An exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products

By

Caroline Naberman

69051941

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SUPERVISOR: Prof E KEMPEN

DEDICATION

To my Heavenly Father,

my partner, family, and friends,

without whom none of my success would be possible.

DECLARATION

I, Caroline Naberman, hereby declare that the dissertation (**An exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products**), which I hereby submit for the degree of Master of Consumer Science at the University of South Africa, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution.

I declare that the dissertation does not contain any written work presented by other persons, whether written, pictures, graphs or data or any other information, without acknowledging the source.

I declare that when words from a written source were used, the words were paraphrased and referenced.

I declare that I have not copied and pasted any information from the internet without specifically acknowledging the sources and inserting appropriate references to those sources in the reference section of the dissertation.

I declare that during my study I adhered to the research ethics policy of the University of South Africa. I also received ethics approval, prior to the commencement of data gathering, and have not acted outside the approval conditions. I declare that the content of my dissertation has been submitted to an electronic plagiarism detection programme before the final submission for examination.

Student signature: **Date: 10/06/2022**

Caroline Naberman

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ABSTRACT

South African research has not focussed on the influence sustainable labelling has on purchase intention through the application of the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Also, the understanding of sustainable labelling in South Africa has not been explored in terms of UTZ, nor Fairtrade certification. This study aimed to explore the influence of sustainable labelling, specifically UTZ and Fairtrade, on consumers' intention to purchase food products. The conceptual framework was developed to support a theoretical approach to the study, that included the TPB, as well as the key constructs the research explored. A qualitative exploratory study was designed, using convenient, purposeful and snowball sampling methods to recruit 16 participants via Facebook, who have heard of sustainable food labelling within the borders of South-Africa. Participants took part in individual semi-structured interviews, conducted on Microsoft Teams. From the content analysed data it emerged that participants were concerned about the environment and were more familiar and informed regarding the UTZ label than the Fairtrade label. Although there was clear concern for the environment the cost implication of sustainable labelled food products was highlighted as an obstacle. This study contributes to the gap within South-African research in terms of showing the consumers' understanding of sustainable food labels.

KEY TERMS

Sustainable food labelling; UTZ; Fairtrade; Consumer purchasing intention, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Attitude, Subjective norms, Perceived Behavioural Control.

SUMMARY

In recent years consumers have become more aware of the negative impact of their food product purchases on the planet. Therefore, an environmentally conscious food trend has developed among consumers. This trend involves consumers being more aware of the impact of their food product related purchases, fuelling environmental concern and the need to protect the planet for future generations. Consequently, the need for environmentally friendly sustainable food products emerged, due to the negative impact the food industry has on the environment. Therefore, the demand for environmentally friendly food products has increased, directing food manufacturers to implement various sustainable food labelling schemes such as UTZ and Fairtrade. Although consumers are demonstrating environmental concern by purchasing sustainable food products, the influence of sustainable food labelling on the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable food products is unclear.

A qualitative, exploratory study was designed, using non-probability sampling methods, namely purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling to recruit 16 participants in South Africa, to willingly participate in individual online interviews. The study received ethical approval before recruitment of participants commenced. The interview guide was piloted to determine whether the questions are understandable before the main study commenced. The data gathering took place after willing participants were identified and conformed to the inclusion criteria in the form of voluntary individual online interviews on Microsoft-TEAMS, which were recorded. The number of interviews were determined through saturation and was transcribed from the recordings, whereafter data analysis was performed to identify the most relevant concepts from the answers relating to each question. The concepts created categories from the same notions, which were presented in the form of quotations in table format to illustrate each category.

The findings suggest that participants had a general understanding of sustainability related towards environmental sustainability. The term 'sustainability' was associated with the idea of a healthy environment and the idea of long-term sustainability through preserving resources and protection of the environment. Whereas the term 'sustainable food product', resembled sustainable manufacturing with the assumption that food manufacturing processes conform towards environmental sustainability. Participants were presented with pictures of two specific sustainable labels found on South-African retail shelves, namely UTZ and Fairtrade. It was evident that most participants encountered the UTZ sustainable label on food products. The participants associated the UTZ label with specific retailers and products containing cocoa, suggesting that participants do not associate UTZ with what it actually stands for. It was also found that curiosity drew the participants' attention towards the UTZ label in terms of the red

colour on the label and the arrow-like features. The participants' self-assessed knowledge regarding the UTZ sustainable label seemed certain by determining that participants know the label is beneficial for the environment and produced on farms where good farming practices are implemented.

However, the opposite findings were significant in terms of the Fairtrade sustainable label. It was clear that the majority of the participants have not noticed the Fairtrade sustainable label on food products found on South-African retail shelves. Although this might be due to the Fairtrade label only being available on certain food products in South Africa or not noticing the label. It was evident that the participants were uninformed and made assumptions regarding the label in terms of comparing Fairtrade to the UTZ label and using the name Fairtrade to describe what it stands for. The participants were further probed to explore whether additional information might emerge through providing them with the actual definitions of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. However, no noticeable difference was identified between the UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. Although participants seemed intrigued by the fact that the Fairtrade label stands for fairness, credibility and education, it also indicated the lack of knowledge regarding the Fairtrade sustainable label. It was furthermore evident that participants do not believe that sustainable labels in general are not well-known among South Africans. They were also of the opinion that UTZ and Fairtrade were not well-known among South African consumers although UTZ was more well-known than Fairtrade. The findings also suggested that participants are concerned about the environment due to the human race not taking care of the environment, therefore the participants indicated an inclination to purchase a food product if it contained an UTZ or Fairtrade label to assist the planet. Therefore, the participants' concern of the environment was clearly driving their consideration of sustainable labels.

The findings were apparent in terms of participants expecting UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels to be environmentally friendly, credible and that the product is of good quality. Some participants were inclined by proof of environmental sustainability to purchase sustainable labelled food products whereas others were doubtful and might need more information to do so in the future. Findings suggested that participants have a positive attitude towards environmental sustainability however, do not necessarily show it in their actual behaviour. This indicated a tendency in terms of changing if they need to or in fact have enough information.

It was evident that participants had a positive attitude towards environmental sustainability, however did not experience pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The participants' guilty yet positive feelings suggest positive associations towards sustainable labelled food products. It was also evident that groups such as family, friends and colleagues

are leaning towards the purchasing of sustainable labelled food products, and no one in particular would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Nevertheless, price sensitive consumers, fast food retailers and the older generation were noted as examples of groups who would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products.

The participants post-purchase experience was also positive therefore meeting the participants expectations, suggesting repurchases and therefore saving the planet one sustainable food product at a time to reach SDG-12, to protect the earth's resources. However, findings suggest that the participants' purchase of sustainable labelled food products are not yet automatic suggesting a lack of information. Participants also mentioned obstacles towards purchasing sustainable labelled food products such as higher cost implications, laziness, product availability and lack of knowledge regarding sustainable food labels. This suggested that focus is needed on emphasizing the benefits of sustainable labelled food products to overcome the obstacles to purchase sustainable labelled food products and save the planet.

LIST OF ABBREVITAIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CAES	COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
BOPL	BACK OF PACK LABELLING
FOPL	FRONT OF PACK LABELLING
NGO	NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS
PBC	PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL
PC	PERCEIVED CONTROLLABILITY
PE	PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY
SDG	SUSTAINBALE DEVELOPMENT GOAL
TPB	THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR
TRA	THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 the study is introduced, described in the context related to sustainable labelling and more specifically UTZ, meaning good in the Mayan language (Rainforest Alliance, 2022) and Fairtrade labels. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is introduced as a useful approach to understand the consumers' intentional behaviour in terms of sustainable food labelling. Thereafter, the research problem is presented and discussed, and the justification for the research study is presented. The research aim and objectives are presented, and the research methodology and ethical clearance acquired for this study are outlined. Lastly, the chapter concludes with academic related information and an outline of the dissertation.

1.1 Overview and background

Within recent years a global evolution toward sustainable practices has taken place in the food industry (Bruno et al. 2019), due to food production and consumption practices being unsustainable and endangering the future of the planet (Notarnicola et al. 2017). The growing global population caused food production to triple between 1960 and 2015, negatively impacting the environment (Djejkic et al. 2021). To address the environmental impacts posed by the food sector, the United Nations included sustainable development goal 12 (SDG-12), that refers to responsible consumption and production, within their 17 global sustainable development goals (SDG), on 25 September 2015 (Sachs, 2015). The SDGs intend to create a sustainable and safe planet for all human beings by 2030 (Osborn et al. 2015). SDG-12 specifically emphasises the importance of sustainability through using the planet's resources efficiently, lowering food waste and promoting sustainable procurement and processing practices (Chan et al. 2018; Chan et al. 2019). Therefore, SDG-12 focusses on creating a global standard by which the environment is not harmed while humanity is evolving and developing (Bernstein and Vos, 2021).

The food sector is one of the main sectors negatively impacting the environment through deforestation, poor farming practices, pollutants, waste and climate change contributions, to name a few (Marczewksa and Marczewska, 2021; Awuchi et al. 2020). In recent years climate change has been creating concerns amongst consumers regarding the effect on the environment (Skogen et al. 2018; Eldesouky et al. 2020). Consumers have therefore become more conscious of the impact food products have on animal, environmental and ethical welfare (Eldesouky et al. 2020). Consequently, an environmentally conscious trend has been developing among consumers to be more aware of their impact on the environment (Sheng et al. 2019).

Due to the environmentally conscious consumer trend, consumers are demanding environmentally sustainable food products, since food manufacturing facilities remain responsible for the contribution to environmental pollution (Li et al. 2019). Malley et al. (2021) add that certain food manufacturing processes are worse for the environment than others. Food manufacturers are obligated to conform to the health and safety of the environment (Hameed and Waris, 2019). Consequently, the demand for sustainable food products in South Africa has increased (Struwig and Adendorf, 2018). This has resulted in many food manufacturers implementing sustainable manufacturing practices and including sustainable certifications on the food labelling (Annunziata et al. 2018). These actions point to the fact that an environmental concern, caused by consumer demand, can encourage sustainable consumption (Yue et al. 2020). Consumers are demonstrating their environmental concern by buying sustainable labelled food products that are not endangering the future of the earth (Sheng et al. 2019). However, Phinijkijsophon (2019) found that Thai consumers assumed the environment will be unharmed when sustainable food products are consumed. With this in mind, it is unfortunately not certain what influence sustainable food labelling has on the consumers' decision to purchase sustainable food products, if any.

According to Tobi et al. (2019) sustainable food labelling in general is progressively used worldwide, through numerous environmental and socially responsible labelling schemes. Sustainable food labelling can be summarised as a tool used to inform consumers of sustainable features present in a food product (Miranda-Ackerman and Azzaro-Pantel, 2017). South Africa has numerous sustainable food labels, such as UTZ, Fairtrade, Dolphin Friendly, and Badger Friendly used on food products (Eco Label Index, 2021). However, sustainable food labels are usually voluntary schemes and therefore not mandatory on food labels (Dendler, 2014). By using voluntary sustainable schemes, manufacturers are gaining access to consumer markets who need sustainable products (Miranda-Ackerman and Azzaro-Pantel, 2017). The sustainable food labelling interest has enlarged in terms of practice and consumption, creating a potential influence on the consumer's sustainable purchasing intention (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). A study by Koloba, (2020) found that South African consumers have the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products, however, South Africa is a third-world country and sustainable labelled food products might be too expensive to purchase. This can be attributed to the fact that sustainable food products have environmental as well as social cost implications (Ingenbleek, 2015). Therefore, sustainable labelled food products tend to be more expensive than conventional food products that do not contain sustainable labels and are less expensive.

The modern consumer is troubled by environmental as well as social issues; their concern can be perceived through behavioural changes in terms of purchasing sustainable products rather

than conventional food products (Hosseinpour et al. 2016). The consumer's perception of sustainable labelled food products is therefore significant towards determining the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products (Wee et al. 2014). In this regard Chu (2018) found that Chinese consumers felt they are behaving responsibly towards the environment by purchasing and consuming sustainable labelled food products.

Marketers and food manufacturers are reliant on consumer engagement and purchasing of sustainable labelled food products in order to grow the market and subsequently assist in addressing SDG-12. Sustainable food labels are available in South African retail stores. For example, Nomu products containing UTZ certified cocoa (Woolworths, 2022) and Woolworths branded food products (Woolworths, 2022) contain the UTZ label. The Fairtrade label can be found on the Black and Green's organic chocolate range (Black and Green's, 2022), K-fee's chocolate espresso pods (Woolworths, 2022), as well as Fairvalley wines (Fairvalley, 2022). It is apparent that sustainable food products, more specifically UTZ and Fairtrade certified food products, are available in limited South African retail stores, thus indicating the potential to grow the sustainable food product market. However, the UTZ certification scheme has now merged with the Rainforest Alliance scheme, resulting in the UTZ label being phased out over time (Rainforest Alliance, 2022). Although this change is in motion, this study focussed on the meaning of UTZ, and the logo is referred to in this study. The study was conducted when UTZ as a certification scheme and its label was still present on food products, and it still might be found on food products in the future until the packaging of the food products has been phased out. The availability of sustainable labelled food products such as UTZ and Fairtrade in South African retail stores suggest that by applying these labels, manufacturers and retailers take a step toward protecting the planet and reaching the SDG-12 as set out by the United Nations, due to the negative impact global food consumption and manufacturing has on the planet's resources and environment.

Although sustainable food labels are voluntary schemes, it can be standardised by changing sustainable food labels to a mandatory requirement, thereby ensuring more food products would be sustainably labelled while safeguarding the planet and its resources. By creating awareness campaigns of sustainable labelled food products among consumers, the demand may increase, forcing manufacturers to conform to the demand and therefore creating sustainable labelled food products as a norm. Consequently, it is important to understand the consumer purchasing intention towards sustainable food labels, more specifically UTZ and Fairtrade labels, to efficiently market products containing these labels commercially. A study by Yang et al. (2020) found that consumers in the United Kingdom generally felt more positive when consuming sustainable products, after evaluating consumer acceptability of sustainable labelled food products. Many studies are available on consumers' intention to purchase

sustainable labelled food products; however, less are available within the South African context or more specifically UTZ or Fairtrade food labels. The TPB offers the opportunity to explore the consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products, through their attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (PBC) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1985). Therefore, this study will use the TPB to potentially predict, or bring about a better understanding of consumers' current purchasing behaviour intent (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2011) of sustainable labelled food products.

Environmental concern and exhaustion of the planet's natural resources are driving humanity to concentrate on environmentally friendly consumption (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). The focus should thus be placed on how marketers and manufacturers can further create awareness regarding sustainable labelled food products as well as commercialisation of these products. Therefore, the research question of this study is to understand how sustainable food labels, specifically UTZ and Fairtrade, influence purchasing intention through using the TPB to determine consumer attitude toward sustainable food labels, the influence of subjective norms and the role of PBC. The TPB suggests that a consumer with a positive attitude alongside a positive subjective norm, mixed with a high degree of PBC may result in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 2006). In this instance sustainable behaviour or non-sustainable behaviour. Through this study it may be possible to gain a better understanding of the position consumers have on sustainable labelled food products and what needs to be done to change their behaviour towards more sustainable labelled food products in order to assist in the development of SDG 12.

1.2 Problem statement

The South African sustainable marketplace is currently in the initial stages of development (Naidoo and Ramatsetse, 2016). Excellent indications of development are taking place in the sustainable marketplace by displaying sustainable food products in stores of main retailers such as in Woolworths and Pick 'n Pay (Mhlophe, 2016) in more specific terms. Although, South African studies are not available that investigated the influence sustainable food labelling has on consumers' purchase intention of food products, the studies available mostly focus on aspects encouraging consumers to purchase organic foods (Mhlophe, 2016); identification of sustainable labels (Struwig and Adendorf, 2018); and factors influencing the intention to purchase sustainable products (Naidoo and Ramatsetse, 2016). For example, Naidoo & Ramatsetse, (2016) explored factors such as value, attitude, subjective norms and PBC that would influence South African consumer's intention to purchase organic foods. The main objectives of this study were to determine the relationship between purchasing intention of sustainable foods and the constructs of TPB. Mhlophe, (2016) researched the important

aspects that encourage South African consumers to purchase organic foods and found that the main objective of Mhlope's study was to establish the degree to which consumer attitude impacts consumer purchase intention also in terms of organic foods. Therefore, these studies did not explore the influence of sustainable food labels on the consumers' purchasing intention of food products.

The subject of focus in South Africa has therefore been on either factor's influencing intention or aspects encouraging the purchase of organic foods, indicating that research has not been focusing on the influence sustainable labelling has on purchase intention through the application of the TPB. Also, the understanding of sustainable labelling in South Africa has not been explored in terms of UTZ certification, nor Fairtrade certification. Furthermore, the only study relating to the influence of sustainable labelling was conducted by Struwig & Adendorf, (2018) who investigated whether consumers could identify South African sustainable labels and did not focus on how these labels influenced consumers' purchase intention of sustainable food products. These researchers rather wanted to evaluate whether eco-labels will further develop consumer awareness of the impact of the product on the environment.

Internationally, several more studies relating to the influence of sustainable labelling on purchasing intention can be found. For example, De Andrade Silva, (2017) investigated the influence sustainable labelling has on the purchasing intention of Brazilian consumers. Aitken et al. (2020) aimed to examine the role sustainable labelling has on attitude and the intention to purchase organic food products. Aitken et al. (2020) found that by incorporating environmental and societal benefits of products, the intention to purchase can be reinforced. Cho & Berry, (2019) looked at how sustainable labels assist consumers in determining sustainability performance of a product, whereas Annunziata et al. (2019) aimed to offer background to whether Italian consumers are aware of and understand specific sustainable labels. These studies focussed on Rainforest Alliance, Libera Terra and Fairtrade sustainable labels however, UTZ labelling was not specifically considered. These studies, although focussing on the consumer, did not apply the TPB to determine the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. However, Aitken et al. (2020) did apply the theory of reasoned action (TRA) to investigate whether labelling plays a role within the relationship of attitude and the intention to purchase organic food products. The TRA is the predecessor of the TPB which does not include PBC, that is used within the TPB to account for non-volitional situations.

The research available in South Africa relating to sustainable labelled food products has been performed by using quantitative research (Struwig and Adendorf, 2018; Mhlophe, 2016;

Naidoo and Ramatsetse, 2016), resulting in insufficient qualitative studies from a South African context to understand and describe the general South African consumer's interpretation of and behavioural intention towards sustainable food labelling. The gap in the use of qualitative methodology to explore this phenomenon is thus evident, calling for additional studies of a qualitative nature to provide insight into why consumers behave in a certain way towards sustainable labelled food products. Based on the problem expressed in this section, the next section provides the justification for this study.

1.3 Justification for research

As mentioned in section 1.2, several international studies, relating to the influence of sustainable labelling on the purchasing intention of consumers have been published. The research on the influence of sustainable labelling regarding consumers' purchasing intention is limited in South Africa. Moreover, the understanding of sustainable food labelling in South Africa has not been explored in terms of UTZ labels or Fairtrade labels. Therefore, this study aims to address the shortage of research through exploring South African consumers' awareness and understanding of sustainable food labels, specifically UTZ and Fairtrade, and whether sustainable labelling influences the South African consumers' purchasing intention towards sustainable labelled food products. It is necessary to explore the consumers' position towards these two forms of certification if advances are to be made to address SDG 12. Without this understanding it will not be possible to identify the areas where consumer education needs to be focused in order to create a bigger awareness of sustainable labelled food products and if consumer education in relation to sustainable labelled food products is necessary. This study is also necessary to determine the approach consumers use towards sustainable labelled food products in order to assist food manufactures to grow this market. Through this understanding, the position of the consumer in relation to these two forms of certification will be known that could assist food manufacturers and retailers in understanding how consumers use and apply sustainable food labelling and when and where it matters to them, in order to grow this market. A clear understanding of this nature has not been established which warrants a better consumer understanding of sustainable labelled food products. This will advance the progress towards protecting the planet, thereby assisting in advancing SDG 12, through consumers' use of sustainable labelled food products in South Africa.

South Africa presently has many challenges concerning sustainable food manufacturing practices. These environmental impacts concerning food products are not always known to the consumer when making purchasing decisions (Ketelsen et al. 2020), resulting in consumers unintentionally purchasing food products that are not environmentally friendly.

Trudel (2019), states that most consumers want to base their purchasing decisions on need, satisfaction and environmental friendliness. As very little is known about the consumer's approach to sustainable labelled food products and what they know about such food products, many consumer misconceptions may exist that could hamper the advancement of SDG 12. The dearth of research on consumers' knowledge and understanding about sustainable food labelling in South Africa may also obstruct food product developers and manufacturers from knowing their consumer market in order to correctly communicate sustainable food products to the sustainable food product consumer. It is therefore necessary to provide these stakeholders with a better understanding of the consumers who are interested in sustainable labelled food products so that they are able to correctly position their products to these consumers. More so, it is also important to assist food manufacturers to reformulate food label information to possibly improve its comprehension where general consumers are concerned, with the aim to attract the attention of conventional food product labelling consumers or change and strengthen the approach of those consumers who are infrequently purchasing sustainable labelled food products. In so doing, it is anticipated that sustainable food labelling will stimulate the consumers' decisions towards sustainable food products. This is based on the fact that sustainable labelling acts as a mechanism through which the consumer is alerted to products that are better for the environment as opposed to conventional food products with no benefits for the planet (Miranda-Ackerman and Azzaro-Pantel, 2017).

The way in which consumers approach, use or understand the role of sustainable food labels, could be of importance to food manufacturers as well as marketers. It could create awareness for sustainable labelled food products that could enlarge the sustainable manufactured food segment within the food industry. However, due to the lack of studies based on this topic in South Africa, it is still unknown whether sustainable food labelling influences the consumer to purchase sustainable food products. By understanding how consumers are influenced by sustainable food labels in terms of attitude subjective norms and PBC, it could create strategies to improve their intention to purchase sustainable food labelled products. A better understanding is needed if a contribution is to be made to a healthier planet supported by the consumer, food product manufacturers and marketing of food products going forward. It is therefore important to explore the consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC of sustainable food labels if behavioural intentions are to be addressed in favour of sustainable food label purchases.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

This study aims to explore **the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchasing intention of food products**. To understand this influence, the following objectives have been formulated.

Objective 1: Determine consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling by:

1.1 Exploring the meaning of the term 'sustainable food labelling;
1.2 Exploring the consumers' interpretation and use of UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels;
1.3 Establishing the importance of environmental concern in the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during food purchases.

Objective 2: Examine the influence of UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels on the intention to purchase food products

Objective 3: Apply the three components of the TPB to determine:

3.1 Consumers' attitude towards sustainable labelling and its influence on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

3.2 The influence of subjective norms on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

3.3 The role PBC plays in the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

1.5 Research design and methodology

The study was designed within an interpretivist paradigm through which a qualitative methodology was applied to understand the phenomenon of sustainable labelled food products. An exploratory and phenomenology design was used to understand this phenomenon from a consumer perspective. These designs were deemed appropriate since little research has been done regarding the influence of sustainable labelling on the purchasing intention of South African consumers.

Three non-probability sampling strategies were used, namely purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling to recruit participants for this study. The study participants were located in South Africa. The following inclusion criteria, specific to a purposeful sampling strategy, required participants to be 18 years or older, in charge of purchasing food products and familiar with sustainable labelling, in terms of thinking they know something about sustainable labelling or have seen or heard of either UTZ labelling or Fairtrade labelling. In light of the fact that this study was conducted during the Covid-19

pandemic in 2021, whereby specific research related restrictions needed to be upheld as specified by the University of South Africa, convenience and snowball sampling strategies were used to further expand the recruit potential of participants for this study. Recruitment of participants for this study was facilitated through the use of Facebook. This method of recruitment was considered due to the fact that Facebook was an accessible and popular social media platform amongst South African users which allowed the researcher to comply with the COVID-19 data gathering requirements and governmental restrictions. The main data-gathering method used for this study was individual online interviews which was facilitated through the use of an interview guide. The interview guide contained questions that were developed to best address each of the objectives of the study. The interview guide was piloted to determine if the questions were clear to the participants and that they could respond to the questions. However, the questions specific to the UTZ and Fairtrade labels were reconsidered in terms of making sure that the participants made the correct association to the label when speaking about it. In this regard an illustration of the labels was presented when they were being discussed to ensure that the participants remained focused on the label and related their responses to the label. The questions were also displayed to the participants by sharing the researchers' screens and focussing on each question as they moved forward, to ensure the participants remained focussed and could reread the question if the sound was unclear.

The individual online interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and lasted between 25-40 minutes. After gaining consent from participants to willingly take part in the study, consent forms were sent to them via email together with a demographic questionnaire requesting the participant to provide demographic information related to them. Once the consent forms and demographic sheets were returned to the researcher, the researcher scheduled individual online interviews with the various participants which were mostly scheduled after hours or over weekends. The standard consent form used in Unisa includes a personal information section which gives an outline of the study and what is expected of the participants. This document is given to participants prior to participating in the interviews to study in their own time. Attached to this document is the consent form signed by the particpants (Appendix B). During the individual online interview, the participants were given a short introduction explaining the aim of the study as well as mentioning that the interview will be recorded. Thereafter, the researcher used the interview guide to guide the conversation with the participant. The interview was recorded via Microsoft TEAMS. As a result, 16 individual online interviews were conducted that formed the data set for this study. Although data saturation was found to emerge during the 13th interview, the researcher continued with 3 additional interviews to confirm data saturation.

After all sixteen individual online interviews had been concluded, the researcher transcribed each recorded individual online interview verbatim. The transcripts were read several times by the researcher after which content analysis was applied to analyse the data by means of using an inductive approach. The process of data analysis was facilitated through open coding that was used to manually code the data during which the main concepts (codes) emerging from the data were identified. Data coding was performed using Microsoft Word in which the codes were added to the word document containing the transcript of the participant. The main coded concepts were refined and grouped into categories to capture the meaning the participants assigned to each of the questions posed to them. Data tables were compiled of the verbatim quotes that represented the responses participants gave to each of the questions from which the categories emerged. Diagrammes that summarised the emerging categories were also compiled as an illustrative component to the data analysis process that was followed. Trustworthiness principles that addressed confirmability, transferability, credibility, dependability and authenticity were applied in this study to ensure that data which had been analysed in this study were reliable and valid. The researcher has applied the principle of bracketing during the data gathering and data analysis process ensuring that the data reflected what was meant by participants and not allowing any preconceived understanding or assumptions from the researcher to cloud this meaning.

1.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science (CAES) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) prior to the commencement of the study. The CAES Ethics Approval is attached as Appendix A (2021/CAES_HREC/035). The data collection only commenced after ethical clearance had been received. UNISA sanctions internationally acknowledged principles of ethics as the foundation for research, which includes justice, beneficence, non-maleficence and autonomy (University of South Africa, 2013) which were addressed in the design of the study as well as during the data gathering and analysis of the data.

Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were reminded that they could stop the interview at any time and discontinue their participation should they wish to do so. They were assured of confidentiality whereby the information they shared during the individual interview would not be shared with any parties other than the supervisor. Their identity would remain anonymous and would not be made known in the data write-up or during any further presentation of the findings. All participants received a consent form they were requested to sign (Appendix B), if they were interested to participate in the study as well as a demographic questionnaire (Appendix C). Participants were reminded during the individual interview that

the interview would be recorded for data analysis purposes. No unforeseen adverse events occurred during data gathering.

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is presented in six chapters:

Chapter 1:

In chapter 1 the study is introduced, described in the context related to sustainable labelling and more specifically UTZ and Fairtrade labels. In this chapter the TPB is introduced as a useful approach to understanding consumers' intent behaviour where sustainable labelling is concerned. Thereafter, the research problem is presented as well as justification for the research study. The research aims and objectives are presented, and a brief overview of the research methodology and ethical clearance obtained for this study are outlined. The overall layout of the chapters to be presented in the dissertation are given.

Chapter 2:

This chapter introduces the research and outlines the background on sustainable food labelling. Thereafter, a general overview of sustainable food labelling will be presented and the significance of front-of-pack-labelling and back-of-pack-labelling will be discussed. This section is followed by a discussion on sustainable labelling in terms of South African and international sustainable labelling. The chapter concludes with a discussion on UTZ as well as Fairtrade food labelling as non-mandatory symbols found on food labelling to assist consumers during the decision-making process of purchasing food products.

Chapter 3:

Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB framework including all three constructs (attitude, subjective norms and PBC) are discussed in terms of the consumer’s intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products namely Fairtrade and UTZ labelling.

Chapter 4:

The aim and objectives of the study is presented. Furthermore, chapter 4 discusses the methodology that was used to determine the role that attitude, subjective norms and PBC has on the consumers’ intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The chapter continues with the proposed paradigm used within this study, as well as a discussion of the research design, sampling strategy and the data gathering methods

used. Thereafter the data instrument as well as the data analysis procedure used will be presented. The trustworthiness in relation to the data will be addressed in terms of accuracy and consistency, and lastly the ethical approval received for this study will be presented.

Chapter 5:

The data is presented in relation to each of the objectives set out for this study. The chapter also briefly discusses the information on the study sample and presents the demographic background of the participants. Thereafter, the data relating to each of the three objectives are presented. The data also includes tables to provide an illustration of the verbal quotes put forward from the participants.

Chapter 6:

Chapter 6 presents the final conclusions in relation to the objectives. Thereafter, particular attention is focussed on three contributions of this study, in terms of the contribution towards the TPB, the contribution towards the methodology and the contribution towards the literature regarding sustainable food labelling. The contribution of the study is followed by the study limitations and recommendations for future research.

1.8 Academic related information

In this dissertation a variation of the Harvard referencing style was used specific to the guidelines provided by the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences Tutorial Letter 301. The dissertation was also submitted to the Turn-it-in similarity check software of which the certificate of similarity is attached in Appendix D. The study has not been presented at any national or international conferences. An article will be compiled from the findings of this study and submitted to an accredited journal for publication. It is foreseen that the findings of this study will be presented at the 25th Biennial International Congress of the South African Association for Food Science and Technology in 2023.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview of the study's context was presented alongside the problem statement, justification for the research, research aim and objectives, a brief methodology, ethical clearance, the dissertation layout and academic-related information. The next chapter will present the literature review, which offers an understanding of the most recent literature and some of the important views from researchers regarding sustainable food labelling.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter an understanding of the most recent literature and some of the important views from researchers regarding sustainable food labelling are presented.

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of Chapter one was to introduce the research and outline the background on sustainable labelling, specifically referring to UTZ and Fairtrade certifications. In chapter 2 a broader overview of sustainable food labelling will be presented by firstly providing context on food labelling in general and sustainable food labelling. Thereafter, the significance of front-of-pack-labelling and back-of-pack-labelling will be discussed in terms of mandatory components, legislation, and the user friendliness of sustainable labels. This section is followed by a discussion on sustainable labelling in terms of relevant concepts related to South African and international sustainable labelling. The chapter concludes with a discussion on UTZ as well as Fairtrade food labelling as non-mandatory symbols found on food labelling to assist consumers during the decision-making process of food products. In the section to follow, the background to food labelling in general will be presented in order to provide the context of labelling in general.

2.2 Food labelling background

The food supply chain changed through the years whereby less contact between the consumer and the manufacturer resulted in the consumer looking towards other sources for information about a food product (Fernqvist and Ekelund, 2014), hence the use of food labelling emerged. **Food labelling** has developed into an essential tool that consumers use to understand and appreciate foods (Evans and Miele, 2017). Martinelli (2018) describes a food label as a legal requirement necessary on all pre-packaged foods as it protects consumers from misleading and false product information (Hamilton and Raison, 2019). The food label also offers point-of-purchase information regarding the content of processed pre-packaged foods. The nature of the food label can be interpretative or non-interpretive through the use of symbols to explain information or merely providing quantitative information on the food label without any interpretation (Mhurchu et al. 2018).

In general, the food label is used to transfer the information from the manufacturer to the consumer and is therefore used by the consumer in the purchasing decision of a food product (Zhang et al. 2020; Lee and Lee, 2018). Subsequently, producers need to provide enough information on the food label for the consumer to make an informed decision regarding the food products they consider purchasing (Tonkin et al. 2016). The statement by Tonkin was

supported by an earlier study in South Africa exploring the influence food labels have on the purchasing decision by Kempen et al. (2011) who found that information on food labels motivate South African consumers to purchase food products. Interestingly Kempen et al. (2012) found that the information provided on food labels assist South African consumers who read food labels, to live healthy lifestyles after exploring the relationship between food label reading, health awareness and lifestyle behaviour. It was also noted that Bosman et al. (2014) found that some consumers do not read food labels due to the lack of time, interest, habitual purchases, and price concerns after evaluating South African consumers' opinions and use of health information on-food labels. The food label is therefore used by consumers to identify food products that fit their specific needs (Nugzar, 2018; McCluckey et al., 2018). Front-of-pack labelling (FOPL) as well as back-of pack labelling (BOPL) are the most informative formats of food labelling found on food products. These labelling formats feature many different elements which consumers can use to inform their decision about the food product. Each of these labelling formats will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Front of Package labelling (FOPL)

Front of Package Labelling (FOPL), of which an example of Soleo Pretzels is given in Figure 2.1 (A), is described as a label on the front of the pack containing the food product (Goodman et al. 2018). The FOPL is a format used to assist consumers in making informed decisions (Bopape et al. 2021). This labelling format provides the consumer with easily understandable nutritional information (Roodenburg, 2017), such as in the form of a flash label indicating that the product is baked and not fried, which is different to the nutritional facts table on the back of the food product pack (Goodman et al. 2018). Thus, FOPL offers the most significant nutritional information within the food product, generally involving the sugar, sodium, fat and energy content of a specific processed and packaged food product (Croker et al. 2020). The supplementary information, such as the phrase 'baked not fried' present in Figure 2.1, is provided as additional information on the FOPL that does not replace Back-of-pack labelling (Jewell, 2019). Bopape et al. (2021) found that South African consumers are positive towards warning labels on food products due to the labels being eye catching and educating them regarding the food product. The purpose of FOPL is to highlight specific advantages of the product. Ikonen et al. (2018) add that FOPL can assist consumers in easily familiarising themselves with the product of choice, thereby noticing important product features as well as the interpretation of food labelling.

(A) (B)

Figure 2.1: Example of FOPL and BOP food labelling

Kanter et al. (2018) are of the opinion that FOPL objectives are twofold which are to (i) inform consumers about the content of the product and (ii) introduce the consumer to healthier options by visibly displaying important information on the front of the packaged food product. This is particularly evident in the example of FOPL illustrated in Figure 2.2 below, where the nutritional content of the product is presented as a guideline for the daily amount of energy, sugars, fat, saturates and salt. Figure 2.3 below, also shows the guideline daily amount of the nutritional content of a South African product and where this guideline can be found on the front of the product.

Figure 2.2: Example of a guideline daily amount label, given per serving.

Figure 2.3: South African product with guideline daily amount label on FOPL

Numerous countries have developed and implemented either mandatory or voluntary FOPL schemes (Findling et al. 2018), such as warning labels, illustrated in Figure 2.4 below, indicating high sugar or saturated fats on food products in Chile (Kanter et al. 2018). Another form of FOPL is the traffic light labels used on food products in the United Kingdom (Findling et al. 2018) as seen in Figure 2.5 below. The "Healthier Choice" label, illustrated in Figure 2.6, was introduced by the Health Promotions Board of Singapore and features on food products from Singapore (Singapore Government Health Promotion Board, 2020). The healthier choice label has been adopted by other Asian countries such as Malaysia and Thailand each featuring their own rendition of the Healthier choice label used by Singapore.

A study by Siegrist, Hartmann and Lazzarini (2019) exploring the effect of the healthier choice label on Swiss consumers stated that their study suggests that the ''healthier choice label does not significantly increase consumers' ability to choose healthier foods, however, could potentially increase consumers' motivation to purchase healthier foods'', therefore, suggesting that the healthier choice label may not be as effective as anticipated. Moreover, African countries also introduced positive FOPL schemes such as various heart healthy logos, as seen below in Figure 2.7 found in Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe on food products as well as the national Good Food Logo, as seen below in Figure 2.8, found on food products in Zambia (Choice International Foundation, 2019). Positive FOPL schemes such as heart logos, as seen in Figure 2.7 below, provide the consumer with important nutritional information regarding food products, to allow healthier food choices (Koen, Blaauw and Edelweiss, 2018), in an attempt to combat the rising global mortality rate from noncommunicable diseases (Koen, 2016). A study by Koen et al. (2018) found that consumers in Cape Town, South Africa do not often read nutritional labels because of habitual purchases as well as lack of interest. Therefore, it is evident that health endorsing logos found on food products have to be bold, full of colour, simple and eye catching (Koen, Blaauw and Edelweiss, 2018), to assist the consumer in making healthier purchasing decisions.

Figure 2.4: High sugar warning label used in Chile (Michail, 20119).

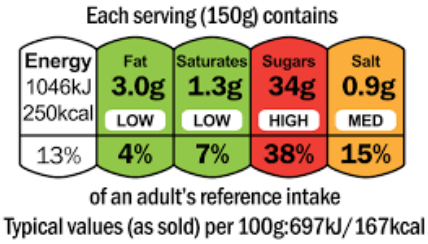

Figure 2.5: Traffic light labelling (Thow et al. 2020)

Figure 2.6*:* Healthier choice labelling

Figure 2.7*:* Heart logos found in Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Choice International Foundation, 2019)

Figure 2.8: Good Food Logo in Zambia (Choice International Foundation, 2019).

Hutton and Gresse (2020) found in their study regarding the perceptions of FOPL label structures amongst South African consumers in Nelson Mandela Bay that warning labels, as

seen in Figure 2.4, were least liked whereas the “healthier choice” label (Figure 2.6) as well as the traffic light, label (Figure 2.5), were most liked due to consumers perceiving these labels to be useful, understandable and easily identifiable. However, according to Ikonen et al. (2020) the intention to purchase products with FOPL formats for example, traffic light labelling (Figure 2.5), is still not consistent. Hutton and Gresse (2021) suggest that evaluative FOPL such as the Healthier choice label (Figure 2.6) is better understood among South African consumers and assists the consumer in identifying healthier food options after assessing five FOPL label formats among consumers in Nelson Mandela Bay South Africa. With reference to the findings of Hutton and Gresse (2021), evaluative FOPL would be most effective in terms of assisting South African consumers with their food purchasing decisions. Although it is not the purpose of this study to investigate the nutritional use of FOPL, the use of FOPL in relation to sustainable information will be explored in this study. The following section will present a brief discussion about the BOPL requirements and the influences these labels have on the consumers’ purchasing decision of food products.

2.2.2 Back of Pack Labelling (BOP)

BOP labelling has been mostly used worldwide for many years (Mandle et al. 2015) and is still featuring on food products today, in the form of nutrition information table, ingredient lists, identification of allergens, storage instructions and sustainable claims (Rønnow, 2020). Examples of these features are presented and indicated in orange in Figure 2.9 below. The nutrition information table usually indicates the contribution of carbohydrates, protein, fats and dietary fibre per 100g of the product or per serving suggestion of the product (Rønnow, 2020). On the other hand, the ingredient list provides the consumer with an accurate list of ingredients present in the product, listed in descending order of highest to lowest quantities (Steenkamp, 2020). BOP nutrition information tables are compulsory in several countries i.e., Europe and the United States (EUFIC, 2018), whereas tested and verified nutrition information table are only mandatory in South Africa if a claim is made on FOPL (South African Foods, 2018). For example, when a manufacturer claims that the product has a high fibre content the nutrition information table should provide the values for soluble and insoluble fibres to support the claim as indicated in Figure 2.9 below. Allergens are usually found on BOP labelling (Rønnow, 2020), in the form of allergen statements or symbols. A study by Marra et al. (2017) found that Canadian consumers rely more on allergen symbols than statements after evaluating consumer preference in food allergen labelling, therefore suggesting that Canadian consumers prefer food labelling information in the form of symbols rather than statements.

Figure 2.9: BOP Label containing nutrition information table, allergens, ingredients, and storage instructions on a South African nougat product.

Mandle et al. (2015) also found that South African consumers want clear, visible symbols, pictures and logos that are standardised to receive quick and easily understandable information. Although BOP labelling contains useful information, FOPL has a greater effect on the consumer since pictures, symbols and logos are used by consumers rather than tables and quantitative information (Wills et al. 2009; Hawley et al. 2013). This was supported by Thow et al. (2019) who claim that BOP nutritional information is of limited value to assist consumers in understanding the healthfulness of pre-packaged food. Seeing that consumers spend only seconds looking at a product (Amato, 2018), FOPL symbols containing the necessary information can be more beneficial to consumers. Consequently, if the symbols on the FOPL catch the consumer's eye they might purchase the food product, however if the information was on the BOP, they might never see the information, resulting in the food product not being purchased. Sustainable labels, as defined in section 2.3, can be found on the FOPL as well as the BOPL but are usually found on the FOPL to enable the consumer to have quick and easy access to understandable information which is immediately identifiable on the food product such as illustrated in Figure 2.10 below. Wills et al. (2009), Hawley et al. (2013) and Thow et al. (2019) are of the opinion that sustainable labels might be more useful on FOP than BOP although neither is mandatory, nor required by legislation in South Africa or internationally, although it might be a useful tool to assist the consumers during their purchase decision.

Figure 2.10: South African sustainable labelled product

2.2.3 Food labelling requirements

Within the South African regulations on food labelling, the minimum requirements for a food label are described as “any tag, brand, mark, pictorial, graphic or other descriptive matter, which is written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed, impressed upon, or permanently attached to a container of a foodstuff, and includes labelling for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal” (Department of Health, Republic of South Africa, 2016). Additionally, mandatory labelling differs among countries in terms of how the food product information needs to be communicated or displayed to the consumer on the food packaging (Cheftel, 2005). South Africa’s mandatory food labelling requirements, are guided by the Consumer Protection Act and the Foodstuffs Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act (Food advisory consumer service, 2019) which requires the following information to be present on the food label: (i) a typical nutritional information table (ii) an accurate name describing the contents (iii) an ingredients list (iv) all allergens listed (v) the country of origin named (vi) batch identification number and a use by date / best before date (Steenkamp, 2020). These requirements ensure that the South African consumer has enough information on the food product to make an informed decision. By applying the labelling requirements, uncertainty about the product is avoided which protects the consumer against exploitation, risk and abuse (Koen et al. 2016).

In South Africa, the above-mentioned requirements are mandatory on food products, and therefore the Consumer Protection Act as well as the Foodstuffs Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act (Food advisory consumer service, 2019) ensure that food manufacturers provide adequate

information to their consumers (McCluckey et al. 2018). Although food labelling is required by law, it does not only serve the purpose to inform the consumer but also to protect the consumer from biased marketing tactics aimed at misleading the consumer (Ababio et al. 2012; Koen et al. 2016; Albert, 2010). While food labelling is required by South African legislation (Food advisory consumer service, 2019), sustainable food labelling certifications on food products are not required by legislation, of which an example of the UTZ certification is presented in Figure 2.7 above. However, the purpose of the sustainable food label is important in terms of protecting the consumer from unsafe foods, overutilization of environmental resources and pollution, and protecting producers as well as workers from unfair labour relations through voluntary sustainable labels (Ponte, 2008), such as UTZ seen above in Figure 2.7.

2.3 Food labelling certifications

Many food labels contain additional statements/symbols which are not mandatory (Hamilton and Raison, 2019) such as the badger friendly symbol seen above in Figure 2.9. These voluntary statements/symbols found on food labelling are described as **food labelling certifications.** Choi (2014) defines these food labelling certifications as a label or symbol that is not required by law but can only be used if the food product meets certain standards established as well as controlled by a third-party organization such as UTZ or Fairtrade. To be specific, third-party organizations regulate specific food attributes in terms of whether the manufacturer meets the standards and follows the certification process, set by the third-party, to use food certifications on food labelling such as UTZ and Fairtrade (Hamilton and Raison, 2019). In other words, food labelling certifications enrich the mandatory food label by providing extra information to the consumer which is certified by a third-party organization ensuring that the requirements are met by the manufacturer. Figure 2.11 below displays a common mandatory food label, which provides the consumer with information such as (i) product name, (ii) product weight, (iii) product ingredients, (iv) nutritional information, and (v) allergens, to name a few. Furthermore, the food label certification presented in Figure 2.9, is an example of a food labelling certification specifically known as the badger friendly symbol. This symbol is not mandatory by law but rather indicates that the manufacturer sources their honey responsibly, though not harming badgers during the process of honey extraction. Phillipov and Gale (2018) state that consumers tend to use food labelling certifications to assist in their purchasing decision as well as to navigate through the intricate modern food retailing context, resulting in consumers being confronted by various food labelling certification schemes used on mandatory food labelled products. These schemes include but are not limited to Fairtrade, UTZ, Blue Flag and Certified Wildlife Friendly, Dolphin friendly, Badger friendly (Eco label index, 2020).

Figure 2.11: Example of mandatory food label FOPL and BOP label

2.4 Sustainable food labelling certifications

Aprile et al. (2012) mention that sustainable food labelling is a tool created from the need to raise awareness regarding altered food consumption patterns and the benefits resulting from that for the environment. Whereas Howard and Allen (2010) mention that sustainable food labels are voluntary certifications on food products that symbolise ecological and ethical standards. In other words, sustainable labelling is merely added to the food label to provide the consumer with more information in which the manufacturer contributed to sustainability in some way or another. Therefore, sustainable food label certifications are designed to grasp the attention of the consumers, influence their emotions and challenge their ethics (Evans and Miele, 2017) when considering a food product. This suggests that although sustainable food labels are not mandatory, they may play a significant role in consumers' intent to purchase a sustainable food product.

Environmental laws exist that guide the implementation of sustainable labels around the world (Dernbach and Mintz, 2011). Countries such as Europe and the United States of America have some of the world's foremost sustainable food labelling standards (Morgera, 2012), whereas South Africa is governed under the National Environmental Management Act No. 107 of 1998, which ensures principles are established for decision making regarding the issues distressing the environment (Beech and Veltman, 2020). Nevertheless, sustainability in general does not have the necessary legal base to require all companies to add sustainable labels to their packaging (Dernbach and Mintz, 2011) nor does it exist in South Africa. Sustainability is not

only aimed at the environment but also includes economic and social benefits, in relation to raw materials, the production process or until the product is purchased and consumed by the consumer (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). This signifies the importance of the principles of sustainability to be implemented in every step of the food chain. Sustainable labelling can be part of any of the above-mentioned processes and can be indicated on FOPL or BOP since packaged foods contain both (Temple & Fraser, 2014). Sustainable labelling is not stipulated within South-African food legislation. However, in Europe sustainable labelling has been found on food labels since 2013 of which the next challenge has been to create a labelling system which would measure sustainability clearly (Burson, Cohn & Wolfe, 2020). This might indicate that the consumers' need for sustainable labelling has been more established in developed countries such as Europe but might still be growing in developing countries such as South Africa.

Apart from these FOPL features, sustainable food labelling is associated with social, economic, and environmental certification schemes (Brown et al. 2020), of which an example of such labelling is given in Figure 2.10, of the UTZ certification scheme. FOPL may also include various significant labels linked to accreditation such as the Rainforest Alliance certification or Fairtrade certification schemes. According to González and Parga-Dans (2020) as well as the Rainforest Alliance (2020) these certifications are difficult for consumers to interpret since the certifications may be unknown or too intricate. Therefore, in order for certification labelling to be more effective in drawing consumers' attention, Sanz-Valero et al. (2012) suggest that consumers would be able to comprehend and value symbols that are easily identifiable. For example, Woolworths, a South African food retailer, uses the UTZ logo on the FOPL to immediately indicate that the product is sustainably sourced as indicated in Figure 2.10, which encapsulated the principle of farm to fork. Therefore, the visible sustainable symbol may help the consumer to make informed and value-added food product purchases (Zhang, 2020). It is important to understand the consumer's current knowledge regarding FOPL, after which it may be necessary to educate the consumer to fall into the habit of checking the FOPL for information (Nugzar, 2018). Therefore, label awareness may be of value to the consumer when considering food product purchases containing sustainable certification symbols such as UTZ or Fairtrade.

Research by the European Food Information Council (EUFIC) (2016) as well as by Zhang (2020) show that consumers have difficulty understanding the information FOPL provides. However, familiarisation with FOPL information can be initiated through education and awareness (Lemos et al. 2020), which may be useful where sustainable food labelling is concerned. Although the type of information needed may differ among consumers, it is

necessary to illustrate this information in a useful and fully understandable manner (Bryła, 2020; Nugzar, 2018). Ababio et al. (2012), are of the opinion that if the consumer does not comprehend the information on the label, such as that of a sustainable food label, it cannot assist in the purchasing decision of a product. Taking this into consideration it becomes necessary to determine what the consumer understands of sustainable food labelling and what needs to be done, if anything, to improve their understanding and use of these labels.

2.5 The role of sustainability in food manufacturing and labelling

Sustainability consists of three equally important parts, namely economic sustainability (refers to long-term economic growth short of negative effects on social and environmental facets), environmental sustainability (refers to conserving the natural resources by protecting environments) and social sustainability (refers to managing business effects on the public) (Mariani and Vastola, 2015). By taking these parts into consideration, sustainable food labelling then refers to social, economic and environmental certified organisations present during the manufacturing of the food product (Sirieix et al. 2013), that are not required by law (Howard and Allen, 2010). Considering this definition, industrial manufacturing of food products is of vast concern as it relates to waste production, water wastage, high energy consumption and not reusing materials (Hayat et al. 2020; Dieu, 2006; Ritchie and Roser, 2020). Although industrialised food manufacturing has achieved food surpluses by generally using fossil fuels, it has had a significant impact on air pollution (Sun et al. 2017). The durability of the planet is dependent on the critical role of specifically food manufacturers, as it is suggested that if these manufacturers invest in sustainability by implementing cleaner production practices to improve environmental performance and efficiency, it will help ensure a prosperous future for the planet (Kronthal-Sacco et al. 2020; Rahim et al. 2020). Sustainability is a continuous process that requires continuous input and needs involvement from every part of the community (Ogiemwonyi et al. 2019). Ghebrehiwet and Chiweshe, (2020) are of the opinion that since environmental risk is a growing concern to the consumer, the sustainable food division has seen immense development worldwide and will continue to see development in the future. However, should consumers not understand the importance of supporting sustainable labelled food products, the efforts to advance SDG 12 in order to address sustainable consumption, may be futile.

2.5.1 Sustainable food manufacturing in South Africa

Public awareness regarding the environment has improved among consumers in general therefore, it is important for manufacturers to satisfy these consumers' needs (Phuah et al. 2020). The market for sustainable products is also developing rapidly, as modern consumers

are troubled by the condition of the earth's resources (Naidoo and Verma, 2020). Consequently, the South African food market needs further development regarding sustainable manufacturing practices because of the growing environmental risk related to water pollution and the extreme energy use associated with manufacturing, such as food manufacturing, in general (Owusu-Sekyere et al. 2020; Ritchie & Roser, 2020).

Since the food manufacturing segment in South Africa has a substantial effect on the environment, policymakers and non-profit organisations (NGO) are aiming sustainable labelling and sustainable labelling policies towards creating sustainable manufacturers to eventually create sustainable consumers (Owusu-Sekyere and Jordaan, 2019; Liobikienė and Poškus, 2019). Consumers can use sustainable labels, provided by manufacturers on the food label, to help them assess food safety, environmental friendliness and possible health concerns stemming from the use of the product (Liu et al. 2019). By combining sustainable manufacturing and sustainable food product consumption through consumers who use sustainable labelled food products, environmental concerns can be addressed. Therefore, the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products such as UTZ and Fairtrade might indicate whether more food manufacturers should invest in sustainable labelling and if, through such endeavours, SDG 12 can be advanced.

2.5.2 Consumer knowledge of Sustainable labelling

The intention with sustainable labelled food products is to ensure that the consumers are able to identify such products and thus ensure that they are purchasing food products that contribute to responsible production, thus supportive of SDG 12. Unfortunately, Mancini et al. (2017) found that consumers do not have sufficient knowledge of environmental issues, and as a result do not pay enough attention to sustainable information featuring on the food product label. Furthermore, Owusu-Sekyere et al. (2020) also found that consumers' attitude and knowledge towards sustainability dictate whether a sustainable product choice would be made. Therefore, a consumer's environmental knowledge can assist in understanding environmental issues (Nancy, 2019) and possibly direct their intent to purchasing sustainable food products. However, recently Shen and Chen (2020) found that there was a need for consumers to be educated regarding environmental awareness as they did not have an elaborate understanding of environmental issues. This was confirmed in a South African study conducted by Mkhize and Ellis (2020) where the findings point to the fact that the consumers did not understand the benefits of sustainable products. If consumers are not knowledgeable about the effect of irresponsible consumption and production practices on the environment, all efforts to encourage sustainable consumption behaviour might be futile. Mancini et al. (2017) and Shen and Chen (2020) are therefore of the opinion that only through consumer education

about environmental concerns and issues will the information presented on the label be effectively used. In this regard Ogiemwonyi et al. (2019) add that the environmentally educated consumer can be used as an instrument of change to guarantee sustainability going forward and possibly influence other consumers to follow suit.

The environmental impact of a food product is not always evident to the consumer during purchasing of food products (Ketelsen et al. 2020). While Onozaka and McFadden (2011) are of the opinion that food manufacturers provide consumers with different and numerous sustainable certifications on the food label, the significance of the sustainable label is not always clear or merely not recognised by consumers (Struwig and Adendorff, 2018). This can be attributed to a lack of knowledge about sustainable food labelling or a lack of environmental concern in general. In order to assist the consumer to become more aware of sustainable labelled food products, Ertz et al. (2017) recommend that the sustainable information on the label should be described in an understandable manner to ensure that the sustainable label acts as information aid to help consumers identify sustainable products (Struwig and Adendorf, 2018), specifically those consumers who are either looking to purchase sustainable products or through which to create a better awareness of sustainable food products.

Educating consumers is a key tactic in influencing attitude and behaviour in general (Mancini et al. 2017). Over-all environmental knowledge of sustainable labels could have a constructive effect on the consumer attitude towards sustainable products (Taufique et al. 2016). Therefore, the need to educate consumers towards sustainable food products is apparent, to ensure sustainable food products are well accepted (Ketelsen et al. 2020), thus contributing towards responsible consumption. Mancini et al. (2017) found that consumers with a higher education level tended to acknowledge the environmental issues and were thus more supportive of sustainable products. The authors further state that the educated and ethical consumer seems to be more open-minded towards environmental issues, therefore, according to the authors, the need for sustainable information on the product label has become more apparent. Kronthal-Sacco et al. (2020) also found that the functionality of a product combined with a sustainable label can increase sales of food products. Nonetheless, to ensure sustainable food products are purchased, it is necessary to identify the aspects that are necessary to persuade the consumer to accept as well as to apply sustainable practices (Ghebrehiwet and Chiweshe, 2020).

2.5.3 Sustainable labelling in South Africa

The voluntary use of a sustainable label indicates that the manufacturer has been audited, to ensure principles are applied that contribute towards environmental, social and economic

sustainability (Rainforest Alliance, 2020). South Africa has a variety of sustainable labels such as Coffee and Farmer Equity Practices (CAFÉ Practices), Certified Wildlife Friendly, Dolphin Friendly, Eco Cert, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), UTZ and Fairtrade (Ecolabel Index, 2020). In this study UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable label certifications will be discussed in more detail and researched as both of these certifications are found on South African food items. The other sustainable labels mentioned above are also particular to South Africa although not necessarily found on food products in chain grocery stores where most South African consumers purchase food products. These two certifications UTZ and Fair trade will each be discussed next.

2.5.3.1 UTZ Certification

UTZ, as referred to in the South African product depicted in Figure 2.12, is a branch of the Rainforest Alliance since 2017, which is an international NGO (Rainforest Alliance, 2020). UTZ is a sustainable label given to tea, coffee, hazelnuts and cocoa that have been sustainably sourced from cultivation to processing of the products (Priyanath et al. 2018).

Figure 2.12: UTZ certified label

Having UTZ certification on food labelling indicates that not only has the product been sourced responsibly but that the farm runs sustainably by implementing the Global Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards (Pierrot et al. 2010; UTZ Certified, 2020). This has been implemented by the Ysterfontein rooibos farmers within South Africa near Clanwilliam, who form part of Rooibos Limited who currently have a 95% market share in South Africa and a 60% market share globally (Ysterfontein, 2021). Furthermore, Nomu, a South African food and lifestyle brand (as indicated in Figure 2.13) provides the consumer with hot chocolate and baking kits with products that are UTZ certified. However, the Nomu brand does not represent cocoa producers, but sources UTZ certified cocoa products from producers to produce Nomu products (UTZ-Rainforest Alliance, 2021).

Figure 2.13: Nomu food and lifestyle brand

For manufacturers to become UTZ certified they are required to meet the internationally recognized environmental, social and economic orientated criteria specific to UTZ (Wahyudi et al. 2020). The main intent of the UTZ criterion is to build a world in which sustainable agriculture is the standard practice (Ingram et al. 2018). This certification covers every step in the production process from the planting phase to harvesting of the food product (UTZ Certified, 2020). This certification is considered very effective since it comes with a tracking and tracing programme which enables not only the retailers but also the actual customer to track their purchased food product from cultivation to manufacturing which guarantees that the product has been sustainably sourced (Wahyudi et al. 2020). UTZ also includes objectives such as creating better business practices to ensure a better future for people as well as for the planet (Pierrot et al. 2010), through implementing sustainable agricultural practices (Ingram et al. 2018). To comply with UTZ certification the following guidelines need to be upheld by food product producers: better farming techniques, improved working conditions, improved care of nature and taking care of your current surroundings for generations to come (Ingram et al. 2018). The guidelines, mentioned above, contribute towards better and stable income, improved crops, better lives and natural resource protection (UTZ Certified, 2020; Ingram et al. 2018).

To illustrate the effect implementation of the UTZ guideline has on food product production, Priyanath et al. (2018) found that UTZ certified tea plantations in Sri Lanka demonstrated better working conditions, environmental sustainability and better managed agricultural practices. Schaad and Fromm (2018) also found that UTZ is resulting in a higher standard of cultivated cocoa beans in Indonesia which results in more knowledge and a better economical position for the farmers. This might be an indication that UTZ certification is not only helping the environment but also helping farmers to be more financially sustainable. A study by Stausebach (2016) focussed on consumer understanding of eco-labelled food products in South Africa, which included the UTZ label. Stausebach (2016) concluded that sustainable

labels have a positive influence on South African consumers but need to be communicated more effectively to assist in elevating the consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling.

Through the implementation of voluntary sustainable labels consumers will be able to differentiate between products and services according to their environmental and social traits (Blackman and Rivera, 2010). These certifications can therefore by used by consumers to (i) receive useful sustainable information; (ii) trust the product more; (iii) receive education regarding different sustainable labels and the meanings behind them (Sogari, Mora and Menozzi, 2016). Voluntary sustainable labels can possibly assist within developing countries where food labelling legislation is not yet fully developed or not effectively enforced. However, it is not sure how sustainable labelled food products influence South African consumers' product purchase intentions or if sustainable food labelling does influence the consumer in any way.

2.5.3.2 Fairtrade Certification

Fairtrade certification, indicated on a South African wine as illustrated in Figure 2.14 is a certification scheme that was developed to not only help the farmers but also help the consumer during the decision to purchase by highlighting products that are not exploiting farmers (Fairtrade International, 2020). Fairtrade was an initiative started in the 1960's by communities as well as individuals who desired to purchase their products ethically from developing countries by sharing information, paying fair prices, and putting trade agreements in place with the producers of the food products (Brand South Africa, 2015). Many years later the Fairtrade foundation was established in 1992 by Christian Aid, Oxfam, the World Development Movement, Traidcraft, as well as the National Federation of Women's Institutes, due to continued demands regarding fairness within the community of micro coffee farmers in Mexico (Fairtrade International, 2021). The Fairtrade certification scheme consists of four main constructs which are: agrochemical regulations, training of employees, general agricultural training and providing a higher buying price for Fairtrade certified products (Fairtrade International, 2021). Fairtrade labelled products consist of mostly agricultural products, including cocoa, wine, coffee, bananas and others (Brand South Africa, 2015) which are found in South Africa.

Fairtrade production practises are gaining momentum in the food industry in anticipation of growing environmental concerned consumers (Konuk, 2019). Since consumers who value the environment tend to be more approachable towards sustainable marketing (do Paco et al. 2019), it is anticipated that they would thus be more likely to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Kanopka et al. (2019) found that 59% of European consumers found the Fairtrade logo helpful because of the ethical claim associated with the logo. Bartels et al.

(2020) found that the presence of Fairtrade certification was a worthwhile effort for manufacturers since Dutch consumers used the certification to identify environmental friendliness and possible health concerns (Liu et al. 2019). Consumers in Portugal were also found to use the Fairtrade certification to interpret the price and quality of products (Silva, 2020). According to Linton (2012) the Fairtrade sustainable labels found on South African food products translate to food products produced to encourage social transformation. This conforms with Fairtrade certification's main objective to concentrate on social and economic standards, however Fairtrade labelling also stands for environmental objectives and regulations, such as the banning of toxic pesticides and the training of farmers in the use of pesticides (Sellare et al. 2020.) Farmers face different risks, one being unstable market prices, in other words the farmer's income is not consistent but fluctuates due to uncontrolled supply changes (Assouto, Houensou, and Semedo, 2020). However, the Fairtrade organisation created a safety net through ensuring minimum prices on all products, providing sustainable income for the farmers (Fairtrade International, 2020). This organization and the key services proposed, are a positive step to further strengthen the outcome of sustainable labelling certifications (Sellare et al. 2020).

Figure 2.14: Fairvalley wine manufacturer using the Fairtrade logo.

2.6 Conclusion

In Chapter 2 the context of food labelling as a tool through which product information is communicated to the consumer, was discussed. In this regard sustainable food labelling was presented as another mechanism through which responsible consumption and production can be advocated. Through the use of non-mandatory UTZ and Fairtrade certification on food products, consumers are able to make an informed decision about the product they are consuming and are thus influenced in their intent to purchase sustainable food products. In

order to understand the influence that sustainable labelled food products have on the intent to purchase sustainable food products, the TPB will be applied to study this phenomenon which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3 – THEORETICAL APPROACH

In this chapter insight is provided in terms of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB framework including all three constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and PBC) is discussed to explore the consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products, specifically UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labelled food products. Thereafter, the conceptual framework for this study is presented.

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, an overview of food labelling in general and sustainable labelling was presented. The significance of FOPL and BOPL was discussed, including mandatory packaging components, legislation and the usefulness of sustainable labels. Specific attention was also given to discussing UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels as non-mandatory symbols found on food packaging to assist the consumer during the decision-making process.

The intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products specifically labelled with Fairtrade and UTZ labelling have not been researched thoroughly, in South Africa. The consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products is an important topic, since many factors in general affect the consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products which can be explored through attitude, subjective norms and PBC components of the TPB (Ajzen, 2002). Therefore, to understand the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products, more specifically UTZ and Fairtrade, the TPB as proposed by Ajzen, (1991) will be applied in this research and discussed in the next section to follow.

3.2 Background to the TPB

The TPB, as depicted in the diagramme in Figure 3.1, is an extension of the TRA, presented in Figure 3.2 (Ajzen, 1991). The TRA was developed in 1967 by Fishbein and was reviewed in the 1980's by Ajzen to create the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). The TRA is associated with voluntary behaviour and suggests that a person's behaviour is motivated by an individual's attitude toward the behaviour as well as the influence of subjective norm on the behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2004). According to Ajzen, (2002) the TRA can essentially be predicted from intention while addressing the analysis of human behaviour under voluntary control. Both the TRA as well as the TPB assume that behaviour is the effect of a mindful choice to act in a certain way (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2004). However, the biggest difference between the two theories, is that the TRA did not include the PBC component, which is used in the TPB to explain situations that were not volitional, as depicted below in Figure 3.1 (Ajzen, 1991).

Volitional refers to a person who requires support, resources, and opportunity to execute a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB is intended to describe and predict intentions, to then execute or not execute a behaviour (Beck and Ajzen, 1991). Intention was defined by Ajzen (1985) as the effort of conveying a behaviour instead of the actions dealing with the actual performance of behaviour. For example, whether a consumer has the intention to purchase a sustainable labelled food product or not. This study will use the TPB with all three components namely attitude towards behaviour, subjective norms and PBC to provide a comprehensive theoretical approach to determine the intention (Ajzen, 1991) to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

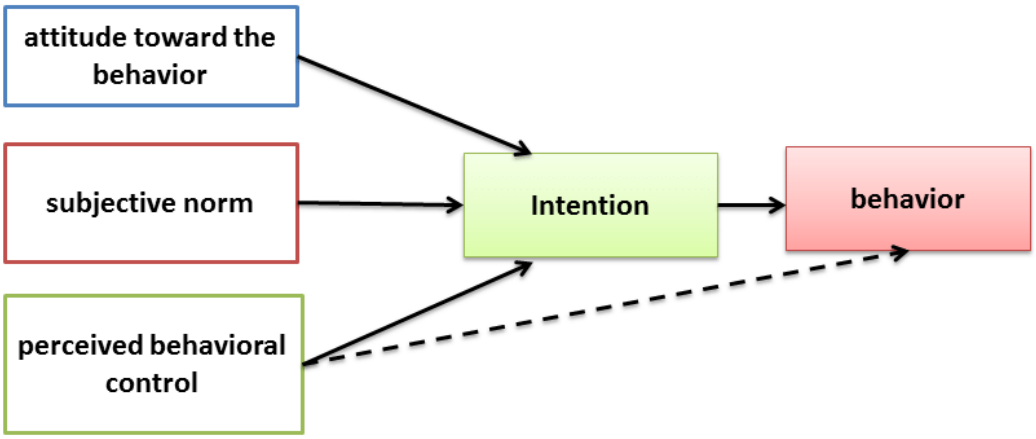

Figure 3.1: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, I. 1991, p. 182)

The TPB consists of three influencing components as seen in Figure 3.1: which are, the *attitude toward the behaviour*, *subjective norm*, and *PBC*. In combination these three components lead to intention as seen in Figure 3.1. However, PBC not only affects the behaviour indirectly through intention but also directly affects behaviour. The reasons being that Ajzen (1991) states that while ''holding intention constant, the effort expended to bring a course of behaviour to a successful conclusion is likely to increase with PBC''. Suggesting that if two individuals' intentions are equally matched, the individual who is assured in mastering the activity, is more likely to attain it than the individual doubtful of his or her capability. A brief discussion of each of the components of TPB will be presented next.

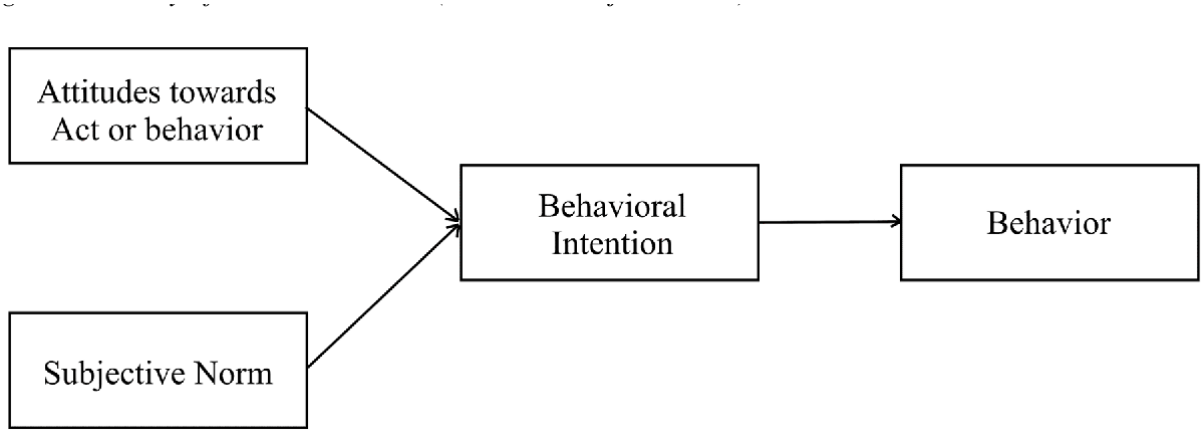

Figure 3 2: Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein, 1975, p.15)

3.3 Theoretical components of the TPB

The consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products are explored using the TPB. More specifically the following theoretical constructs are explored in the next section namely: attitude, subjective norms, PBC, the role of beliefs in the TPB, intention as well as behaviour towards the purchasing of sustainable labelled food products.

3.3.1 Attitude toward the behaviour

Attitude, as seen in Figure 3.3, is the first construct within the TPB- framework which describes the degree to which an individual has a fault-finding or constructive assessment of a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) attitude is also defined as the evaluation of a notion, purpose, or behaviour. Alternatively, attitudes influence the way in which consumers evaluate and respond to things. Furthermore, Fishbein and Ajzen, (1980) mention that attitude is cultivated by opinions individuals have regarding the specific object. Therefore, the individual's attitude is dependent on the perceived outcome of the specific behaviour (Nyremo & Widerberg, 2020). This suggests that people tend to favour behaviours which are believed to create favourable consequences over behaviours which they believe will have unfavourable consequences. For example, a consumer might not like the appearance of a specific food product but hearing that the brand is endorsing Fairtrade or UTZ might lead to a favourable behaviour which in return would lead to a favourable consequence i.e., a positive attitude towards the product. Paul et al. (2016) found that attitude has a positive impact on intention, whereas Sniehotta et al. (2014) mention that intention is fully facilitated by the effect of attitude. This suggests that if the consumer has a positive attitude towards a food product showcasing Fairtrade or UTZ labelling it could have a positive effect on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled product labelled with Fairtrade or UTZ.

3.3.2 Subjective norm

The second construct in the TPB framework is subjective norms, as indicated in Figure 3.3. Subjective norm is described by Ajzen, (1991) as the alleged social stress not to execute or to execute a specific behaviour. Subjective norm can also be described as the consumer's alleged feeling towards social pressure to do or not do something in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Paul et al. 2016). Subjective norms are thus dependent on the extent to which an individual cares about the approval of other individuals (Ajzen, 1991). Family, friends, colleagues and significant others can be considered important influencers of the consumer when it comes to the intended behaviour (Ajzen 1985). The importance of subjective norms in relation to environmental behaviour has been established by Yadav and Pathak, (2017) who found a positive effect between subjective norms and environmental behaviour, which was also recently confirmed by Niemiec et al. (2020). This suggests that subjective norms established through significant others may have a positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products such as UTZ or Fairtrade labelled food products. As a result, advisory groups such as friends, family and work peers are considered a prominent influence on the consumers' subjective norms, consequently it is essential for marketers to target these groups within the marketing campaigns (Shahtahmasbi & Bagheri Rooch, 2019).

3.3.3 Perceived Behavioural Control

The third construct of the TPB framework, as indicated in Figure 3.3, is the PBC over a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen, (2002) claimed that PBC consists of two associating variables namely, perceived self-efficacy (PE), described as an individual's belief of their own ability and perceived controllability (PC). It is also described as an individual belief that their behaviour is volitional. Together PE and PC create the construct known as PBC that is used within the TPB to predict behaviour as well as indirectly predict behaviour through intentions (Ajzen, 2006). PBC is described by Ajzen, (1991) as the effortlessness with or difficulty in which individuals must perform a specific behaviour. In other terms, Scholtz and Mloza-Banda (2019) refer to PBC as the amount of control which an individual has over their behaviour as well as the certainty in performing the behaviour. The PBC was added to the TPB by Ajzen (1991) to account for behaviour and intentions that are not completely volitional and thus out of volitional control (Ajzen, 2002). However, Paul et al. (2016) found that PBC meaningfully predicts the purchase intention of sustainable products. For example, even though a consumer has a positive attitude towards a sustainable food product, the consumer also believes that it is appropriate to purchase sustainable food products and has plans to purchase the sustainable food product, purchase behaviour may not be likely if the product contains an allergen that the

consumer is allergic to. In this example, the control is removed from the consumer, resulting in unlikely action although the behavioural intention was favourable. This suggests that if the consumers' PBC is low, regardless of a positive attitude and favourable subjective norm towards UTZ and Fairtrade labelled food products, their intention to go into action will remain low.

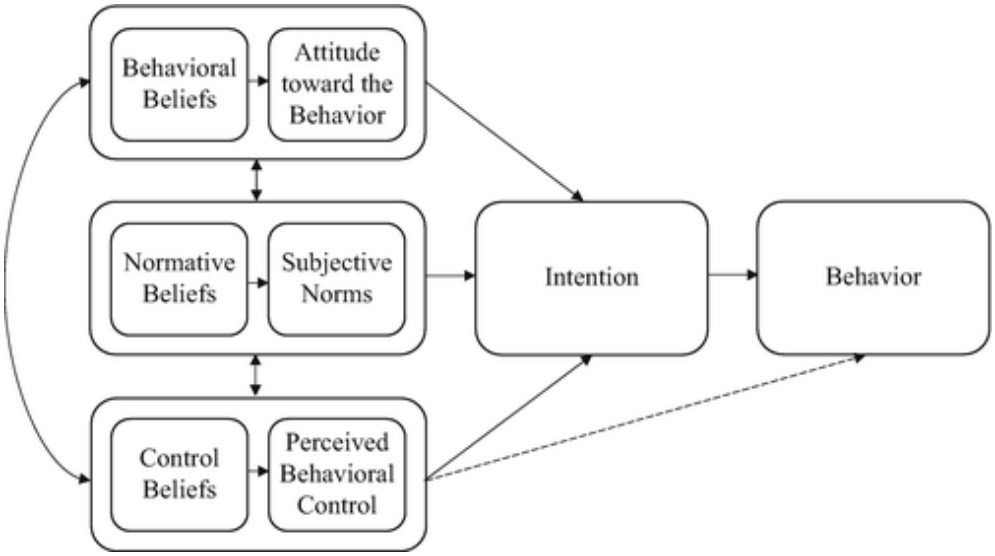

Figure 3.3: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, I. 2006, p.1)

3.3.4 The role of beliefs in TPB

The TPB presumes that beliefs are the predecessors of the three components i.e., attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms and PBC. The three beliefs, as indicated in Figure 3.3, are thought to drive human engagement through behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). The **behavioural belief,** as seen in Figure 3.3 above, can be described as the person's belief regarding the outcomes of a specific behaviour, resulting in the formation of the attitude toward the specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, a person's personal experiences, available information and the conclusion thereof that they can recall forming a favourable or unfavourable attitude. The main function of behavioural beliefs is to connect the behaviour of interest to the probable outcome (Ajzen, 2006). The **normative belief,** see Figure 3.3, can be termed as the person's perception of how the specific behaviour will be assessed by friends, family or colleagues (Ajzen, 1991). For example, a person's belief of what friends and family will think of their intention to purchase an UTZ labelled food product. The main function of a normative belief is to create a subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991). The **control belief,** Figure 3.3, suggests a person's comprehension of control over the specific behaviour, which then is connected to the PBC (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, a person's beliefs justified through reasons they give, that may enable or obstruct the specific behaviour.

Within Ajzen's framework, see Figure 3.3, behavioural beliefs influence attitude, normative beliefs influence subjective norms, and control beliefs influence PBC (Ajzen, 1991). This explains that when an individual has (i) a favourable attitude toward the behaviour (ii) the attitude is positioned with the necessary norms and (iii) the individual observes a high level of PBC, a possible strong intention to perform the behaviour is possible. This study will focus on the influence that the components namely (i) attitude, (ii) PBC, and (iii) subjective norms have on intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Each of these components will be discussed in the section that follows.

3.3.5 Intention

Ajzen, (1991) continues by proposing that intention is the core construct within the TPB, indicated in Figure 3.3. Intention is seen as the immediate predecessor of behaviour, but also influenced by attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms and PBC (Ajzen, 2006). According to Ajzen, (1991), intentions are described as indications of how eager people are to perform a certain behaviour such as purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Ajzen, (1991) also adds that when people's intentions become stronger to perform a behaviour, the probability of physically going through with the decision also increases. Ajzen, (1991), continues by stating that behavioural intention can influence behaviour only if the behaviour can be communicated through variable control, i.e., whether the individual can choose to purchase a sustainable labelled product or not. Intention is believed to recognize the motivational factors influencing behaviour; indicating the person's willingness to carry out the behaviour; the number of resources dedicated to the behaviour; and how hard the individual is willing to work to participate in the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, the stronger the intention towards the behaviour is, the more likely the individual is to act upon the behaviour, under volitional control. It is therefore proposed that the intent to purchase sustainable labelled food products are influenced by the attitude a consumer has towards these products, the influence of significant others and the level of control a consumer has to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

3.3.6 Behaviour

The final element of behaviour included in the TPB is proposed to be the consumer's actual behaviour which in the context of this study would be the action of acquiring a sustainable labelled food product. The TPB proposes that, a positive attitude and subjective norm (influence of others) towards a behaviour combined with a high degree of PBC, may result in a higher chance of the person being able to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). For example, in this study a favourable attitude towards sustainable food products together with the

favourable acceptance among friends and family of such food products, combined with the ability to obtain such products, may result in the intention to purchase a sustainable labelled food product. It is however not certain how well the proposition on which the TPB is founded will come to the forefront when exploring consumers' intention to purchase sustainable label food products. It is therefore noted that if the consumer has a positive attitude, positive support from significant others such as friends, family and colleagues, as well as a high PBC, the intent to engage in the purchase of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labelled food products may be more favourable. There are several studies implementing the TPB, and a few recent studies are discussed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Recent studies implementing the TPB framework.

Article	Date published	Type of research	Descriptions and findings
Developing an extended Theory of Planned Behaviour model to predict consumers' intention to visit green hotels.	2014	Quantitative research	This study aimed to extend the TPB by including environmental concern and perceived moral obligation to predict consumers' intention of visiting sustainable hotels. Chen and Tung (2014) found that the TPB has good explanatory attributes relating to consumers' intention to purchase sustainable hotel accommodation. Suggestions to increase the demand of sustainable hotels were also noted in the study.
Traffic light labelling of meals to promote sustainable consumption and healthy eating.	2019	Quantitative research	The TPB was also used by Osman and Thornton (2019) to examine the effect of behavioural involvements on sustainable consumption and healthy eating habits. The results showed that the presence of traffic light labels led to lower carbon emission. Positive behavioural change was also noted to not only make healthier choices but also to make more sustainable meal choices.

Social and environmental sustainability model on consumers' altruism, green purchase intention, green brand loyalty and evangelism.	2020	Quantitative research	The study aimed to construct a model which included environmental and social sustainability awareness through measuring the buying intention, altruism, and loyalty through applying the TPB. Panda et al. (2020) found that sustainability awareness had a positive influence on consumer altruism which not only enhanced the consumers' purchase intention, but also green brand loyalty and green brand evangelism.

From the above-mentioned studies in Table 3.1, it is evident that the TPB framework has been successfully used in establishing the consumer's intent to purchase in terms of: sustainable hotel options, sustainable meal options and green products. The TPB is mostly used within quantitative studies (Renzi & Klobas, 2008). From the studies stated above, it is evident that the TPB framework may also be appropriate in determining consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC to determine their intent to purchase sustainable labelled food products within this study.

The TPB has been widely examined and is successful in establishing the influence of its components, i.e., attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm and PBC in several disciplines including health related behaviours, environmental behavioural intentions and voting behaviour (Fielding et al. 2008; McEachan et al. 2011; Tung et al. 2012), as well as explaining behaviour, over which people have control (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the TPB is an appropriate theory to apply to the study of the influence sustainable labelling has on consumer purchasing intention, seeing that it has been successfully used to examine intention the TPB is successful in establishing the influence between intention in studies concerning the environment or sustainability issues such as the current study intends to establish.

This section discussed the components of the TPB from a theoretical point of view. The next section will present the conceptual framework for this study in which it is proposed how the influence of the components of the TPB may affect consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products is depicted.

3.4 Conceptual framework

Adom et al. (2016), describe a conceptual framework as a description of how the research problem will be uncovered. The conceptual framework for this study, represented in Figure 3.4, is based on the TPB, as explained in Section 3.1 – 3.2 and important concepts related to this study. In this study the TPB, which is proposed as a framework for explaining intention that leads to actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is used to explore the intention of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. The three original components (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) specific to TPB is applied in the conceptual framework as indicated in Figure 3.4. Accordingly, it is proposed that the components of the TPB can be used in this research to examine how and in which way attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control influence the consumer's purchase intention when a consumer is confronted with sustainable labelled food products. It is further proposed that environmental sustainability (indicated to the far left of Figure 3.4) may influence the three components (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control), thus influencing a consumer's intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products although the importance is not yet certain within the South African context. Subsequently environmental sustainability forms a major part of the context in which the study is designed and considered as an influential factor in the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The importance of including environmental sustainability within the context of this study and conceptual framework is because global warming, also known as climate change, has been a fundamental subject in recent years. These environmental problems are the result of unsustainable resource usage (Davidovic et al. 2020). As such, environmental concern which relates to environmental sustainability, indicated in figure 3.4, has been known to influence attitude, subjective norms and PBC (Tang et al. 2018; Maichum et al. 2017). To this effect Hoang et al. (2020) established an interactive outcome between environmental concern and purchasing intention of organic food in Vietnamese consumers. In other words, consumers with a more favourable environmental concern might limit their impacts on the environment through possibly choosing to purchase sustainable labelled food products

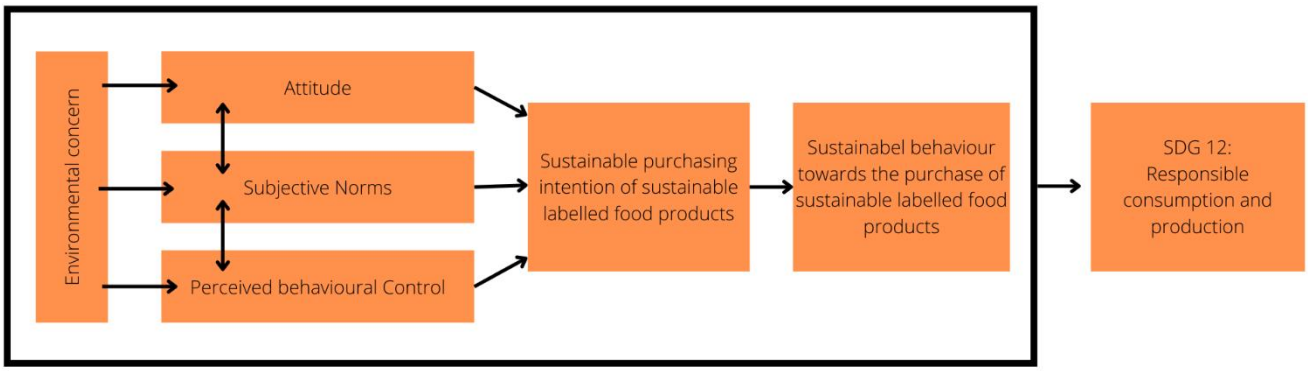

Figure 3.4: Schematic presentation of the conceptual framework adapted from the TPB (Ajzen, I. 1991, p. 182).

The consumer is a regular person who engages in actions which relate to the purchasing of products (Ajzen, 2018). Therefore, we can assume that during this action certain components may influence the consumer's intention to purchase a sustainable labelled food product. The first construct influencing the consumer's intention to purchase a sustainable labelled food product, is **attitude**, indicated in Figure 3.4. The more favourable a consumer's attitude is towards sustainability the more likely their behaviour would be positive (Ceylan, 2019). In other words, the consumer would be more inclined to purchase a product that includes a sustainable label if they have a positive attitude towards sustainability. To this effect Yadav and Pathak, (2016) found that environmental concern considerably influenced the attitude of the Indian consumer towards sustainable products

The second construct influencing sustainable purchase intention within Figure 3.4, is **subjective norms**. Subjective norms suggest that the consumers are not only influenced by their own attitude but also influenced by the people around them. This was supported by Hassan et al. (2018) who found that students at the university of Utara Malaysia in Malaysia were influenced by friends, lecturers, parents as well as societies with actionable intent regarding the purchasing of sustainably labelled food products. This suggests that friends and family may influence the intention to purchase sustainable certified food products.

The third and last construct influencing sustainable purchase intention within Figure 3.4, is **PBC**. PBC suggests that there might be a volatile influence on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Hassan et al. (2018) stated that PBC is a noteworthy determinant of sustainable behaviour, since students in Malaysia indicated that they were in complete control of whether they purchase products that are sustainably certified or not.

It is thus proposed that **sustainable purchase intention** is influenced by all three above-mentioned components, that are indicated in Figure 3.4, namely attitude, subjective norms and PBC. Therefore, purchasing intention will be examined as an interconnected chain which is not only stimulated by attitude, PBC, and subjective norms, but also follows Wang et al's. (2020) suggestion that environmental concern may also influence these elements of TPB. Song et al. (2019) also indicated that environmental concern is a significant indicator when looking at sustainable purchasing intention, implying that when the consumer is concerned with the environmental issues, they are more likely to purchase sustainable certified products.

It is further proposed that a consumer's intent to purchase sustainable labelled food products and the actual behaviour of purchasing such products would impact on the advancement of SDG-12 which relates to sustainable and responsible production and consumption.

Therefore, the conceptual framework for this study proposes firstly that consumers' environmental concern is an influencer of the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. In the framework it is also proposed that this environmental concern may influence consumers' attitude towards the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Environmental concern may also influence subjective norms as significant others may, through their negative or positive environmental concern, influence the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Lastly the PBC control component is also proposed to be influenced by an environmental concern of the consumer that may further influence the intent to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The influence of all these components may determine the consumers' behaviour and action towards purchasing sustainable labelled food products. As a result, should a favourable intent towards the purchase of sustainable labelled food products exist, it would assist in advancing SDG 12.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 3 presented the TPB through which it is proposed that consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products can be explored. Through this model it is suggested that attitude, subjective norms and PBC may influence the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The proposed conceptual framework of this study further suggests that environmental concern may influence the components of the TPB which may have an effect on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. As a result, the behaviour towards sustainable labelled food products may negatively or positively influence the advancement of SDG 12 in Chapter 4 to follow. The research methodology used to explore consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products will be discussed, focusing on the qualitative research paradigm, and thereafter explaining the methods that were used to execute the research.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodology that was used to address the research objectives of this study is presented.

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 the theoretical background to this study was presented. The conceptual framework that underpins this study was introduced. The conceptual framework was developed to support a theoretical approach to the study, that included the TPB, as well as the key constructs the research explored. These constructs include the influence that attitude, subjective norms and PBC have on the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. More specifically, the intention to purchase food products that feature the UTZ and Fairtrade certification. The purpose of the study is to explore the influence of sustainable labelling on consumers' intention to purchase food products. Chapter 4 will describe the research methodology that was followed to achieve the purpose of the study through an exploration of the objectives set out in this study. Methodology can be defined as the theoretical path in which research is performed (Jonker and Pennink, 2010), which creates a foundation for understanding the methods applied (Kumar, 2019) to explore the objectives of the study.

In Chapter 4 the importance of the aim and objectives of the study is restated to ensure that the qualitative methodology is presented to best address the objectives of this study. The interpretivist paradigm used to frame the research will be presented after which the phenomenology and exploratory research designs as well as the sampling strategies applied in this study will be discussed. The data gathering method used in this study, as well as the data analysis procedure used to analyse the data, will also be presented. Trustworthiness in relation to the data collected for this study will be addressed in terms of accuracy and consistency, after which the ethical approval received for this study will be presented. The bracketing principles applied by the researcher will also be discussed. The following section will present the aim and objectives of the study.

4.2 Research aim and objectives.

The aim of this study is to determine the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchasing intention of food products. To understand this, influence of the following objectives has been formulated.

Objective 1: Determine consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling by:

1.1 Exploring the meaning of the term 'sustainable food labelling;
1.2 Exploring the consumers' interpretation and use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels;
1.3 Establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision.

Objective 2: Examine the influence of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels on the intention to purchase food products.

Objective 3: Apply the three components of the TPB to determine:

3.1 Consumers' attitude towards sustainable labelling and its influence on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products;
3.2 The influence of subjective norms on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products;
3.3 The role PBC plays in the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

4.3 Interpretivism and the qualitative methodical approach

Ryan (2018) describes interpretivism as subjectively understanding peoples' experiences. Interpretivism adopts a relativist ontology, where a particular phenomenon can have various interpretations rather than one understanding (Pham, 2018). This study adopted an interpretive paradigm since it allowed the researcher to consider the participants' various experiences with sustainable food labels to explore what influences the consumers' purchasing intention. Therefore, the paradigm allowed the researcher to fully understand the participants' subjective experiences with sustainable food labels, particularly UTZ and Fairtrade. The paradigm also allows probing during qualitative interviews to ensure that the researcher fully grasps the participants' thoughts and feelings (Pham, 2018). The interpretivist paradigm will be approached through a qualitative methodical approach, since interpretivism is frequently combined with qualitative research (Zahle, 2021).

A qualitative methodical approach was used for this study. Qualitative methodology can be defined as the manner in which the world experiences and interprets various experiences (Hignett and McDermott, 2015). Furthermore, Mohajan (2018) states that qualitative research can be described as a type of social action which focuses on the way individuals interpret their experiences, in other words the purpose of qualitative research is to methodically define and understand experiences from an individual's point of view or in the form of conversation, words, documents or images (Hansen, 2020). Qualitative research focusses on a problem which is compiled of information gathered from experiences, opinions and reasoning of

participants, rather than figures or data (Flick, 2014). Therefore, this study used the participants' experiences with sustainable food labelling such as UTZ and Fairtrade to understand what influence it has on the consumers' purchasing intention. In other words, the qualitative methodical approach offers insight into reasons of intricate behaviours and motivations which are appropriate in areas of limited research (Walsh et al. 2015).

The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it consists of broad, open-ended questions to obtain and comprehend participants' experiences within a certain phenomenon (Jonker and Pennink, 2010). Qualitative research is also exploratory, and describes the who, what, where and why of a specific phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018). Through this approach in-depth information on the specific topic being researched is gathered (Hennink et al. 2020). Therefore, qualitative research is most suitable to determine the consumers' experience with sustainable labelled food products, such as UTZ and Fairtrade because, as presented in the problem statement in Chapter 1, very little research has been conducted in this field.

Rahman, (2017) identifies different benefits associated with qualitative research which are: (a) comprehensive and complete narratives of participants' opinions, experiences, emotions, and thoughts; (b) an understanding of the human experience in depth, which Tracy, (2019) points out may otherwise be overlooked in structured surveys; (c) data that are subjective and comprehensive because the researcher interacts directly with the participants and (d) a flexible design that can be adjusted as needed. In other words, the participants' idea about sustainable food labelling can be explored and understood in detail and in depth.

Therefore, qualitative research was selected as the most fitting approach for this specific study. The benefits of qualitative research assisted the researcher with accomplishing the objectives set out in this study. By gathering data in terms of consumers' current opinions, thoughts and interpretations of sustainable labels namely, UTZ and Fairtrade through an individual in-depth interview conducted by the researcher. The qualitative research approach permitted the researcher to explore whether the consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC could suggest intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

4.4 Research Design

A research design is referred to by Creswell et al. (2016) as the blueprint of the research that incorporates different components in a logical manner. This blueprint contains the general plan to link the research problems with the empirical research (Boru, 2018). This study used phenomenology and an exploratory design to qualitatively explore the influence attitude,

subjective norms and PBC have on the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

4.4.1 Phenomenology research design

A phenomenological research design is described by Bliss (2016) as an elaborate exploration of what people's experiences mean to them. The design is based on several assumptions, Grossoehme (2014) states the assumptions as ''meaning and knowing are social constructions, always incomplete and developing, the investigator is a part of the experience being studied and the investigator's values play a role in the investigation, bias is inherent in all research and should be articulated at the beginning''. Furthermore, Hignett and McDermott (2013) add that a phenomenological research design aims to gain an understanding of a phenomenon through understanding how situations are experienced by human beings. Evidence has been presented of a lack of studies providing insight regarding the South African consumers' intention to purchase food products containing sustainable food labelling. By using the phenomenology research design the researcher is consequently learning about the participants' experiences (Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio, 2019) with UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable food labels which were useful designs to use in this study. Therefore, the researcher is attempting to broaden the knowledge regarding the phenomenon as well as creating awareness towards what influences the South African consumer to purchase sustainable labelled food products to support SDG-12. This design is appropriate, since little insight is available in South Africa regarding the lived experiences of participants in terms of how sustainable food labelling influence their purchasing intention. This reiterates the need to understand what the influences of sustainable food labelling means to the participants and how this would influence SDG-12 going forward. Thus, this study aimed to gain insight into the phenomenon of the influence of sustainable food labels on the consumers' purchasing intention of food products. By using the phenomenological design, it may be possible to broaden the knowledge surrounding the influence of sustainable food labels on the consumers' purchasing intention, particularly to UTZ and Fairtrade, to assist marketers and food manufacturers in terms of creating awareness and understanding towards the benefits of sustainable labels to reach SDG-12.

4.4.2 Exploratory research design

Exploratory research aims to identify key issues to gain a wider understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell et al. 2016) by studying the problem, that has not been defined yet (Research Methodology, 2019). As has been indicated a lack of studies exist on consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products, especially in South Africa. The lack of studies reiterates the need for an exploratory study in terms of depth and application, not

only a superficial explanation. This not only confirms the need to explore (i) the influence of the proposed constructs would have on the consumers' intention to purchase since little is known regarding this topic in South Africa, but also (ii) to explore the influence they might have on SDG-12. This design is appropriate since little research is available regarding the influence of sustainable labelling on the purchasing intention of South African consumers, which reiterates the need to discover and explore how the components within the TPB would influence their intent to purchase the items and how this would influence the SDG 12. The intention of exploratory research is not to provide a conclusion to the research question but merely exploring the research topic in depth (Boru, 2018), although it may only be on certain aspects as stated in the objectives of the study.

By applying an exploratory design, it allowed the researchers to obtain a better understanding of the influence attitude, subjective norms and PBC have on the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. This exploration would allow the researcher to understand what would, and what would not influence their intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The data collected from this study might also assist further research to better understand how sustainable labels should be marketed and explained to consumers to assist in the intention to purchase such food products.

4.5 Context of study

South Africa, as well as the rest of the world, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020 (Mazumder et al. 2021). This study was conducted midst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. To adhere to the social distancing requirements and the research requirement stipulated by Unisa, the study utilized Facebook as a tool in recruiting potential participants for this study, thereby minimizing physical interaction during participant recruitment, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through utilizing Facebook as a recruitment tool, the researcher and the possible participants were not at risk of contracting COVID-19 since no physical contact was initiated. Therefor no physical interaction of any kind was undertaken during data collection for this study.

4.6 Study location

Recruitment of participants for this study was conducted within the borders of, South Africa. The South African population is estimated at 59.62 million (Statistics South Africa, 2020) providing opportunity for many South African citizens interested in participating in the research to be recruited via Facebook. Online recruitment via a Facebook invitation was used to obtain eligible participants for this study. Participation was determined by specific inclusion criteria which were set, as stipulated in section 4.7.1. Participants were also asked to willingly

nominate other possible participants, matching the inclusion criteria that remained within the borders of South Africa, to participate in the study. This snowball sampling technique will be discussed in the next section.

4.7 Sample Strategy

Sampling is a technique used to systematically select a smaller number of people from a specific population to provide the researcher with data required, in line with the objectives of the specific study (Sharma, 2017). The population from which a study sample for this particular study was drawn was the general food consumer in charge of purchasing food products and who was familiar with sustainable food labelling residing within the broader context of South Africa. For this study, three specific non-probability sampling methods were implemented, namely purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling (Creswell et al. 2016) to include the study sample for this research.

4.7.1 Purposive sampling

The first and most important sampling strategy used in this study, was purposive sampling also known as judgemental or expert sampling (Lavrakas, 2008). This strategy was applied through means of a specific inclusion criterion, which allowed the researcher to choose participants with the purpose in mind to ensure in-depth information will be collected (Creswell et al. 2016). In this regard Etikan et al. (2016) define purposive sampling as a plan of action where a participant is chosen based on specific attributes. The specific attributes are defined as inclusion criteria which are described by Botma et al. (2010) as allowing participants who should be in the study to be included, thereby ensuring that these participants have the best attributes to provide the information the researcher is after. Purposeful sampling is used frequently within qualitative research due to the discovery and selection of plentiful and substantial data (Palinkas et al. 2015). Furthermore, through using purposive sampling a justifiable inference can be made based on evidence and reasoning from the research data to the wider population (Sharma, 2017) who hold the same characteristics as the study sample.

Grounded in the aim and objectives of this study the following inclusion criteria were set. (i) The participants must be older than 18 years to ensure that they are consenting adults within the study. It is also important that the (ii) participants are familiar with sustainable food labelling, in other words if the participants think that they know anything regarding the topic or have seen or heard of either UTZ or Fairtrade labelling. Furthermore, the participant also needs to be (iii) in charge of purchasing food products within retail stores such as Checkers, Woolworths and Pick & Pay. If participants do not comply with these inclusion criteria, they will not have the required knowledge and experience to answer the questions regarding

sustainable food labelling and its influence on the decision to purchase food products. They would also not have been exposed to enough food products to ensure they have seen sustainable labels. Therefore, in summary the following inclusion criteria were proposed:

1. The participants were required to be 18 years or older.
2. The participants were required to be in charge of purchasing food products.
3. Participants were required to be familiar with sustainable labelling, in terms of thinking they know anything about sustainable labelling or have seen or heard of either UTZ or Fairtrade labelling.

4.7.2 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is defined by Creswell et al. (2016) as the method of recruiting participants with the intent to obtain access to other participants through a referral by those who have participated in the study. Snowball sampling was included to ensure participants with sustainable label familiarity could be identified and reached through participants who already met the criteria and who had participated in the study. Therefore, this sampling technique was also most convenient, to reach hard to find participants and most importantly was best suited for a qualitative exploratory research design (Birks and Malhotra, 2006). Snowball sampling was also an effective sampling strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic since upon the consent of a participant, they were asked if they would consider asking a friend that would also meet the stipulated inclusion criteria to take part in the study. This was quite effective to recruit more participants for the online individual interview, since participants would be more comfortable if a friend should ask them to participate than a stranger. The inclusion criteria stipulated in section 4.7.1 was applied to recruit participants through means of snowball sampling.

4.7.3 Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling was the third sampling strategy that was used to recruit participants for this study. It can be defined as the process whereby participants are selected, as they are readily and easily available (Taherdoost, 2016). Etikan et al. (2016) add that convenience sampling also refers to appropriate individuals in terms of willingness, geographic immediacy, accessibility and availability to participate in the study at the time of recruitment. The researcher thus used participants who were available during the time of recruitment as well as those who were willing to participate in the study in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although convenience sampling was used, the specific inclusion criteria that were adopted in this study as stipulated in section 4.6, were also applied during convenience sampling. As the data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, convenience and snowball

sampling strategies became a necessary sampling strategy to employ in order to ensure enough participants could be reached for this study. The researcher asked the participants who were already part of the study to refer potential participants to the researcher's Facebook page, who would match the inclusion criteria and interested people to participate in the study.

4.7.4 Facebook as recruitment tool

Facebook was used by the researcher as a tool through which recruitment of participants for this study was facilitated. Facebook can be described as an online application that is used by consumers to share content as well as look at content posted by other users (Caers et al. 2013). In 2020, Facebook claimed to have over 22.89 million South African users (Tankovska, 2021), representing a sizeable segment of the South African population participating within social media and resulting in a more connected South Africa. Lijadi and Schalkwyk (2015) noted that the number of users on Facebook opened an opportunity for researchers to use the platform for conducting research online. As a result, the researcher chose to use Facebook for the recruitment of participants above any of the other online platforms due to the accessibility in terms of COVID-19 restrictions and popularity amongst South African users. Welch, (2020) agrees that recruitment via Facebook offers cost-effective and efficient contact to targeted participants, which would be achieved through purposeful sampling. Whitaker et al. (2017) also add that by comparing Facebook recruiting to traditional recruitment methods, the benefits also include diminutive recruitment periods, improved representation, as well as enhanced participant selection in terms of hard to grasp demographics.

However, it is important to note that Facebook recruitment also has disadvantages such as the inability to reach individuals without internet access (Whitaker et al. 2017) as well as participants who do not have Facebook (Pedersen and Kurz, 2016). This could possibly result in valuable participants to the study and valuable data from these participants being excluded.

To facilitate the Facebook recruitment, the researcher created a post on her personal Facebook profile requesting consumers who meet the inclusion criteria to participate willingly in this study. Information about the study was posted on the researcher's personal Facebook page where she asked Facebook friends to recommend the study to their friends who might meet the inclusion criteria of the study and possibly be interested to participate. Both male and female participants were recruited for this study in accordance with the inclusion criteria. While language was not set in the criteria, participants had to be conversant in English, to comprehend the Facebook post and discuss the topic with the researcher.

The Facebook post asked participants not to contact the researcher publicly on the post but to send a private Facebook message or send an e-mail on the e-mail address provided in the post. Within 2 weeks of posting the research on the researchers' personal Facebook page, 10

emails and over 30 private messages on Facebook messenger inquiring about the research were received. The researcher contacted each possible participant individually via email, while including the information below in the email:

1. The details of the research were explained.
2. The consent form was attached.
3. A demographics questionnaire was attached.
4. A Teams invitation was sent confirming the time and date of the online interview.
5. Requesting the potential participant to share this post with friends and family who might also comply with the inclusion criteria, to create a snowball sample of more potential participants for the study.

The researcher therefore used participants who were willing to take part in the study and available when recruitment commenced on Facebook. Subsequently, the participants within this study were also purposively selected through the inclusion criteria (Creswell et al. 2016) that were applied during the recruitment process. The inclusion criteria assisted the researcher to find participants who had knowledge or experience regarding sustainable food labelling, to ensure they were able to assist in addressing the research objectives and hold a discussion with the researcher on this topic (Etikan et al. 2016). Therefore, participants who complied with the inclusion criteria and were available and willing were able to partake in the study.

4.8 Data Collection

The formal study took place between June 2021 and July 2021. Qualitative studies use data collection and data-analysis as an ongoing process to ensure data saturation occurs (Creswell et al. 2016). The researcher interviewed participants during data collection while also informally analysing the data by identifying ideas that were continuously coming forward. The researcher suspected data saturation after the thirteenth interview, since no new ideas were forming. Nevertheless, the researcher continued with three more interviews to confirm that no new data were emerging. Therefore, data collection is defined as the procedure of gathering and assessing the material in an established and orderly manner, which facilitates the researcher with finding resolutions towards the research questions (Muhammad and Kabir, 2016) and objectives. The goal for all data gathering is to collect valuable evidence which translates into in-depth data exploration and enables the development of convincing and precise information (Kabir, 2016). Irrespective of the field of study meticulous collection of data is required to preserve research integrity (Muhammad and Kabir, 2016) which also pertains to qualitative research. The main data gathering technique that was used in this study was in-

depth individual interviews through which data were obtained on the exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products.

4.8.1 Data gathering instruments

Three data collection instruments were used in this study. In general data instruments refer to the methods used to collect the data (Creswell et al. 2016), which in the case of this study were **projective techniques**, **in-depth semi-structured individual online interviews,** and a **demographic questionnaire** completed by the participants.

4.8.1.1 Projective techniques

Projective techniques are defined as an approach to gain insight into a participant's unconscious feelings and beliefs through stimulation (Gambaro, 2018). These techniques are useful in qualitative research to assist the researcher in finding the participants' true thoughts and feelings (Boddy, 2005). This method proves to be a resourceful tool to translate the participants' true feelings and beliefs into useful information (Porr et al. 2011). This study included projective techniques to stimulate participants to gain a better understanding of their thoughts surrounding UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. The projective technique also ensured that the discussion focused on each individual sustainable label during the interview and ensured participants were not confusing UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels with any other sustainable labels. The researcher provided digital pictures of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable logos, see Figure 4.1 below, before questioning commenced. The digital pictures were shared through Microsoft TEAMS, before commencing with questions 1.2.1 – 1.2.5 relating to the UTZ sustainable label, as seen in Appendix E., while the Fairtrade sustainable label was shared digitally before commencing with questions 1.2.6 – 1.2.10, as seen in Appendix E.

Figure 4.1: UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable label logos used in projective techniques

The participants were also provided with the actual definitions of both UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels, as seen below in Table 4.1. The actual definitions were provided to the participants as a stimulus to determine whether the information would change their minds or alter their thoughts about UTZ or Fairtrade sustainable labels by considering the true

definitions of the sustainable labels. To further explore their thoughts and beliefs after they had gained a better understanding brought about through the definition of each of the sustainable food labels. The researcher provided the definitions of each sustainable label to ensure that the participants were considering questions 1.2.11 -1.2.12, as seen in Appendix E, to follow with the same definitions shared to all participants. The participants were therefore exposed to the authentic definitions of both UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels during the online interview via a presentation shared via Microsoft TEAMS. Therefore, these definitions acted as a stimulus to determine if any additional information would emerge.

Table 4.1: Authentic definitions provided as a stimulus of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels

UTZ definition	Fairtrade definition
UTZ stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers, their families and our planet (UTZ Certification, 2022).	Fairtrade certification is a product certification system where social, economic and environmental aspects of production are certified against Fairtrade Standards for Producers and Traders. The Fairtrade system monitors the buying and the selling of the product until it is consumer packaged and labelled (Fairtrade, 2022).

4.8.1.2 In-depth semi-structured individual online interviews

An **in-depth** interview is described by Hammarberg et al. (2016) as a method used to understand an experience from a personal view. The **semi-structured** interview is used within qualitative research and can be summarised as an interview that follows a pre-constructed interview guide with a central topic providing general structure to an exploratory interview, which allows for discovery during the interview (Magaldi and Berler, 2020). Therefore, a well-constructed semi-structured interview would include an interview guide with predetermined questions but allows flexibility during the interview to discover and explore the answers of the participant (Eppich et al. 2019). To this effect the interview guide included open-ended questions which were followed up with probing questions to ensure in-depth explanatory responses (Cresswell et al. 2016), as well as a guarantee that the participant had the opportunity to elaborate and provide more detail on their initial responses in their own words, expressing themselves in the best possible way. The researcher used the following probing techniques as identified by De Jonckheere and Vaughn (2019), during the interview; echoing, whereby the researcher repeated the participant's answer, to gain more detail and expansion. In this instance the researcher asked the participant to elaborate on their answer, which is

similar to probing. It was important to the research to remain alert during the interviews in order to identify new associations to the study or information that required more detailed explanations. This ensured that all avenues of the data were explored and probed to ensure saturation of the data (Creswell et al. 2016). The interview guide assisted the researcher in covering all the significant topics and questions related to the objectives of the study (Mathers et al. 2000). Another important feature of the in-depth semi-structured individual interviews were that they took place online. This is attributed to the fact that researchers have relied on face-to-face interviews for many years and have of late turned to **internet-based methods** (Saloniki et al. 2019) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Krouwel et al. (2019) confirmed that the differences between traditional and online interviews were modest and that online interviews could assist with cost and time saving as well as assisting in times where researchers are restricted, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the data gathering process South Africa was on alert level 3. The University of South Africa's Covid-19 guidelines: implications of alert levels for researchers and postgraduate students, see Appendix G, indicated that physical interaction between researchers and participants were not permitted in terms of face-to-face interviews. Therefore, online interviews were a more appropriate interview method to use since it limited physical engagement with participants therefore limiting possible exposure to COVID-19.

4.8.1.3 Demographic questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire, as seen in Appendix C, was the second data gathering instrument that was used in this study. Demographics are used by researchers to describe the sample of participants within the study (Connelly, 2013). Therefore, the researcher included a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire was sent to the participants via email in the form of a Microsoft Word document. The participants had to complete the form prior to the study and send it back to the researcher. The demographic questionnaire included age, gender, educational status and occupation which allowed the researcher to obtain a more detailed impression of the participants in the study. Race and ethnicity were not included in this study as it was not necessary for the researcher to make a distinction between racial or ethnic differences in the response to the questions, since racial and ethnic differences had no relevance to this study (Corbie-Smith et al. 2008).

4.8.2 Operationalisation of the study

Operationalisation can be described as a process used by researchers to show how the objectives will be achieved (Peters, 2020). In this instance the operationalisation of the study describes how each of the three objectives were explored. Operationalisation was considered in relation to the in-depth semi-structured interviews that were used as method to collect data

pertaining to each of the objectives of this study. Projective techniques were used to facilitate the discussions on UTZ and Fairtrade as sustainable by providing the participant with digital images of both sustainable label logos as well as the authentic definition of each and did not form part of any analysis procedure. The data analysis was used to analyse all interview data which will be discussed in section 4.5.7 and indicated in Table 4.2. The objectives are operationalised by means of specific questions that are presented in Table 4.2. These questions specifically explore the consumers' understanding of sustainable food labelling, namely UTZ and Fairtrade as influencers of food product purchase intention. As well as the components of TPB as influencers of sustainable labelled food product purchase intention. Data collected from the interviews are presented in chapter 5 to follow.

Table 4.2: In-depth individual interview questions addressing the objectives of this study

Method of data gathering	**Objectives, sub-objectives, and related questions**	**Method of analysis**
	Objective 1: To determine consumers' understanding of the term sustainable labelling by:	
	Sub-objective 1.1: Exploring the meaning of the term sustainable labelling	
Interview questions	1.1.1 When you hear the word sustainability what comes to mind (what are you thinking about, what are your thoughts)?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	1.1.2. Now when you hear the expression "sustainable food product", what comes to mind, what are you now thinking about?	
	Sub-objective 1.2: Exploring the consumers' interpretation and use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels	
Projective technique	View below the picture of a sustainable label and answer questions subsequently 	No analysis
Interview questions	1.2.1 Have you noticed this label on food products?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	1.2.2 What do you know about UTZ?	
	1.2.3 Where have you noticed it, on which product?	
	1.2.4 If you have what specifically drew your attention to the label??	
	1.2.5 When you hear the word UTZ certified, what are you thinking about?	
Projective technique	View below picture of a sustainable label and answer questions subsequently 	No analysis

Interview questions	1.2.6 Have you noticed this label on food products?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	1.2.7 What do you know about Fairtrade?	
	1.2.8 Where have you noticed it, on which product?	
	1.2.9 If you have what specifically drew your attention to the label?	
	1.2.10 When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what are you thinking about?	
Projective technique	**The description of UTZ certification will be provided to the participant hereafter.** ***UTZ*** *– UTZ stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers, their families and our planet.*	No analysis
Interview questions	1.2.11 Now that you have heard what UTZ stands for, what is now important to you about this label?	Content analysis of transcribed data
Projective technique	***Fairtrade*** *- Fairtrade certification is a product certification system where social, economic and environmental aspects of production are certified against Fairtrade Standards for Producers and Traders. The Fairtrade system monitors the buying and the selling of the product until it is consumer packaged and labelled.*	No analysis
Interview questions	1.2.12 Now that you have heard what Fairtrade stands for what is now important to you about this label?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	1.2.13 Following on what you have just heard, what would you say are the most important things about sustainable food product labelling to you?	
	1.2.14 In your opinion do you think sustainable labels are well known amongst South Africans?	
	1.2.15 Now that you have heard some of the clarifications to each of the labels, do you think UTZ, and Fairtrade certification are well known among South African consumers?	
	1.2.16 Will you purchase a product with one of these labels? And why will you or why will you not?	
	Objective 2: Examining the influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels has on the intention to purchase food products	
Interview questions	2.1 What do you expect when you see Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	2.2 How important is environmental sustainability to you when it comes to food products?	
	2.3 In which way does environmental sustainability influence your decision to buy a food product?	
	Objective 3: Apply the three components of the TPB to determine	
	Sub-objective 3.1: Consumers' attitude towards sustainable labelling and its influence on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.	
Interview questions	3.1.1 How do you feel about sustainability/environmental sustainability?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	Sub-objective 3.2: To explore consumers' subjective norms towards sustainable labelling	

Interview questions	3.2.1 Is there any social pressure from family, friends, peers etc who are pressuring you to buy or not to buy sustainable labelled food products, if so, where is the pressure coming from, and why do you feel pressured?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	3.2.2 How does the pressure make you feel?	
	3.2.3 Are there any specific individuals or groups you would like to mention whom you think would approve of you buying sustainable labelled food products?	
	3.2.4 Are there any individuals or groups of people you would like to mention who would disapprove of you purchasing sustainable labelled food products?	
	3.2.5 Are there any individuals or groups that come to mind when you think about sustainable food labels in particular?	
	Sub-objective 3.3: To explore consumers' perceived behavioural control towards sustainable labelling:	
Interview questions	3.3.1 When you think about the fact that you have bought sustainable food products, how does that make you feel?	Content analysis of transcribed data
	3.3.2 Does buying sustainable labelled products come naturally to you or not, is it a concerted effort or something you do automatically and specifically where these two are concerned, do you really go out of your way to look for them and if so why or why not?	

4.8.2.1 Design and layout of individual interview questions

The interview guide comprised of questions developed for each of the objectives. These questions were based on the literature reviewed relating to sustainable labelling. Research in South Africa has not specifically explored the influence of sustainable labelling on the purchase intention of food products nor has the components of TPB been explored in relation to their effect on the intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The meaning of the term sustainable labelling and the use of sustainable labelling certifications and its influence on the purchasing intent of sustainable food products have also not been studied using South African consumers. As a result, the information pertaining to sustainable food labels were more specific to international studies on which the questions were developed. Studies did, however, highlight South African consumers' ability to identify sustainable food labels (Struwig and Adendorf, 2018); the factors influencing consumer intention to purchase sustainable food products (Naidoo and Ramatsetse, 2016); and the aspects encouraging consumers to purchase organic foods (Mhlophe, 2016) which were not specific to sustainable labelled food products. The approach to these studies and the findings and conclusions of these studies posed useful in the development of the questions pertaining to the objectives of this study. Considering the exploratory nature of the study, the questions developed for this study was not only based on the understanding of former literature but the proposition of questions that would unpack and provide an understanding of the objectives of this study.

Therefore, the interview guide consisted of the following three sections with specific questions assigned to each section: determining consumer understanding of the term sustainable labelling, examining the influence of Fair Trade and UTZ certified labels on the intention to purchase food products, and exploring consumers' attitude, subjective norms, and PBC towards sustainable labelling. The overall compilation of the interview guide can be seen in the operationalisation of the study as presented in section 4.7.4. in this chapter.

4.8.2.2 Pilot testing of the instruments

Van Teijlingen, (2002) defines pilot testing of instruments, such as the interview guide used in this study, as the preliminary testing of the research instrument or data gathering tool. The interview guide was piloted, to determine whether the questions were communicated in an accurate and understandable manner, but also to ensure that the questions would answer the objectives set out for this study. Kusyk (2017) adds that by pilot testing instruments, such as the interview guide, the efficiency and quality of the main study is improved. Furthermore, the piloting of the interview guide was vital to ensure that the questions were correctly understood and to allow the researcher to determine the estimated time of completion of the in-depth semi-structured individual interview. The pilot testing of the interview guide was performed at the offices where the researcher was employed in order for the researcher to clarify or improve and retest any questions that were not correctly interpreted after the necessary changes were made. Permission was obtained from the management of the company to allow for the pilot testing of the interview guide on an employee from the company who complied with the inclusion criteria. Once permission had been granted, recruitment commenced by approaching individual employees and determining if they met the inclusion criteria. Participation remained voluntary, and individuals were not forced to participate.

The particular research instrument, could conveniently select participants who adhered to the inclusion criteria of the study, was used in the piloting of the interview guide. The participant completed a consent form and returned the form to the researcher before the interview commenced. An online TEAMS-meeting was scheduled with the participant which was also attended by the supervisor. The purpose of including the supervisor was for the supervisor to observe the interview process and techniques used by the researcher to pose questions, guide the conversation, and apply probing where necessary. As this was the researcher's first attempt at interviewing participants for the study feedback was given by the supervisor to improve the interview process. After completion of the piloting of the interview guide small changes were made to how the questions were asked, as the pilot-participant indicated that some of the questions were challenging to understand and some of the questions seemed repetitive. It was also decided to include a picture of Fairtrade and UTZ when questions related

to one of these labels were asked to ensure that the participant knows which label it is that is being discussed and remains focused on the label. It was also decided to project the questions by sharing a document with the participant during the online interview on Microsoft Teams, to ensure that the participant remained focused on the question and could revert back to the question or read it with the researcher for better understanding of what is required of them.

4.8.2.3 Data gathering procedure of the main study

Data gathering commenced with the retirement of participants through means of purposeful, snowball and convenience sampling strategies. Participants were recruited through Facebook as explained in section 4.7.4. The researcher extended an electronic invitation through the online Microsoft TEAMS interview to anyone who indicated on Facebook that they met all of the criteria and was willing to participate in the study. The continuous development of technology within recent years resulted in qualitative researchers using platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Skype (Janghorban et al. 2014). Therefore, this study used Microsoft Teams. The participants were able to accept or reject the Microsoft Team interview or propose another electronic platform or time that was more appropriate. Once the invitation was accepted, they received a link on an e-mail that redirected them to the electronic interview on the requested date and time. The interview was digitally recorded through the electronic platform, to ensure transcription was as accurate as possible. Electronic interviews were chosen to overcome the limitations set by conventional interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as time and financial difficulties (Akers and Gordon, 2018). However, if a participant was not able to be interviewed through Microsoft Teams, any other electronic platform with which the participant and researcher were familiar was considered.

Data collection for the main study followed the following procedure:

(i) Upon entering the digital interview, the participants were welcomed with a presentation by giving a quick brief in regards of the aim, objectives, research problem and what this study aimed to achieve.

(ii) Thereafter they were reminded that the session will be digitally recorded. They were also reassured that confidentiality and anonymity will be respected and that they were welcome to leave at any point during the interview if they no longer wanted to participate.

(iii) The researcher also encouraged the participants to provide elaborate and truthful answers as this would assist the researcher in understanding their experiences.

The individual interviews lasted between 25 - 40 minutes. Most of the participants answered the questions effortlessly however some participants had to be probed by the researcher for

a fully explored response. Once the interview was concluded the participants were thanked for their time and participation, the participants were also asked if they were willing to review their interview transcription to ensure the interview was captured truthfully; the participants willingly complied. A total of 16 individual interviews were conducted. It was evident after the thirteenth individual interview that saturation was accomplished, given that no new information emerged. However, the researcher continued to interview three more participants to ensure data saturation had indeed been achieved. No further interviews were conducted thereafter. After data saturation had been achieved and confirmed, the formal data analysis process started, as discussed in the following section. The reason being that the data analysis process used by the researcher during the interviews were informal and not detailed, but merely identifying saturation of ideas that were continuously coming forward.

4.8.2.4 Sample size

According to Sim et al. (2018) defining sample size priori is challenging in exploratory research, since significant themes cannot be identified beforehand. Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2017) stated that within a qualitative exploratory approach, stipulating the number of interviews needed for a priori to comprehend what is yet undiscovered, is irrational, since the researcher is not able to know what would be discovered before commencing the interviews. However, a possible approach is to empirically investigate through theoretical saturation. Saturation can be described as a state which is reached once the researcher has explored the depth and breadth of a concept to achieve thorough explanations and descriptions of research (Faulkner and Trotter, 2017). Theoretical saturation can also assist with validation since it is associated with the research result (Nascimento et al. 2018). Guest et al. (2006) followed the empirical approach by using 60 interviews and determined that saturation followed 12 interviews. Therefore, this study did not include fewer than 12 interviews since the study was based on exploratory research in which sample size is directed by the principle of data saturation (Sim et al. 2018).

4.9 Data analysing

Graue, (2015) describes qualitative data analysis as the development of explaining, grouping and the connecting of participant's experiences with the research concepts being investigated which in terms of this study relate to the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' intention to purchase food products. Qualitative research can yield immense volumes of data in the form of transcribed recordings or notes (Pope et al. 2000). Therefore, the researcher approached the vast amounts of data in a structured and systematic manner. The data collected digitally during the individual interview, will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher (Botma et al. 2010) to ensure the data can be studied in detail (Bailey, 2008). The transcription

was done by the researcher to ensure that non-verbal cues were included and that attention to detail is accurately given (Bailey, 2008). The transcription was typed on Microsoft Word by the researcher through playing the recorded Microsoft TEAMS interview and typing out the sentence as the participant spoke. The data was saved on a Microsoft Word document and the data analysis was initiated through content analysis. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) describe content analysis as a systematic process which summarises the textual content. The content analysis allows the researcher to interpret the data (Bengtsson, 2016). Once the researcher was familiar with the content analysis, the data were coded (Creswell et al. 2016).

Botma et al. (2010) define coding as the procedure of arranging the data into sections of text before conveying significance to the data. The researcher started by implementing open coding to identify main concepts (Williams and Moser, 2019). In this study the codes reflected the most frequently used concepts expressed by the participants by analysing the data through the questions that are asked. Thereafter, axial coding which focussed on the refinement of the concepts to create categories (Williams and Moser, 2019), was implemented as the second level of coding (Axial coding). The data were then grouped into meaningful categories that best represented the ideas relating to a particular question by the researcher. In other words, the categories were developed from the data whereas the questions provided the data to explain the emerging ideas that developed from the objectives. Lastly, selective coding was implemented to allow the researcher to choose and incorporate categories with one another to create expressions filled with meaning (Williams and Moser, 2019). This enabled the researcher to develop theory and create meaning from the study. Double coding was not implemented within this study, however a process of verifying was executed between the supervisor and the student by working through the data together.

The data is presented within the study, using verbatim quotes to illustrate the concepts within the different categories that emerged from the data. Tables are also presented to reflect all the verbatim quotes that made up each category emerging from the data. The data is presented according to each question that was responded to during the interviews, to provide clarity on what the participants' ideas, thoughts and attitudes were, regarding a specific aspect of the study. It was however important to validate the data throughout the data interpretation to ensure trustworthiness.

4.10 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research trustworthiness describes the confidence the researcher has in the data interpretation, and ensures that the methods are accurate within the study (Polit and Beck, 2014). To ensure trustworthiness researchers establish protocols and procedures to ensure

that the study is deemed well-intentioned (Amankwaa, 2016). According to Korstjens and Mosher (2018) many explanations of trustworthiness are available, they however state that the unsurpassed criteria are set by Lincoln and Guba, (1985). Therefore, Korstjens and Moser (2018) based their trustworthiness criteria on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria that have been adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the study which addresses the credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, reflexivity and bracketing of the research.

4.10.1 Credibility

Credibility is described by Korstjens and Moser, (2018) as the assurance within the truth of the research findings, in other words whether the information gathered from participants are plausible. Botma, (2015) states that credibility can be ensured through the following methods: enough engagement, triangulation as well as member checks. Credibility is addressed in this study through applying snowball and purposive sampling techniques, to ensure participants meet the criteria and ensure that they are diverse. Through using participants who have heard of sustainable labelling in terms of UTZ or Fairtrade labelling previously, credibility of the study was increased.

4.10.2 Transferability

Transferability is described by Korstjens and Moser, (2018) as findings that have applicability in more than one context. Creswell et al. (2016) mention two strategies to ensure transferability, through thick description as well as purposeful sampling. Transferability was ensured in this study by offering a thorough record of the analysis, study location, inclusion criteria, sampling strategy, instruments and data analysis and allowing another researcher to duplicate the study.

4.10.3 Dependability

Korstjens and Moser, (2018) describe dependability as providing consistent findings over time. Botma, (2015) recommends the following strategies: descriptions on how the data were captured, traceability of the data sources, peer reviewing of the study as well as thorough descriptions of the methodology. For the instance of this study, the researcher accurately transcribed recorder audio files of the individual interviews, as well as backing up the data on external devices. The researcher also provided exact steps on methodology for another researcher to repeat the study.

4.10.4 Confirmability

Korstjens and Moser, (2018) describe confirmability as the degree to which the outcome of the study can be established by other researchers. Creswell et al. (2016) suggest using triangulation as a strategy to increase confirmability by reducing researcher bias through implementing triangulation that is defined as using more than one method or data source (Botma, 2015). Roulston, (2018) mentions four types of triangulation methods as set by Denzin, (1978) these include data triangulation, methodological triangulation, theory triangulation and investigator triangulation. This study will use data triangulation as well as methodological triangulation. This was established through using different participants from different communities by means of using Facebook as a data gathering medium as well as using different sampling methods such as convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

4.10.5 Reflexivity

Palaganas et al. (2019) state that reflexivity is a ‘’process of introspection on the role of subjectivity in the research process’’. Furthermore, reflexivity can be described as the researcher’s influence on the study as well as the results (von Unger, 2021). Dodgson (2019) suggests that if reflexivity is accurately described the credibility of the study increases. This study focussed on prospective reflexivity, in other words the effect of the researcher on the research (Attia and Edge, 2017). Within the context of this study the researcher had to consider the manner which was used while interacting with the participants during the online individual interviews in terms of the researcher’s experience and background in the food industry. The participants were not made aware of the researcher’s background in the food industry; the participants were therefore given the lead in terms of setting the pace of the online individual interview, to ensure that the participants were not intimidated or scared to provide truthful answers.

4.10.6 Bracketing

Chan et al. (2013), describe bracketing as the researchers’ best effort to departmentalise their personal beliefs, knowledge and experiences to truthfully illustrate the participants’ experiences within a research study. Bracketing removes assumptions rooted in the researcher’s natural attitude (Moran, 2019). Furthermore, bracketing is described by Nazir (2016) as a self-reflective process, which entails that the researcher confronts any predetermined notions about the specific phenomenon throughout data collection and the analysis to determine a truer version of the phenomenon. This study implemented a bracketing

strategy during the data collection and data analysis. The strategy consisted of an interview guide that was constructed to guide the semi-structured individual online interviews to cover all the objectives but also allow the participants to express their true thoughts while allowing the researcher to probe the participants to understand the full picture (Chan et al. 2013). By implementing bracketing the researcher did not influence the participants' understanding of the phenomenon, therefore ensuring untainted findings as well as a deeper understanding of the findings (Tufford and Newman, 2012).

4.11 Ethical considerations

Botma et al. (2015) state that research including human participants within South African borders need to be subjected to a renowned ethics committee for approval, before the actual research may commence. This study obtained ethical clearance for this study from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the CAES at UNISA prior to the commencement of the study. The CAES Ethics Approval is attached as Appendix A (2021/CAES-HREC/035) because research ethics is a legitimate foundation for responsible research (Parveen and Showcat, 2017). Johnstone, (2018) continues by describing research ethics as a subdivision of philosophy that addresses right and wrong decisions among individuals. The attention on ethical behaviour has increased in recent years, to satisfy people's expectancy of accountability (Zegwaard, Campbell and Pretti, 2017). The data was only collected after ethical clearance was received; the following ethical considerations were considered during data collection:

Prior to the online individual interview, the participants were asked respectfully to participate voluntary within the study, which was followed up with a digital consent form, to prevent any possible communication barriers. The information was captured in the digital consent form which was signed digitally (as seen in Appendix B). It is important to note that participants received no incentive nor were they reimbursed for data usage for this study.

On the day of the online individual interview the researcher proceeded by explaining the study outline to the participants as well as the purpose and an indication of how long the study may take to complete. This was to ensure full transparency as well as to provide the participants with all relevant information to make an informed decision, to partake or not to partake in the study. The participants were also told that they may leave or opt out of the study at any time. The participants were also assured that all their information would be kept confidential. The names of the participants would also not be used in any way as all data would by anonymously presented in the dissertation and article or any conference presentation.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter described the research aim as an exploratory study of consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The study was directed by determining the participants' attitude, subjective norms and PBC of sustainable labelled food products found in South Africa. The three objectives were formed, and the study followed a qualitative methodology. The research design was phenomenology and exploratory, and the participants originated from the country of South-Africa. Participants were selected with non-probability sampling techniques namely: (i) purposive, (ii) convenience and (ii) snowball sampling. Thereafter, the researcher defined the inclusion criteria and data collection methods were set out.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings in accordance with the objectives set out in the study. The chapter also offers a brief discussion of these findings.

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four presented the research design and methodology used to address the aim of the study, which was to **explore the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchasing intention of food products**. An interpretivist paradigm was applied within which qualitative methodology was used to imbed the phenomenological approach, as it allowed the researcher to explore and describe participants' experience of sustainable labelling specific to UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. In following qualitative methodology, individual interviews with participants, who amongst other inclusion criteria, perceived themselves to be familiar with sustainable labelling, was used as the main data collection method. In chapter five the data will be presented related to each of the objectives set out for this study as operationalised in section 4.8.4. As it is important to fully understand the context of the participants who provided the data to this study, the demographic background of the participants will be presented after which the data relating to each of the three objectives will be presented in the sections to follow.

The data that will be presented in this chapter represents the findings that emerged from each of the questions put forward to the participants in this study. These findings will be discussed in terms of the categories that emerged from the responses and discussions on each of the questions which will be supported with relevant literature and direct verbal quotations from the participants. Tables will be used to present the verbal quotes from which the categories were developed from the data analysis. Not all the quotes are included in the discussion but can be viewed in the table included in the section to which they apply. The first section to follow will focus on the background of the study sample as obtained from the demographic profile of the participants after which the data related to each of the objectives will be presented to form the remainder of the chapter.

5.2 Background information on the study sample

The participants were purposefully and conveniently selected through the inclusion criteria used for this study, which were presented in Chapter four. In addition, snowball sampling was also applied to obtain access to participants who could not be approached through the use of

the Facebook recruitment tool. After the researcher had interviewed 13 participants for this study, data saturation was achieved. The researcher was confident with data saturation due to no new data emerging from the individual interviews (Fuschand and Ness, 2015). However, data gathering was continued and confirmed that no new data were emerging, which included another 3 participants bringing the total number of participants used in this study to 16. Tran et al. (2017) mention that data collection should be continued until no new data emerge from the participants which was further confirmed by the additional three interviews that were conducted.

The inclusion criteria required participants to be (i) over 18 years of age, (ii) familiar with sustainable labelling, in terms of thinking they know something about sustainable labelling or have seen or heard of either Fairtrade labelling or UTZ labelling or have previously heard of sustainable food labelling, and (iii) be the main grocery shopper in the household. The inclusion criteria assisted the researcher to interview participants who perceived themselves knowledgeable about sustainable food labelling that aided in achieving data saturation through the homogenous nature of the study sample used in this study. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the study was not designed to, at this time, differentiate between the responses of female and male participants, nor was it designed to distinguish between age groups or educational level of the participants and the influence these criteria have on sustainable food labelling and consumers' intention to purchase sustainable food products. The demographic information collected from the participants were only used to describe the participants in this study, by forming a better idea of who participated in this research and to provide context in relation to the responses obtained from the participants. Therefore, the findings in this chapter should be read with the context of the participants in this research project in mind.

Participants in this study originated from various provinces in South Africa which is attributed to the utilization of Facebook as a recruitment tool which allowed the researcher to gain access to a wider network of participants (Whitaker et al. 2017). By using Facebook, participant recruitment without face-to-face contact was also possible as Facebook recruitment limited physical interaction during the recruitment activity. In adhering to the COVID-19 research regulations specified by the University of South Africa as pertaining to Level 3, Facebook recruitment was useful to ensure social distancing and any other contact with potential participants was minimised. The participants who responded to the Facebook recruitment information, who complied with the inclusion criteria, who were available and willing to participate in the study was contacted by the researcher. The demographic profile of these participants is presented next.

5.3 Demographic profile of the participants

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire in a word document format prior to the interview, which was sent to them by email to be filled in electronically and sent back to the researcher via email. The demographic questionnaire consisted of six questions, as seen in Appendix C, which required participants to indicate: (i) gender, (ii) age, (iii) educational status, (iv) occupation, (v) awareness of sustainability, and (vi) if the participant is the person responsible for grocery shopping. To determine if participants would be able to have a conversation about sustainable labelling and respond to questions about sustainable labelling it was necessary to include participants who had either an awareness or perceived themselves to be knowledgeable about sustainable labelled food products. It was not important to determine the level of knowledge they had as the study was exploratory in nature thus only focussing on the general consumer and their understanding of sustainable labelled food products. In that instance a general awareness or perceived knowledge of sustainable labelled food products was thought to be enough to explore consumers' understanding of the concept. Therefore, participants' awareness of sustainable labelling was determined by asking the participants in the demographic questionnaire the question: ***''have you heard of sustainable labelling?''*** The response from this question should be viewed as the participants own perception of sustainable labelling and how much they think they know or are aware of sustainable labelling. The findings of this exploratory study have thus originated from the personal perceptions and awareness of the participants.

The demographic information, presented below in Figure 5.1, shows that the 16 participants who took part in the study were mainly female participants (81.25%; n = 13), with only three of the participants being male (18.75%, n = 3). The larger group of female participants might be due to females conforming to the role of purchasing groceries for the household and thus possibly more familiar with different product categories and new developments in these product categories such as the introduction to sustainable labels. Although more female participants took part in this study than males, Drexler et al. (2018) found no difference between male and female consumers' perceptions regarding product labelling from the Czech Republic when trying to establish the effect of organic labels on consumer attention. Based on Drexler et al.'s (2018) findings it is assumed that in this instance where fewer male than female participants took part in the study, it would not distort the findings of this study towards the female participant views, as Drexler et al.'s (2018) findings suggests that male and female participants have similar perceptions toward product labelling. However, as the findings of Drexler cannot be generalised to South African consumers, the findings from Drexler were

only considered but not used to argue the purposeful inclusion of fewer male participants in this study.

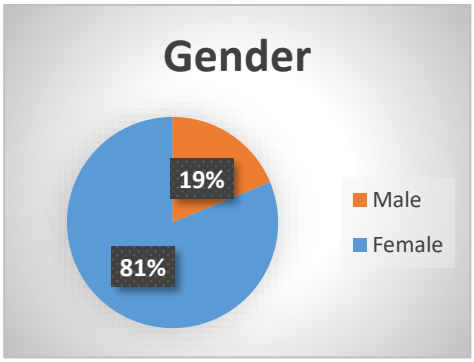

Figure 5.1: Participant demographics in terms of gender

Participants who took part in the current study, as seen below in Figure 5.2, were mostly between 18-29 years of age (81.25%; n = 13), with two participants who were between 30-39 years of age (12.50%; n =2), and only one participant who was between the age of 50-59 years (6.25%; n=1). Individuals between the age of 25 and 40 years are considered millennials and individuals aged 24 years and younger are defined as the new generation (Dimock, 2019). A study by Johnstone and Lindh, (2018) found a relationship with age and the awareness of sustainability among younger consumers. In the current study 81.25% of the participants were aged between 18-29 years and 12.50% of participants between the age of 30-39 years resulting in a total of 93.75% of millennials and the younger generation having participated in this study. More millennials might have been attracted to the study because of the Facebook recruitment strategy that was applied in this study as 77.6 % of Facebook users are younger than 44 years (Statista, 2021) resulting in a greater possibility for younger participants to join in the study. The larger number of participants were younger and complied with the inclusion criteria which also suggest that the younger generation might be aware of and interested in sustainability and thus possibly attracted by the invitation to participate in this study. Kovacs and Keresztes (2022) supports this by stating that ‘’the younger generation is becoming the largest consumer market for nutritious and sustainable food products’’.

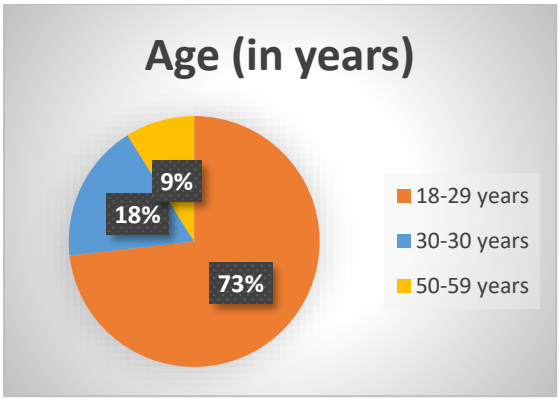

Figure 5.2: Participant demographics in terms of age

Thirteen of the participants had obtained a degree (81%; n =13) whereas one had a diploma (6%, n =1), and two of the participants' highest level of education was grade 12 (13%, n=2). A study by Debrah et al. (2021) found that consumers with a tertiary education tended to have a good awareness of environmental sustainability and therefore have knowledge of sustainable labelling. This might explain why the majority of the participants with degrees were attracted to participate in the study as they may consider themselves more knowledgeable about sustainable labelling and environmental sustainability in general.

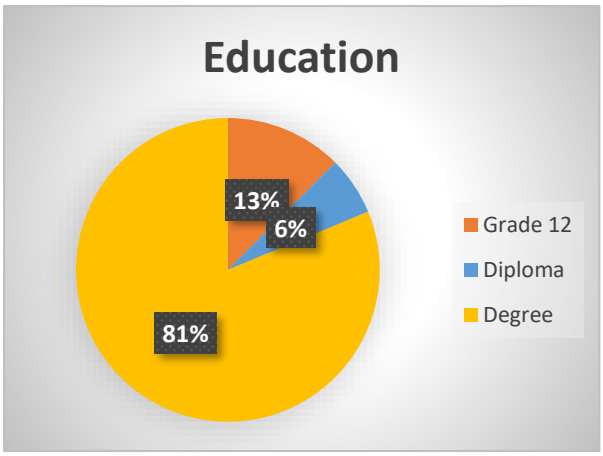

Figure 5.3: Participant demographics in terms of education

Additionally, the 16 participants were asked to indicate their current occupation. Two of the participants did not comment on this question, whereas the remaining 14 participants recorded a variety of occupations as indicated below in Table 5.1, ranging from an innovation specialist, cost accountant, food technologists, students, procurement, quality, production controllers and coordinators. This study did not focus on the participants occupation, and the participants did not reveal their occupation during the interview, therefore it had no influence on the data, it was only an idication of the background of the participants.

Table 5.1: Participant occupation

Current occupation	Frequency of participants	Percentage (%) of participants
Innovation specialist	1	6.25
Quality controller	3	18.75
Logistics controller	1	6.25
Food technologist	1	6.25
Students	2	12.5
Procurement	1	6.25
Production controller	3	18.75
Cost accountant	1	6.25
Coordinator	1	6.25
No indication of occupation	2	12.5

Based on the demographics used for this study the participants' profile can be summarised as being primarily female (81.25%), with a tertiary qualification and mostly between the ages of 18-29 years (81.25%) from a variety of occupations. In the following sections the qualitative findings that emerged in response to the three objectives which are: (i) to determine consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling, (ii) examine the influence of Fair Trade and UTZ certified labels on the intention to purchase food products, (iii) apply the three components of the TPB to determine consumer attitude, PBC and subjective norms, are presented.

5.4 Qualitative findings regarding consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling (Objective 1)

The purpose of Objective 1 was to explore the consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling. To do so, attention was given to specific aspects related to sustainable labelling through the formulation of sub-objectives that explored (i) the meaning of the term sustainable labelling, (ii) the consumers' interpretation and use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision related to food products, and (iii) establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision. The data will reflect the understanding of the participants who took part in this study, therefore the word consumer will no longer be used although it is acknowledged that the participants are consumers of sustainable labelled food products in general.

5.4.1 Exploring the meaning of the term sustainable labelling (Sub-objective 1.1)

To gain insight into participants' understanding of the term sustainable labelling, it was important to first establish the meaning participants assigned to the concept of sustainability in general as this would give an idea of the participants' own understanding of and position regarding sustainability. Therefore, the first question that was asked during the online individual interviews was: ***''When you hear the word sustainability what comes to mind (what are you thinking about, what are your thoughts)?''*** (Question 1.1.1 as in Appendix E). From the qualitative findings generated from this question, two categories emerged that best reflect the main ideas participants have when thinking about sustainability which is that it relates to a (i) long term effect, and a (ii) healthy environment.

When reflecting on what participants understood or thought in terms of sustainability, as shown in Table 5.2 below, it was evident that the participants have a general understanding of sustainability that specifically reflects a **long-term effect** associated with sustainability, as this participant says, *"I think it means something long term, something to maintain".* The following participants expanded on the idea of 'long term' by specifically relating sustainability to the future of the environment when the participant says, *"Preserving the environment for future generations and meeting our current needs in such a way that it is long term''* or this participant who says *''to ensure that we do not overuse or disregard the stuff that we use for future generations''.* Participants' long-term connotation to sustainability might be due to sustainability being defined by Moore et al. (2017) as ''after a defined period, a programme or intervention strategies continue to be delivered and individual behaviour change is maintained, while the behaviour may change or adapt while continuing to produce benefits for individuals or systems''. Therefore, suggesting that sustainability represents the idea that the process was changed towards a more responsible process which would be feasible over time to ensure the environment as well as the people, are protected not only now but also in the future and thus resembling the long-term effect.

The second category that emerged from the data explained sustainability particular to a **healthy environment** that was mentioned by participants as being *"'green, healthy and overall, better for the population"* or a *"better and healthier way to produce food"*. Another participant added that a healthy environment represents *''Protecting the planet, keeping the planet healthy''* and one participant who adds *''products or produce that are produced in an environmentally friendly''* way. The participants' views are supported by Verma (2019) who also mentions that a prospering economy is dependent on a healthy environment. The World Health Organization (2021) describes a healthy environment as representative of clean air, healthy and safe working conditions, safe agricultural methods as well as processes to

preserve nature. Participants were thus conscious of the importance of a healthy environment and the contribution sustainability makes in ensuring the planet remains in a healthy state and does not degrade further.

Table 5.2: Participant quotations understanding of the term sustainable

Category	Quote
1. Long term sustainability	''long term in terms of food the environment or processes'' ''the use of resources without depleting them'' ''environment to ensure we preserve it and protect it to ensure it is there for future generations'' ''not depleting natural resources'' ''long term solutions in getting material and resources'' ''if you take something today you have to make sure it is there in the future as well'' ''Preserving the environment for future generations and meeting our current needs in such a way that it is long term'' ''to ensure that we do not overuse or disregard the stuff that we use for future generations'' ''I think it means something long term something to maintain'' ''The way to make sure that we have a safe future and a sustainable future''
2. Healthy environment	**''**Betterness'' ''green, healthy and overall, better for the population'' ''Protecting the planet, keeping the planet healthy'' ''not damage/negatively impact the earth or the environment'' ''food production and provision thereof doing it in a sustainable way no waste and everyone is taken care of, and no one is negatively impacted during the process'' ''better opportunities in terms of sustainable'' ''Better and healthier way to produce food'' ''products or produce that is produced in an environmentally friendly''

Once the researcher established participant's general understanding of **sustainability** it was essential to establish participants' thoughts regarding a sustainable food product. It was expected that after having discussed the meaning of sustainability in general the connection to a food product would result in new ideas related to food products in more specific terms. Hence, the following question was posed to participants that was phrased: ***''Now when you hear the expression "sustainable food product, what comes to mind, what are you now thinking about?''*** (Question 1.1.2 as in Appendix E). The responses to this question were particular to two categories, as seen below in Table 5.3, which represented participants' ideas regarding the term, sustainable food product. These ideas were related to (i) sustainably manufactured products and (ii) food products that were not harming the planet.

To the participants, **sustainably manufactured products** is an attribute that comes to mind when thinking about a sustainable food product**.** In this context participants described the way food products were manufactured when this participant says *''the methods of producing these products are done in a sustainable way''* and another participant who mentioned that it represents *''better ways of producing food that we put on our tables''*. Another participant adds that a sustainable food product was manufactured with *''a good process, and the environment*

was kept in mind during the whole manufacturing, production and harvest of the food that I am eating". Therefore, responses suggest that participants may expect sustainable food products to include sustainable manufacturing practices. Ingram et al. (2018) found that farmers in Ghana and Ivory Coast experienced an increase in cocoa productivity after adapting their production practices towards sustainable practices. Thus, indicating that by transforming manufacturing practices to more sustainable methods, holds benefits not only for the consumer and environment but also financial benefits for the manufacturers or producers of such products.

The second category that emerged from the data, epitomised a sustainable food product as a product that was **not harming the planet** as these participants explain when they say '*"to ensure the environment is not harmed", and* '*"to better the impact on the environment' as well as* this participant who mentioned that *"the materials are used in such a way that it does not negatively impact the environment"* From these responses it is clear that participants also expect a sustainable food product to possibly be environmentally friendly in terms of how it is produced to ensure the environment is not damaged in the process. To this effect, Ojo and Shah (2020) mentioned that sustainable food manufacturing may assist in reducing the harmful impact on the environment. In this way a sustainable food product is also contributing to a healthy environment as they expected sustainability in general would do.

From the responses in Table 5.3 below, it is evident that the participants' understanding of the word sustainable food product captured expectations related to the manufacturing of the product and the belief that the outcome of such manufacturing process would benefit the environment. It has been established that industrialised activities have been expanding rapidly and have caused exhaustion of natural resources and permanent damage to the environment (Doorasamy and Baldavaloo, 2016). Although the damage may be irreversible, sustainably produced food products may slow down the continuous damage to the environment. In this way, sustainably produced food products are aligning to SDG-12, which relates to responsible consumption and production whereby attention is given to reduce the ecological footprint by changing the way goods are produced and consumed and how resources are used in the production and consumption of these goods (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2022).

In the previous question ***''When you hear the word sustainability what comes to mind (what are you thinking about, what are your thoughts)?''*** (Question 1.1.1 as in Appendix E), a similar category emerged namely 'the healthy environment' category that seems to also support the idea that the environment should not be harmed. This suggests that the participants connect the term sustainability to the common element of taking care of the planet.

However, when the term food product is added to the term sustainability the participants remain loyal to the care of the planet but also add the element of sustainable manufacturing of the food product to ensure the process protects the planet. This may possibly be attributed to when a food product is mentioned in relation to sustainability that the manufacturing process also needs to be sustainable to the consumer.

Table 5.3: Participant quotations of understanding the term sustainable food product.

Category	Quote
1. Sustainable Product manufacturing	''the methods of producing these products are done in a sustainable way'' ''better ways of producing food that we put on our tables'' ''produced under sustainable label conditions, so its products that have been produced against a certain measure'' ''it was a good process, and the environment was kept in mind during the whole manufacturing, production, and harvest of the food that I am eating'' ''product was made with stuff that is sustainable to the environment'' ''ingredient used in a durable way without exhausting the environment'' ''Maybe food that is made in ways that is safe for the environment'' ''UTZ comes to mind''
2. Not harming the planet	''to ensure the environment is not harmed'' ''way that it is environmentally friendly or sustainable'' ''to better the impact on the environment'' ''not depleting the environment without any negative impact on the environment'' ''the materials are used in such a way that it does not negatively impact the environment'' ''good for the environment'' ''I'm thinking about the environment no harm to the environment or people'' ''taking your food and ensuring what you take out of the environment you can put back into it''

5.4.2 Exploring the consumers' interpretation and use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels (Sub-objective 1.2)

Progressing from establishing participants' basic understanding and thoughts of sustainability and a sustainable food product, the focus of the interview was moved to explore the UTZ sustainable label in more specific terms. To gain a better idea of what participants thought of the UTZ label, a digital image as presented in Figure 5.4 below was presented to them to start the discussion and to ensure that the discussion focusses on the UTZ certified label. By presenting the participants with the digital image the researcher also made sure that participants did not confuse other sustainable labels with the UTZ label and was certain of their responses in relation to the projected UTZ label.

Figure 5.4: UTZ label

The participants were exposed to the image in Figure 5.4 during the online interview by sharing the image on Microsoft Teams which was the platform on which the interviews were held. The first question posed to the participants regarding the UTZ label was: **‘’Have you noticed this label on food products?’’** (Question 1.2.1. see Appendix E). Fourteen participants responded by indicating that **they have noticed the UTZ label on food products**, as seen below in Table 5.4, whereas only two participants noted that **they have not noticed the label on food products**. The latter participants were not excluded from the rest of the study as they were required to have been exposed to either of the labels to participate in this study. Although UTZ was founded in 2002 (Rainforest alliance, 2021) the certification was only introduced in South African retailers such as Woolworths in 2012 and specifically on cocoa products sold by this retailer (Woolworths, 2021). An observation of cocoa products from this retailer, by the researcher confirmed the placement of the UTZ sustainable label on cocoa products on BOP labelling, such as the chocolate flavoured puffed rice and the chocolate flavoured granola. Therefore, the fact that this sustainable food label is found on the BOP labelling might make it difficult for participants to immediately notice the UTZ label. The participants that indicated that they have not seen the UTZ label on food products, were not questioned further in terms of UTZ related questions. It was assumed that they would not be able to share any meaningful opinions with the researcher. It is also acknowledged that there is a possibility that these participants could have shared some information about UTZ although they had not noticed the label on food products of which it was not sure at that time if this information would have been made up and not true experiences. The researcher was rather interested in participants who had engaged with the label and the opinions that they generated based on their engagement with the label.

The majority of the participants (14 participants) mentioned ‘*’Yes, I have”* seen the UTZ label on food products with one participant who strongly confirms this by saying ‘*’absolutely”.* The group of participants who noticed the UTZ label on food products further voluntarily provided examples of where they had noticed the UTZ label food products which was from a specific retailer namely (i) **Woolworths,** and one participant who had noticed the UTZ label on (ii)

products containing cocoa and another participant who had been introduced to the UTZ label by (iii) **working in the food industry,** which represents their exposure to UTZ products. The second group represented the two participants who had not noticed the UTZ label on any food products when they said *''No, I have not''* or *''No''*.

From the examples mentioned by the participants, it is evident that the few participants who had specifically noticed the UTZ label on products from the **Woolworths** retailer which was expressed as *''Woolworths's products''* and on *''Woolworths's packaging''*. Woolworths committed to 100% UTZ certified products for their entire food range by 2022 (Woolworths, 2021). In light of the fact that these participants were specifically highlighting the Woolworths retailer as stockist of UTZ labelled products may be attributed to the impact of the Woolworths' UTZ certification campaign which had made UTZ labelled products noticed by consumers. One participant had indicated to have noticed the UTZ label on ''*products that contain cocoa powder''*. The UTZ sustainable label can be found on coffee, cocoa, tea and hazelnuts (Rainforest-alliance, 2021) which suggests that participants were able to relate UTZ labelling to a specific product and ingredient that is recognised for being certified with the UTZ label. The one participant who ''*work with products containing the symbol''* indicated the contribution a work environment makes in exposing and introducing employees to the UTZ label, indirectly creating consumer awareness of the UTZ label.

Table 5.4: Participant quotations of recognizing the UTZ label

Category	Quote
1. UTZ label was noticed on food products	'Absolutely'' ''Yes, I Have'' ''I have seen it yes'' 'Not extensively but yes, I have a few times'' ''Yes'' ''Yes'' ''Yes'' ''Jah actually yes'' ''Yes, I have''
1.1 Woolworths products	''yes, some Woolworths products'' ''Well, I am only aware of them on WW packaging'' ''I have seen it on labelling in WW''
1.2 Products containing cocoa	''Yes, I have especially products that have cocoa powder in it''
1.3 Working in the food industry	''Yes, I noticed it because I work with products containing the symbol, I wouldn't have noticed it if I wasn't confronted with it at work''
2. UTZ label was not noticed on food products	''No, I have not'' ''No''

After establishing whether the participants have noticed the UTZ label or not, the next question aimed to determine what participants understood in terms of the UTZ label. This question was

specifically asked to establish if participants had researched or sourced more information about UTZ after having noticed it on food products. Only the participants who indicated that they have seen the UTZ label on food products were therefore asked ‘’**What do you know about UTZ?’’** (Question 1.2.2 see Appendix E). Three different categories were identified that explain the participants’ subjective knowledge regarding the UTZ label seen on food products. These categories reflect the different aspects of their subjective knowledge regarding the UTZ label in terms of (i) sustainable farming methods, (ii) sustainably sourced cocoa, and (iii) cocoa products.

From the findings it emerged that the majority of participants thought that the UTZ label represents **sustainable farming methods.** This was emphasised by this participant who explained that the UTZ label indicates *“sustainable farming and better opportunities. It has to do with farmers and improving farming methods and conditions”* and this participant who says *‘’foods should be produced in a way that they are not harmful to the environment or employees”*. It is evident from the data analysis, presented in Table 5.5 that UTZ labelling was specifically thought of as representative of sustainable farming methods, which when applied to the food products are not only beneficial to the environment but to the farmer as well. A study by Salman et al. (2021) supported this finding by establishing that farmers in India who were UTZ certified were benefitting from this certification as they had higher income levels to non-certified farmers.

In addition to UTZ relating to sustainable farming methods, a few participants also related UTZ to specifically **sustainably sourced cocoa,** through statements such as *‘’sustainable farming of cocoa powder”* and *‘’the way the cocoa is harvested”*. It is not certain how participants came about this knowledge as it was not interrogated further, but it has been established that through auditing the cocoa, UTZ is able to ensure that the cocoa was sustainably manufactured (Rainforest Alliance, 2021). However, because cocoa farmers are rapidly increasing their farmland to meet food industry needs, cocoa farming has become a major driver for deforestation (Perkiss et al. 2020) which can thus not be considered a sustainable product in the true sense of the word.

A few participants did relate UTZ labels to products **containing cocoa**. To this effect participants responded with mentions of “*something to do with cocoa”* as well as ***‘’I know UTZ is on all the chocolate products for the cocoa”***. Cocoa powder is one of the ingredients certified by UTZ (Rainforest Alliance, 2021) which has possibly, through continuous purchases of chocolate products labelled with UTZ certification, made participants more aware and familiar with the UTZ label. The responses of the participants are suggesting that UTZ labels have

made an impression on them in relation to certain cocoa containing products which may also be due to the contribution from specific retailers.

Table 5.5: Participant quotations of knowledge regarding the UTZ label

Category	Quote
1. Sustainable farming	''sustainable farming and better opportunities. It has to do with farmers and improving farming methods and conditions'' ''to preserve the environment and ensures that the farmers who farm the cocoa beans do it in a sustainable manner so that it makes everything better'' ''eco-friendly ways of farming the cocoa and good working environment for the workers, and no child labour'' ''unsustainable farmers to improve working conditions'' ''foods should be produced in a way that they are not harmful to the environment or employees'' ''helping farmers with sustainability and healthy environment'' ''the product was sourced in a way that is good for the environment and the producers'' ''UTZ certified means that it is sustainably sourced'' ''sustainable farming''
2. Sustainably sourced cocoa	''sustainable sourcing of cocoa and cocoa products and coffee products'' ''sustainable farming of cocoa powder'' ''the way the cocoa is harvested'' ''sustainably sourced mostly with cocoa powder''
3. Cocoa products	''Something to do with cocoa production'' ''not that much only that it is compared to chocolate and cocoa products'' **''**cocoa products and organisations that support it'' **'**I know UTZ is on all the chocolate products for the cocoa''

Following on from the question which explored what the participants knew about UTZ labels the next question aimed to discover the food products that participants have seen the UTZ label on. Although some participants already suggested products they related UTZ labels to, the question was asked again to ensure that other participants could also add to the cocoa related products that were already mentioned in the previous question and thereby increasing the list of specific food products they could recall seeing the UTZ label on. Participants were asked: ***''Where have you noticed it (referring to the UTZ label), on which food product?''*** (Question 1.2.3, Appendix E). From the data analysis two categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.6, which was re-establishing (i) specific retailers as stockists of these food products, but also (ii) specific food products ranging from beverage to sweet and cocoa products. Although, this question specifically focussed on which food product they had noticed carrying the UTZ label, participants again related UTZ labelled food products to specific retailers as they had previously done when asked if they had noticed the UTZ label on any food products.

Therefore, **specific retailer products** were identified as the *''Woolworths's products''* as well as this participant who says *''I have seen it on Woolworths's products''* whereas only one participant noted that the UTZ label was seen on a product in another retailer when mentioning *"one product at Checkers".* Irrespective of which retailer was connected to the UTZ label, not

all participants were able to identify specific food products but singled out well-known retailers as a representative of UTZ products thus linking retailers who sold food products to the UTZ label. The fact that several participants mentioned Woolworths in relation to UTZ labelling may be due to consumers associating sustainable products in general with Woolworths which is part of the retailer's so called ''Good Business Journey's since 2007 (Hughes et al. 2015). The Woolworths' good business journey ensures environmentally friendly practices through reducing their effect on the environment as well as producing sustainable products (Mukonza and Swarts, 2020). This suggests that sustainability is equated to a retailer, especially for consumers who possibly have a greater awareness of what the retailer stands for, as the retailer has thus become a prominent figure in sustainability in general.

The next category represents food products participants associated with the UTZ label of which the UTZ label currently certifies coffee, cocoa, tea and hazelnuts (Rainforest Alliance, 2021). In this category various examples are given of food product participants related to the UTZ label. The first food example was identified as **sweets**; although chocolate was mentioned more often in relation to this category, other sweets were also indicated. This is evident in participants mentioning that they have seen UTZ labels *''on chocolate''* products and this participant who mentions ''*chocolate products such as chuckles or seashells''.* Participants were unable to identify any other types of sweets in relation to UTZ other than a participant who mentioned ''*nougat bars and Turkish delight''* and this participant who specifically identified a ''*Pecan salted caramel bar''*. These sweets mentioned by the participants are not necessarily sweets that are UTZ certified but rather contain cocoa as an ingredient which is certified from which the sweets are produced. This may suggest that participants are not relating the UTZ certification to an ingredient but rather to the product. International sweet companies such as Ferrero and Nestle have pledged to use sustainable cocoa by 2020 due to the increasing demand for sustainable cocoa (Iddrisu et al. 2020). Locally in South Africa, the food retailer Woolworths through the ''Good Business journey'' campaign have also followed by including sustainable cocoa products in their product categories (Hughes et al. 2015). Because these three companies are implementing specific strategies to manufacture and sell sustainable cocoa related products and including the UTZ label on the product they manufacture, it may have resulted in these types of products becoming more visible on retail shelves. Therefore, food labels can carry sustainable information thereby possibly increasing the awareness of sustainable food products (Grunert et al. 2014).

Participants further specifically identified products containing **cocoa** when they mentioned ''*granolas that contain cocoa and cereal bars that contain cocoa*'' another participant

mentioned a *''chocolate cereal'* and this participant who suggested *''chocolate rice puffs''*. Grassnick and Brümmer (2021) state that South Africa is one of 9 countries importing UTZ certified cocoa, which is possibly contributing towards the visibility of UTZ labelled products and the specific association with cocoa related products.

Although not mentioned by many participants, some identified UTZ certified **coffee** when they say *''coffee''* and *''coffees''*. However, the UTZ label is present on coffees available at takeaway coffee bars where a variety of UTZ certified coffee products are available such as from the Spar's Bean tree Café (Spar, 2021) and the Wild Bean Café (BP South Africa, 2021) who sell various UTZ certified "on the go" coffee products.

One participant indicated *''wine''* as a UTZ certified product. However, **wine** is not a product certified by UTZ (Rainforest Alliance, 2021) which may suggest that the participant might have confused the product with another or confused the UTZ label with another certification found on wine. The last example which was also mentioned by one participant was '*''tea''*. The first Rooibos farm was UTZ certified in 2011 due to the demand of existing **tea** buyers (Rainforest Alliance, 2021) although its availability through general food retailers could not be confirmed. This might suggest that the Rooibos farm mentioned above might be UTZ certified for exports, but not necessarily indicated on the label for local foods.

Table 5.6: Participant quotations of products that the UTZ label has been seen on:

Category	Quote
1. Specific retailers	**''** I have seen in Woolworths'' ''Woolworths'' ''Woolworths and one product at Checkers'' '' in Woolworths'' ''in WW'' **''**Products in WW'' **''**Woolworths's products, everything that has cocoa in'' **''**WW products'' ''I have seen it on products in WW
2. Food products	
2.1 Sweets	''On chocolate'' ''Pecan salted caramel bar'' ''nougat bars and Turkish delight'' ''Chocolate'' ''on chocolate bars and stuff like that'' ''chocolate products such as chuckles or their sea Schell''
2.2 Products that contain cocoa	''cocoa'' ''granolas that contain cocoa and cereal bars that contains cocoa'' ''chocolate rice puffs'' ''a chocolate cereal''
2.3 Coffee	'Coffee'' ''coffees'' ''coffee''
2.4 Wine	''wine''
2.5 Tea	''tea products''

After determining on which food products participants had noticed the UTZ label, the researcher set out to establish what attracted the participant to the UTZ label. The participants were therefore asked ***''If you have (noted the UTZ label on food products), what specifically drew your attention to the label?''*** (Question 1.2.4 Appendix E).

In this respect, participants' attention was captured by different aspects of the UTZ label, as seen below in Table 5.7, which were (i) label related aspects, attention to the label was also captured out of (iii) curiosity and a lesser extent (ii) career related. The first category that emerged was specific to **label related aspects** which captured their attention in the form of five different aspects of the label such as (i) colour, (ii) spelling, (iii) label meaning, (iv) shape of label, and (v) label awareness. Although label related aspects were predominantly identified as attention attraction mechanisms, only a small number of participants contributed to the various label related aspects. However, from the data an idea of the label related elements that attracted the attention of the participants were found to be very specific to UTZ which can be useful to product manufacturers and for further research on UTZ labelling. In terms of **colour** the participants observed *''The colour, is quite alarming, the red''.* The attraction of the colour red is explained by Hunjet and Vuk (2017) who mention that the colour red on packaging stimulates the potential consumers sense and excites, thus possibly attracting participants to the UTZ product. The second label related aspect that attracted the attention of the participants was the **spelling** of the certification name (UTZ) which was also noted by the participants in terms of *''I think it is abbreviated''* and '*'I saw the three lettered word UTZ''*. The fact that the letters UTZ attracted attention may be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the word UTZ which means good in the Guatemalan Mayan language of Quiché (Rainforest Alliance, 2022). Another participant noted that it was due to strategic label placement since the participant is a label reader and it caught her attention by mentioning that *''I look at the back of the products for ingredients, because it is usually placed close to the ingredient list that is why it caught my attention''*. This is an indication that by placing the UTZ label near the ingredient list in the BOP would be beneficial in attracting consumers' attention. To this effect Jain et al. (2018) conducted a study about food label awareness, among consumers in New Delhi. The study reported high levels of food label awareness among consumers when enough available information was presented on the packaging. The study by Jain et al. suggests that the correct placement of the UTZ sustainable label may assist in creating a better awareness of UTZ amongst consumers. Another participant also noticed the **shape** of the UTZ label *''Well, it has this recyclable arrow thing going on that is the one thing that grabbed my attention''*. Which is supported by Marques da Rosa et al. (2019) who investigated whether consumers preferred the shape of angular over round packaging and found that Brazilian

consumers prefer angular packaging. However, in relation to consumers' preference for angular shaped objects, it might suggest that participants' attention was captured by the angular shape of the UTZ label.

Lastly, some participants mentioned that **curiosity** led them to investigate the product containing a UTZ label as this participant mentions ‘*’I just wondered what UTZ meant and researched it and saw what it was for”* additionally another participant added that ‘*’because I saw something new on the packaging and I did not know what it meant.”.* A study by Jefrydin and Talib (2019) noted that curiosity is one of the main motives for consumers to use food labels. In relation to UTZ, when placed on sustainable food products, the UTZ logo may draw consumers' attention if not known to them, which may then lead to further investigation and clarity in terms of the meaning of UTZ as sustainable food product label. There was also a participant who noted the UTZ label due to their **career choices** *‘’It was because I am a food technologist”*, **within the food industry** that exposed the participant to UTZ labels and thus not as a consumer shopping for food products.

Table 5.7: Participant quotations of attributes attracting participant attention towards the label

Category	Quote
1. Label related aspects	
1.1 Colour	‘’The red colour’’ ‘’The colour, is quite alarming, the red’’ ‘’The colour’’
1.2 Spelling of the word	**‘’**I think it is abbreviated’’ **‘’**The spelling because the way you pronounce and spell it’’ ‘’I saw the 3 lettered word UTZ’’ **‘’**The meaning behind the label’’
1.3 Strategic label placement	‘’I look at the back of the products for ingredients, because it is usually placed close to the ingredient list that is why it caught my attention’’
1.4 Shape	**‘’**Well, it has this recyclable arrow thing going on that is the one thing that grabbed my attention’’
2 Curiosity	‘’because I saw something new on the packaging and I did not know what it meant’’ ‘’I just wondered what UTZ meant and researched it and saw what it is for’’ ‘’But if you know a little about it, it will give you peace of mind to know it is sustainably sourced’’ **‘’**Well, I would say the fact that I don't actually know what it stands for, it looks interesting’’ ‘’To know what it means’’
3 Career	‘’It was because I am a food technologist’’

When the researcher established the aspects that attracted the participants to the UTZ label, it was important to understand what the participants thought of UTZ certification. As some participants were curious about the meaning of the UTZ certification and possibly read up about it, it was thought that this understanding and what they discovered and more so what

sense they made of the UTZ certification in general would come to light. At this point it is important to note that UTZ certified manufacturers and farmers, are audited by independent accreditation bodies to ensure respectable farming methods, good working conditions, no child labour as well as the protection of the environment (Rainforest Alliance, 2021). To establish what understanding participants have of the UTZ certification, participants were asked ***''When you hear the word UTZ certified, what are you thinking about?''*** (Question 1.2.5 Appendix E).

From the data analysis, as seen below in Table 5.8, two specific categories emerged that described what participants thought UTZ certified meant. This related to (i) sustainable faming and products and (ii) environmental concerns. In relation to **sustainable product farming** one of the participants described it as *''a product that has been made on a farm where good working conditions and farming methods are used''* and this participant who mentions *''I would think it is the way the cocoa is harvested and the way it goes through production, so that it is done in a more natural way''*. In this sense some participants understood UTZ certified as a sustainable method applied throughout the production process which not only resembles the planting, harvesting and processing of the products but conditions under which labour is used to produce the products.

Furthermore, the second major category represented by almost half of the participants is **environmental concern** which was described by one of the participants as ***''I think about that the company that actually sources the products actually does research to make sure they do not harm the environment with their product''*** and this participant who mentions that it *''Helps the environment''*. The meaning of the term UTZ certified was clearly linked to environmental sustainability and the endeavour to create a sustainable environment through the products that are produced. In this regard the aim of UTZ certified is to ensure that sustainable farming methods are implemented throughout the world in order to profit in respect of the planet and the people (Malgas et al. 2014).

Table 5.8: Participant quotations in terms of thoughts incited by the term UTZ certified

Category	Quote
1. Sustainable product farming	''it is a product that has been made on a farm where good working conditions and farming methods are used'' ''sustainable chocolate and cocoa and cocoa products'' **''**sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers'' **''**I would think it is the way the cocoa is harvested and the way it goes through production, so that it is done in a more natural way'' **''**The harvesting of the cocoa'' ''helps the farmers'' **''**its fair trading''

2. Environmental concern	''Beneficial for the environment'' **"**I think about that the company that actually sources the products actually does research to make sure they do not harm the environment with their product'' **"**product that you can be ensured that it has been certified against a benchmark ensuring it is sustainable'' ''the product needs to be certified by the company and measured to a standard'' **"**it has to do with sustainability so which ever product has it on is sustainable or sustainably produced'' ''Helps the environment'' **"**well, I would say that it recalls that the product went through process to get to that point of being certified''

Progressing from establishing the participants basic understanding of the UTZ sustainable label, the focus of the interview was moved to explore the Fairtrade sustainable label, in more specific terms. To gain a better idea of what participants thought of the Fairtrade label of which a digital image is presented in Figure 5.5 below, as a sustainable food label found on South African food products used in this study. The image below in Figure 5.5, was presented to the participants to start the discussion and to ensure the focus of the discussion is on the Fairtrade certified label. By presenting the digital image the researcher also made sure that the participants did not confuse other sustainable labels (such as, cocoa life, badger friendly, and sustainably sourced cocoa to name a few) with the Fairtrade label and was certain of their responses in relation to the label.

Figure 5.5: Fairtrade label

The participants were also exposed to the image in Figure 5.5 during the online interview by sharing the image on Microsoft Teams, which was the platform on which the interviews were held. The first question posed to the participants regarding the Fairtrade label was: ***''Have you noticed this label on food products?''*** (Question 1.2.6. see Appendix E). Thirteen participants responded, as seen below in Table 5.9, by indicating that they have **not noticed the Fairtrade label** on food products. Whereas only three participants noted that **they have seen the label on food products.** The participants that have not noticed the Fairtrade label were not excluded from the rest of the study as they were required to have been exposed to either of the labels to participate in this study.

Therefore, most of the participants (13 participants) in this study had **not noticed the Fairtrade label**, on food products. Participants *mentioned ''no, this is the first time that I saw*

that specific uhm logo'' and this participant added that *''I have not seen it on any recent products that I have purchased"*. Additionally, some participants said *''no, never''*, whereas others noted *''No to be honest no''*. Although the majority of participants had not noticed the Fairtrade label on food products which was launched in South Africa in 2009 and has been present on food products since then (Fairtrade Africa, 2021). The researcher explored local South African retail stores and found the following products containing the Fairtrade label which were Cadbury dairy milk chocolate, Fair valley wine, Green and Black's organic chocolate as well as Illy coffee found in coffee shops and takeaway coffee bars that are also Fairtrade certified. The Fairtrade label was found on the FOPL, which provides the opportunity of direct information to the consumer (El-Abbadi et al. 2020). Therefore, participants might not be purchasing products containing the Fairtrade label or are not evaluating the food products that they purchase in relation to the presence of the Fairtrade label. The participants that indicated that they have not seen the Fairtrade label on food products, were not questioned further in terms of Fairtrade label related questions.

In terms of participants who **have noticed the Fairtrade label** on food products, a significantly smaller group emerged (3 participants**)**. The participants indicated they have seen the Fairtrade logo on food products by noting that *''Yes, I have but I can't pinpoint a specific product''* another participant added that *''not in shops physically but I have noticed it once or twice online''* additionally, another participant mentions that *''yes, but I cannot recall on which products''.* This is a clear indication that participants do not regularly notice the Fairtrade label on food products or are not aware of the Fairtrade label on food products nor the specific products it is associated with.

Table 5.9: Participant quotations in noting the Fairtrade label on food products

Category	Quote
1. No	''No, I have not'' ''I must say no, this is the first time that I saw that specific uhm logo'' ''I would not say so'' ''No to be honest no'' ''I have not seen it on any recent products that I have purchased'' ''Not really no'' ''No'' ''No. Never'' ''No'' ''No'' ''No not yet'' ''No'' ''No actually I haven't''
2. Yes	''Yes, I have but I can't pinpoint a specific product'' ''Yes, but I cannot recall on which products'' ''not in shops physically but I have noticed it once or twice online''

After establishing that three participants recognised the Fairtrade label it was important to continue exploring what these participants understood in terms of the Fairtrade label. This question was specifically asked to determine if the participants had found out more about the Fairtrade label after noticing it on food products. Only the participants that indicated that they have seen the Fairtrade label on food products were further questioned to ensure accurate answers were captured. The participants were therefore asked ***''What do you know about Fairtrade?''*** (Question 1.2.7 see Appendix E). Participants who had not noticed the Fairtrade label on food products were not further asked to explain what they know about it as it was assumed that they would not be able to share any meaningful opinions with the researcher. However, it is also acknowledged that there is a possibility that these participants could have some knowledge about Fairtrade although they had not noticed the label on food products. The responses to this question can be categorised into five aspects in terms of participant knowledge of Fairtrade labelling.

Fairtrade was explained to be (i) similar to the UTZ, having (ii) stricter regulations, and it is an (iii) older certification system, representing (iv) fair trading, and related to (v) social issues. The first example which emerged was Fairtrade being **similar to the UTZ label**, the participant noted in Table 5.10 below, that '*'I know it is like the UTZ''* label. UTZ and Fairtrade certification share similar goals in terms of focussing on social, environmental, and economic goals (Rainforest Alliance, 2021) although specific difference does exist, such as UTZ not negotiating minimum purchase prices for crops from small holder farmers.

Furthermore, **stricter regulations** emerged in terms of the participant explaining Fairtrade labels are *''stricter than UTZ''* labels. UTZ and Fairtrade are both part of ISEAL (International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling) however Fairtrade focusses on poverty (Fairtrade, 2021) and UTZ focusses on creating a sustainable planet (Rainforest Alliance, 2021). Consequently, the two sustainable labels cannot be compared since they focus on different aspects and are therefore not similar in their sustainable approach.

Additionally, a participant indicated that Fairtrade is an **older certification system**. The participant mentioned that Fairtrade *''has been around longer than UTZ''*. UTZ was established in the early 2000's (Ingram et al. 2018) whereas Fairtrade was established in 1992 (Fairtrade, 2019).

Also, **fair trading** emerged as an example which entails that Fairtrade is *''about sustainable trading of products''.* Additionally, another participant mentions that *''it sounds like equality and the work environment and practices are fair in terms of methods and practices''*. It is not clear

whether the participants knew that Fairtrade focusses on Fair trading in terms of fair compensation for products or whether the conclusion was drawn from the label name.

The last category which emerged was **social issues** where the participant noted that Fair trade *''focusses on social issues''*. A study by Pyk and Abu Hatad (2018) found that small scale farmers are motivated by the financial gain of Fairtrade labels rather than the social and environmental benefits through evaluating farmers in Tanzania's motivations for Fairtrade certification. Although the label focusses on social issues this might not be the only reason for farmers to join the sustainable certification schemes since financial benefits are also very attractive.

Table 5.10: Participant quotations regarding knowledge of the Fairtrade label

Category	Quote
1. Similar to the UTZ label	''I know it is like UTZ um certification''
2. Stricter regulations	''it is stricter than UtZ''
3. Older certification system	''has been around longer than UTZ''
4. Fair trading	''it is about sustainable trading of products.'' ''It sounds like equality and the work environment and practices are fair in terms of methods and practices''
5. Social issues	''focusses on social issues''

The above-mentioned question explored the participants' knowledge of the Fairtrade label; the following question intended to explore on which food products the participants have noted the Fairtrade label. Therefore, the three participants were asked: ***''Where have you noticed it (referring to the Fairtrade label), on which product?''*** (Question 1.2.8, Appendix E). A distinct main category emerged from the data analysis namely, food products. The main category further revealed three examples of food products that were noted by participants namely (i) red wine, (ii) Cadbury chocolates, and (iii) liquids.

The three examples, specifically represent food products associated with the Fairtrade label. The Fairtrade label currently certifies the following food products in their certification scheme bananas; cocoa; coffee; flowers; sugar; tea; cotton; fruit; honey; herbs; nuts; rice; wine and many more (Fairtrade, 2021). The participants identified three examples of food products where the Fairtrade label has been noted on, as described in Table 5.11 below. The first food product where the Fairtrade label was related to **wine,** stating that *''I think it was a red wine''*. The second food product, where a participant noted the Fairtrade label was specifically described as **Cadbury chocolates**: *''I know it is on Cadbury chocolates''*. The last food product where the Fairtrade label was noted was described as **liquids**: *''I don't know, I think maybe liquids or something''*. Therefore, the participants identified three food products which

one is certified by the Fairtrade label namely, Cadbury chocolates and one product that is possibly certified by Fairtrade namely red wine although the specific brand was not mentioned. However, the last category described as liquids was not very specific and cannot be confirmed to be certified by Fairtrade. The lack of recall in terms of the Fairtrade label on food products might be due to participants not purchasing Fairtrade certified food products or not examining the food labels for the Fairtrade label.

Table 5.11: Participant quotations of food products on which the Fairtrade label has been noted

Category	Quote
1. Red wine	**''**I think it was a red wine''
2. Cadbury chocolates	'' I know it is on Cadbury chocolates''
3. Liquids	**''**I don't know, I think maybe liquids or something''

After determining on which food products the participants had noted the Fairtrade label the researcher set out to determine what drew the attention of the participants to the Fairtrade label. The participants were therefore asked ***''If you have (noted the Fairtrade label on food products), what specifically drew your attention to the label?''*** (Question 1.2.9 Appendix E). The responses to this question as illustrated in Table 5.12, only reflects one category one participant indicated which was the colours of the label.

Table 5.12: Participant quotations of attributes that drew their attention to the Fairtrade label

Category	Quote
1. Colours	''colours, the blue and green''

In this respect the researcher could not fully establish which elements, regarding the Fairtrade label caught the attention of the participants due to the lack of responses. However, one participant noted that the *''colours, the blue and green''* caught their attention. Marques da Rosa et al. (2019) investigated whether the colour of packaging may impact consumer expectations and found that Brazilian consumers perceive blue-to-green packaging to be healthier. Suggesting that the participant might also perceive blue and green labels as being healthier for the planet.

Although limited data emerged in the previous question it was still important to understand what the participants thought of Fairtrade certification. Products containing the Fairtrade certified label explain that the manufacturer or farmer was audited by international standards

that was audited and certified independently, to meet the social, environmental, and economic standards of Fairtrade (Fairtrade, 2021). The participants were therefore asked ***''When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what do you think about?''*** (Question 1.2.10 Appendix E).

From the qualitative findings generated from this question, four categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.13, that best described participants' thoughts regarding Fairtrade certified products. Fairtrade certified created thoughts of the (i) product origin, whether the product supports a (ii) healthy environment, if (iii) fair working conditions were implemented and the (iv) credibility of the label. Fairtrade labelling can be defined as a certification system that focusses on social, environmental and economic aspects in the agricultural and food sector to support and promote the empowerment of farmers and their workers (Raynolds, 2018).

A region-specific association was made towards **product origin,** as expressed in this quote that Fairtrade incites thoughts of *''where the product comes from''*. Micro-farmers and farm workers are disregarded by the world-wide trading system; therefore, they are represented by the Fairtrade regional producer's network in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean (Fairtrade, 2022). Suggesting that the notion of Fairtrade certified being region specific is an accurate assumption made by the participant. The second category which emerged attributed towards a health-orientated thought which is provoked by Fairtrade certified. The participant said it provokes thoughts of *''a healthy* environment'' which is very similar to what was thought in terms of the UTZ label. However, Damalas and Koutroubas (2018) explain that pesticides used on farmlands may have side effects on the health of the farm workers and possibly the environment. Therefore, Fairtrade certified signifies a **healthy environment** where training is provided for farm workers on how to use pesticides, to not endanger their personal health environment or that of the planet. The third category that emerged from the data referenced **fair working conditions**. This category was explained by the participant as a place where *''people are treated fairly and working conditions are fair for the farmers as well as the worker.''*

Lastly, the data analysis revealed **credibility** which a participant described Fairtrade certified as a system which has *''different specifications that a product should meet than other products''.* Fairtrade certified products have a standard by which all products have to abide in terms of social, economic and environmental standards (Fairtrade, 2022). Thus, Fairtrade certified products must meet certain standards whereas conventional products do not have to abide by these standards. The participants explained that the Fairtrade label incites thoughts of (i) where the product comes from, whether a (ii) healthy environment was kept in mind

during the process, (iii) fair working conditions for the farm workers, and that Fairtrade certified meets (iv) specifications not necessarily met by similar products.

Table 5.13: Participant quotations incited by the meaning of Fairtrade certified

Category	Quote
1. Product origin	''where the product comes from''
2. Healthy environment	''a healthy environment''
3. Fair working conditions	''people are treated fairly and working conditions are fair for the farmers as well as the workers''
4. Credibility	''Fairtrade has different specification that a product should meet than other products''

After establishing the participants experience with UTZ and Fairtrade labels the participants were provided with the actual definitions of both UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. To determine whether the information would change their minds or alter their thoughts about UTZ or Fairtrade sustainable labels by considering the true definitions of these sustainable labels. By providing the definition of each sustainable label the researcher ensured that participants were considering the questions to follow with the same information shared across all participants. Therefore, the participants were exposed to the authentic definitions of both UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels during the online interview via a presentation, to explore the concepts further after they had gained a better understanding brought about through the definition of each of the trademarks. Therefore, these definitions acted as a stimulus to determine if any additional information would emerge. The participants were presented with the below definition of the UTZ sustainable label, thereafter the following question was asked to the participants, ***''Now that you have heard what UTZ stands for what is now important to you about this label?''*** (Question 1.2.11 Appendix E). The participant's response was based on what they knew once the UTZ definition was provided. The definition that was shared with the participants was: *UTZ stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers, their families, and our planet* (Rainforest Alliance, 2022).

After having been presented with the definition of UTZ four attributes emerged that seemed important to the participants where UTZ was concerned. Firstly, **environmental concern** emerged as an important attribute that the participants highlighted in relation to UTZ. They mentioned that *''the product is still being sustainable towards the environment''* and *''That everybody gets on the band wagon so that we can take care of the environment for the future''.* This attribute also surfaced in a previous question, where participants were asked: ***''When***

<u>you hear the word UTZ certified, what do you think about?''.</u> Therefore, participants associated environmental concern with the UTZ certification before the definition was provided suggesting that environmental concern was an important attribute of UTZ to the participants which was not changed by the authentic definition. Furthermore, Gray et al. (2019) mentioned that in recent years environmental concern has evolved into a pressing concern among consumers, which has also been confirmed in this study.

Fair working conditions is another important attribute related to the UTZ certification when the participants say: *''If something is UTZ certified no harm will come to the employee"* and that the *''the farmers are being protected"*. Another participant added that *''no child labour used with farming practices''* and this participant mentioned *''the working conditions for the farmers are fair and equal''.* A study by Priyanath et al. (2018) found that UTZ certified farmers in Sri Lanka showed improved working conditions and management practices after evaluating their efficiency under the UTZ certification. Suggesting that the UTZ certification is not only beneficial for the environment and the individual but also for the farmers and the farm workers.

A further attribute that the participants pointed out as important of UTZ certified was **credibility.** Participants felt it important to mention '*'When I see the UTZ sign, I would hope that it is really sustainable"* and another mentioned *''You know there are no undergoing deals regarding the production everything is above board''.* In other words, it seemed important to some participants that what the UTZ certification stands for is actually implemented and practiced. The UTZ certification system implements the UTZ code of conduct, which includes good agricultural practices, social requirements as well as environmental requirements (Rainforest Alliance, 2022). For example, the UTZ code of conduct was implemented in the Ivory coast in 2008 to improve sustainability within the cocoa supply chain (Ingram et al. 2014). By implementing their code of conduct UTZ ensures credibility of their label.

Lastly, the **availability** of food products containing the UTZ certification was also mentioned by one participant as an important attribute since it would be more accessible if *''more cocoa products and chocolate packaging contained the label''* as seen below in Table 5.14. A study by Pop and Frunza (2020) found that availability of UTZ certified products in stores fluctuates considerably in Romania. Indicating that UTZ certified products are available, unfortunately it is still inconsistently available in retail stores in South Africa.

Table 5.14: Participant quotations of the importance of the UTZ label after definition was provided

Category	Quote
1. Environmental concern	**''**If you see the label, you know it comes from a good place and contributing to the environment'' ''That everybody gets on the band wagon so that we can take care of the environment for the future'' ''Definitely that the product is still being sustainable towards the environment'' ''Food production and provision thereof doing it in a sustainable way'' ''It means that sustainable farming is used to produce the products, it is certified against measures'' **''**Just what they stand for, that they encourage sustainable farming and general wellbeing of their products'' ''Promoting a healthy environment''
2. Fair working conditions	''the working conditions for the farmers are fair and equal'' ''it is for the people, for everyone concerned from the labourer to the supplier'' ''helping the farmers'' ''everyone is taken care of'' **''**The fact that the farmers are being protected'' helping the farmers'' ''it will be good for the farmers'' ''If something is UTZ certified no harm will come to the employee'' ''no child labour used with farming practices''
3. Credibility	''The credibility of the label'' ''When I see the UTZ sign, I would Hope that it is really sustainable'' **''**You know there are no undergoing deals regarding the production everything is above board''
4. Availability	''more cocoa products and chocolate packaging contained the label''

The researcher gained a better understanding of the UTZ trademark, after the authentic definition was provided. It was also important to gain the same understanding of the Fairtrade trademark. Therefore, the participants were presented with the authentic definition of Fairtrade and asked: **''Now that you have heard what Fairtrade stands for what is now important to you about this label?''** (Question 1.2.12 Appendix E). The participants' responses were based on what they knew once the Fairtrade definition had been provided. The definition that was shared with the participants was: Fairtrade certification is a product certification system where social, economic and environmental aspects of production are certified against Fairtrade Standards for Producers and Traders. The Fairtrade system monitors the buying and the selling of the product until it is consumer packaged and labelled (Fairtrade, 2022). The participants indicated four important attributes which they believed the Fairtrade trademark represented namely (i) fairness, (ii) credibility, (iii) availability, and (iv) education.

The participants indicated that **Fairness** is important because it *''ensures the whole process is fair''* as well as this participant who mentions that *''everything is done fairly and treated equally'',* as seen below in Table 5.15. A previous question also initiated the same response, after the participants were asked: ***''What do you know about Fairtrade?''.*** Therefore, participants associate the Fairtrade trademark with all round fairness from farm to fork, which

was of importance to the participants before the definition was provided and reiterated after the definition was provided. Dragusanu and Nunn (2018) corroborate the participants' notion of fairness by mentioning that Fairtrade originated in the Netherlands in 1988, to ensure fair wages for coffee farmers. Therefore, substantiating the participants' responses that Fairtrade is about fairness to all.

Additionally, participants also indicated that Fairtrade stands for **credibility** when mentioning participants who mentioned that it stands for ''*something that shows that it is certified in terms of a measuring system".* Credibility was also mentioned in a previous question, when the participants were asked: ***''When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what do you think about?''.*** This indicates that participants were aware that Fairtrade is credible through doing what they are saying they are doing.

Furthermore, two new concepts emerged based on the definition which was not heard before namely: (i) education and (ii) availability. The participants noted that Fairtrade stands for **education,** to support and *''educate your customers more about what Fairtrade is".* Fairtrade labels can easily be found on mainstream shelves in first world countries (Ruggeri et al. 2021), however, South Africa is a developing country and has not prioritised the use of Fairtrade labels resulting in not all retailers stocking Fairtrade certified food products. Therefore, the consumers need to be informed about the label to spread awareness regarding the benefits thereof, to create a larger need for Fairtrade as sustainable label on food products.

Lastly, a participant indicated that Fairtrade stands for **availability** by mentioning that it ''*should be a precondition for other labels to also get on board".* However, Fairtrade sustainable labels are a voluntary certification system which aims to improve not only environmental issues but also social issues (Raynolds, 2018). Although the Fairtrade sustainable label is a voluntary food label, one participant indicated that it should be part of the necessary information provided on food labels, suggesting that sustainability and the protection of the planet is of importance to the participants.

Table 5.15: Participant quotations of the importance of the Fairtrade label after the definition was provided

Category	Quote
1. Fairness	''ensures the whole process is fair'' ''I think the name says it all, everything is done fairly and treated equally'' ''It shows me it's important that it supports the environment and human rights'' '' ethical movement of a product'' ''The first word that comes to mind is fair '' ''all the steps are sustainable''
2. Credibility	''the company actually upholds the standards that they claim'' ''The companies undergo procedures to ensure they are conforming to the regulations'' ''it is environment sustainable and sustainably sourced according to regulations''

	''the trade between farm to fork went through all the right processes'' 'It sounds like Fairtrade is kind of a safety stop for the products'' ''make sure that the social, economic and environmental aspects are following standards''
3. Education	''Educate your customers more about what Fairtrade is'' ''Well, I would love to know more on the products that I purchase '' ''I would like to research it to know more''
4. Availability	''It should be a precondition for other labels to also get on board''

After determining what the UTZ and Fairtrade trademarks represent to the participants, after the authentic definitions were provided, it was necessary to establish the most important aspects pertaining to sustainable food product labelling. The participants were therefore asked: ***''Following on what you have just heard, what would you say are the most important things about sustainable food product labelling to you?''*** (Question 1.2.13 Appendix E). The participants' responses created five categories, as seen below in Table 5.16, that represents the most important attributes of sustainable food product labelling (i) credibility, (ii) education, (iii) sustainable future, (iv) beneficial, and (v) quality.

The data revealed that participants perceive **credibility** as one of the important aspects of sustainable food product labels due to the label indicating that it is '*'made according to a sustainable process''* but also '*'gives me as the customer a better idea of what they are doing*'. Another participant added that it is important because *'' it is certified in terms of a measuring system''* and this participant who adds that it is *''made according to a sustainable process''*. A study by Rossi and Rivetti (2020) found that a formal sustainable label is more effective in influencing consumer trust of the integrity of the sustainable label in South Italy, suggesting that consumers are looking towards a formal label to indicate that the food product is credible in terms of sustainability. Credibility was mentioned in the previous questions relating towards UTZ and Fairtrade, when the participants were asked: **''Now that you have heard what Fairtrade stands for what is now important to you about this label?'' and ''Now that you have heard what UTZ stands for what is now important to you about this label?''.** This indicates that participants highly value the credibility of sustainable labels.

Additionally, **education** emerged as an important aspect of sustainable food product labelling given that a participant mentioned that *''education is important since we are in a third world country''* it was also noted that sustainable labels should '*'be more out there so that people can understand what it is about''*. Maesano et al. (2019) mention that the advantages of sustainable labelled food products are not thoroughly communicated to the consumers. It was noted by the participants in this study that sustainable food labels should be explained and marketed better towards consumers and this notion is corroborated by Maesano et al. (2019). Education was also mentioned in the previous question which asked: ***''When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what do you think about?'',*** reiterating the importance of providing

consumers with information regarding sustainable labels to educate them towards the benefits of such labels.

The data also revealed that **sustainable futures** are also an important aspect to the participants which indicated that sustainable food product labelling is important, since it is *''good for the future, so our children will have hope and food security''*, another participant added that *''we need to do as much as possible to preserve the planet''*. Khan and Zaman (2018) state that the future generations need to focus on dynamic social, economic and environmental sustainability through looking at all aspects of sustainability. In this instance the participants in this study are already focused on a sustainable future as Khan and Zaman (2018) suggest, possibly already reflecting the importance of sustainability to them.

Moreover, participants added that sustainable food product labels are important because it is *''**beneficial** to the farmers, consumers, workers, and the environment'' to which another* participant added that sustainable labels are also *''beneficial from the producer to the consumer''*. Wang and Gao (2017) mention that sustainable labels can assist with food safety, the environment and eco systems as well as food security. The study by Wang and Gao corroborates the participants' notions in this study that sustainable labels are beneficial for all parties involved in producing sustainable products.

Lastly, one participant indicated that *''if its sustainable it should be **quality**''*, in other words, the participant is expressing the expectation that a sustainable product would be of high standard. A study by Sadílek (2019) found that when considering different consumer segments in Czechia, consumers expected a value-added quality attributed to products containing a sustainable label which seemed the same expectation the participant in the current study expressed.

Table 5.16: Participant quotations regarding the importance of the sustainable labels after definitions were provided

Category	Quote
1. Credibility	''To put the label there for actual reasons not just marketing'' '' if the label is on packaging, that tells you everything that you need to know'' ''Companies undergo inspections to make sure they are adhering to regulations'' ''labelling on sustainability guarantees that procedures are done the way it should be'' ''It gives me as a customer a better idea of what they are doing'' '' it is certified in terms of a measuring system'' ''made according to sustainable process''
2. Education	''I rarely look at the BOP to see if there is any sustainability but if it is on the front with a short description of what it actually is, I think that would help''

	‘’I think education is important since we are in a third world country’’ ‘’Maybe just be more out there so that people can understand what it is about’’
3. Sustainable future	‘’good for the future, so our children will have hope and food security’’ ‘’We need to do as much as possible to preserve the planet’’ ‘’I would prefer a sustainable label for future generations which is long term’’
4. Beneficial for all parties	‘’Beneficial to the farmers, consumers, workers and the environment’’ ‘’beneficial from the producer to the consumer’’
5. Quality	‘’if its sustainable it should be quality’’

After determining the most important aspects of sustainable labels it was important to establish whether the participants thought that South African consumers know anything about sustainable labels. The participants were therefore asked: ***‘’In your opinion do you think sustainable labels are well known amongst South Africans?’’*** (Question 1.2.15 Appendix E). Two participant groups emerged, as seen below in Table 5.17, in relation to whether sustainable labels are well known among South Africans. The first group indicated that (i) yes, they are aware of sustainable labels, and the second group indicated that (ii) no, they are not aware of sustainable labels.

Most of the participants (12 participants) in this study indicated that they **do not think that sustainable labels are well known among South African consumers**. This was found in responses such as ‘*’I would not necessarily say so’’, ‘’no, not that I am aware of’’* and *‘’No, I do not think so’’ to name a few.* Furthermore, four participants indicated that they **do think sustainable labels are well known among South African consumers**. The participants explained that *‘’yes, consumers might be familiar with some of the labelling’’* and *‘’I think it is well known among the educated’’* and another participant mentions *‘’some of them not everyone’’.*

However, participants from the group who thinks that **sustainable labels are not well known among South African consumers** suggest that a lack of education might be the reason for sustainable labels not being known among South Africans when they say ‘*’No, I do not think so, I think most of our population is under educated’’*. Another participant adds that *‘’No, I do not think South Africans are well educated in terms of these labels’’* and this participant adds that *‘’especially people in rural areas do not have the knowledge’’*. On the other hand, a participant from the group who thinks **sustainable labels are known among South African consumers** thought that it might be more known amongst educated consumers when she says ‘’I think it is well known among the educated’’. A study by Vecchio et al. (2015) evaluating the usefulness of sustainable food labels among Italian consumers found low familiarity regarding consumer knowledge and understanding. Therefore, suggesting that consumer education regarding sustainable labels is not only a problem in South-Africa, a third world country, but also in Italy, a first world country.

Table 5.17: Participant quotations in terms of sustainable labels being identified amongst South African consumers

Category	Quote
1. No	''I would not necessarily say so'' ''No, I do not think so'' ''No, I do not think so, I think most of our population is under educated'' ''Not necessarily among all of them'' ''No not at all'' ''No, I do not think South Africans are well educated in terms of these labels'' ''No'' ''No not that I am aware of.'' ''No especially people in rural areas do not have the knowledge'' ''I don't think so'' ''I am not sure, but I do not think it is very well known'' ''I don't think so''
2. Yes	''Yes, consumers might be familiar with some of the labelling'' ''I think it is well known among the educated'' ''Some of them not everyone'' ''Hopefully because on my side I didn't notice it before I worked with the label''

Once the researcher established that participants do not think sustainable labels were known among South-Africans it was important to establish whether the participants thought UTZ, and Fairtrade certifications specifically were known among South-Africans. Therefore, the participants were asked: ***''Now that you have heard some of the clarifications to each of the labels, do you think UTZ, and Fairtrade certification is well known among South African consumers?''*** (Question 1.2.16 Appendix E). The data revealed three groups of participants, as seen below in Table 5.18, in relation to whether UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are well known among South African consumers. The first group indicated that (i) no, UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are not well known among South Africans, (ii) UTZ is more known than Fairtrade, and (iii) UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are minimally known among South-Africans.

The seven participants who indicated that **UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are not well known among South African** consumers did so by mentioning '*''no, because I think South Africans are behind in food labelling''* another participant mentions that *''no, neither of them in my opinion''* additionally a participant adds that *''no, because South Africans are not properly educated about food labels''.* Furthermore, four participants indicated that **UTZ is more well known among South African consumers than Fairtrade**. Subsequently, participants mention that *''I think UTZ is more well-known than Fairtrade''* and indicate that *''I am not sure about Fairtrade, but UTZ yes''.* The last four participants indicated that **UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are minimally known among South African consumers.** Participants mention that UTZ and Fairtrade are *''not extensively known but I have seen it''* moreover

another participant adds that they *''might be aware of the labels, but they might not be aware of what it actually stands for''.* One participant abstained from answering this question.

In the previous question participants were asked **''In your opinion do you think sustainable labels are well known amongst South Africans?'',** to which four participants indicated that sustainable labels are known among South African consumers. However, only two of those four specific participants suggested that (i) UTZ is more well-known than Fairtrade among South African consumers and the other participant suggested that (ii) UTZ and Fairtrade certifications are minimally known among South African consumers. The remaining two of the four participants indicated to this question that UTZ and Fairtrade certification are not known among South African consumers. Therefore, it is suggested that these participants believed sustainable labels in general are known among South African consumers. The specific sustainable labels that the participants are referring to were not mentioned. However, UTZ and Fairtrade certifications specifically are not known among South African consumers, which suggests that awareness needs to be created specifically among UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable food labels among South African consumers.

Table 5.18: Participant quotations in terms of South African consumers' identifying of UTZ, and Fairtrade labels

Category	Quote
1. No	''I do not think so'' ''I do not think it is well-known'' ''No, because most South Africans are not properly educated about labels'' ''No, I think South Africans are behind in food labelling'' ''I don't think so, I am studying consumer science and I'm not sure what it is'' ''No, neither of them in my opinion'' ''I don't think so''
2. UTZ more than Fairtrade	''I think UTZ is more well-known than Fairtrade'' ''UTZ maybe, Fairtrade not as much, in my opinion'' ''I am not sure about Fairtrade but UTZ yes'' ''I don't know Fairtrade, but I know UTZ''
3. Minimally	''not extensively but I have seen it'' ''might be aware of the labels, but they might not be aware of what it actually stands for'' 'I think it is minimal'' ''I think some of the people who think the future is important will know about it''

After determining whether UTZ and Fairtrade labels are known among South Africans, the researcher wanted to establish whether the participants would purchase food products with UTZ or Fairtrade labels. Hence, the researcher asked: ***''Will you purchase a product with one of these labels? And why will you or why will you not?''*** (Question 1.2.17 Appendix E). Subsequently, two main categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.19, namely (i) **yes**, I would purchase food products with UTZ and Fairtrade labels and (ii) **no**, I would not purchase food labels with UTZ or Fairtrade labels.

The first significantly larger group (14 participants) indicated: (i) **yes, I would purchase food products containing UTZ and Fairtrade labels**. The reasons for supporting products with sustainability certification were because these products resembled: (i.i) sustainability, were (i.ii) beneficial to the consumer, (i.iii) supported farmers, and (i.iv) provided self-gratification. The second group which consisted only of two participants indicated (ii) **no, I would not purchase food products with UTZ and Fairtrade labels** was attributed to her (ii.i) craving related purchases, and (ii.ii) a lack of label use.

The first category which emerged were participants who **would purchase food products with UTZ and Fairtrade labels**. Participants mentioned that ‘*’I would be more inclined to purchase products with the labels”* and mentioned *‘’I will”* and *‘I will yes”*. Participants further explained why they are inclined to purchase food products with UTZ and Fairtrade labelling present. The first reason emerged as sustainability where participants mention that *‘’I would be inclined to purchase; I would like to help sustainable development”*. Also, this participant who said *‘’Yes, I will, I prefer to buy something from a better source”*. The second reason described that purchasing food products with UTZ and Fairtrade labels are beneficial. The participant mentioned that *‘’I would say so due to the advantages that they hold to everyone’’* another adds that *‘’ because it will benefit all these people”* and this one who states that *‘’I would say so, due to the advantages that they hold to everyone”*. The third reason which emerged from the data was the inclination to purchase products with UTZ and Fairtrade labels due to it supporting farmers. A participant indicates that *‘’Buying a product can help farmers, I would like to help”.* Furthermore, the last reason to emerge with one response, referring to self-gratification. The participant mentioned *that ‘’I think I will, it makes me feel good, if you have the money”*.

The second group of participants which emerged from the data was: **no, I would not purchase food products with the UTZ and Fairtrade labels on.** Although this was a substantially smaller category with only two participants, the participants mentioned their reasons for their decision. The first reason was due to cravings, a participant indicated that *‘’I would usually buy something that I am craving”* and not necessarily a food product with UTZ or Fairtrade labels present. The other participant indicated lack of label use by mentioning that *‘’I don’t read packaging”.* A study in Ghana by Madilo et al. (2020) found that consumers in Ghana often read food labels after assessing consumers' use, knowledge as well as understanding of food labels.

Table 5.19: Participant quotations in terms of intention to purchase food products with sustainable labels

Category	Quote
1. Yes, I would purchase food products containing UTZ or Fairtrade labels	''I will definitely'' ''I will'' ''I will yes'' ''I would be more inclined to purchase products with the labels on'' ''Well, I have before''
1.1 Sustainability	''I would be inclined to purchase such product because I would like to help sustainable development'' ''Yes, I will I prefer to buy something from a better source'' ''Yes, I believe I will I believe it's important to sustain the future that's safe for the environment and people and farming''
1.2 Beneficial	''Yes, I would purchase a product with those labels because of the benefits that the parties involved get out of it'' ''I would say so due to the advantages that they hold to everyone'' ''because it will benefit all these people'' ''I will try and purchase sustainable labels since it is for a good cause''
1.3 Supporting farmers	''Buying a product can help farmers, I would like to help''
1.4 Self gratification	''I think I will, like I explained earlier it makes me feel good''
2. No, I would not purchase food products containing UTZ or Fairtrade labels	
2.1 Craving	''I would usually buy something that I am craving''
2.2 Lack of label use	''I don't read packaging''

5.4.3 Establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision (Sub-objective 1.3)

After exploring the UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable label in more specific terms. This sub-objective aimed to gain a better idea regarding the importance of environmental concern among participants and the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision of food products. The participants were therefore asked***: ''Are you concerned about the environment in general?*** (Question 1.3.1 Appendix E).

All sixteen participants, as seen below in Table 5.20, indicated that they are concerned about the environment, through statements such as ‘*''Yes, I am extremely concerned about the environment''*, *''Yes, I definitely am, I think that the environment has been damaged in the past few years that I have been alive''*, *''Yes, I believe so''* and *''Yes, I am'' as some examples of their expressions.* This finding suggests that the participants' concern is similar to international consumers as De Boer and Aiking (2021) revealed consumers' environmental concern, more specifically their concern regarding climate change, after exploring Europe's new farm to fork strategy which aims to protect the environment.

Table 5.20: Participant quotations of concern for the environment

Category	Quote
Concern for environment	''I would say yes'' ''Yes, I am extremely concerned about the environment'' ''Yes, I am. I think it is a little bit of everything, we are all part of a nice eco system and if we disrupt one element everything else will suffer from it'' ''Yes'' ''YES!'' ''Yes, I definitely am, I think that the environment has been damaged in the past few years that I have been alive '' ''Yes, I am'' ''Yes'' ''Yes, I am'' ''Yes'' ''Yes, I am!'' ''Yes, I am'' ''Yes, I am'' ''I am I hate littering!'' ''At the moment definitely, it is a concern if you think long term, not a lot of people know a lot about this, so they don't try to maintain it they take it for granted'' ''Yes, I believe so''

The opening question established that participants are concerned about the environment. The next question specifically intended to establish what particularly concerns them where the environment is concerned. Therefore, the researcher asked the following question: ''***what concerns you in particular?***'' (Question 1.3.2 Appendix E). Three categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.21, namely (i) human factor, (ii) climate change, and (iii) plastic pollution.

Participants indicated that the biggest environmental concern is the human factor who is responsible to take care of the planet as well as being the cause for much of the destruction on the planet when they say: ''*there is no planet B, we have to take care of what we have''* another participant mentioned *''we are killing the planet and it all started with us humans''* and this participant who mentions *''people destroying everything''.* The human factor concerns raised by the participants are aligned to what Sagala et al. (2019) propose in that the current environmental issues are due to the negative nature of human beings. Other participants indicated that climate change is the biggest concern by mentioning *''global warming''* and ''*I would say mostly climate change causing heat waves, droughts, water shortage and ground erosion''*. Climate change is associated with rising temperatures worldwide (Ahmed, 2020) which is the concern also raised by participants in this study. Lastly, plastic pollution emerged as an environmental concern among participants. The participants indicated ''*non-recyclable plastic* " as an environmental concern as well as ''*Pollution such as ocean pollution – plastic''* and *''littering''.* Cotter (2019) states that plastics were created to assist humans however now it is damaging the environment, which is a concern raised by the participants in this study.

These specific environmental concerns mentioned by the participants suggest that the environment could potentially benefit from sustainable labels due to their focus being not only on people and the economy but also on the environment.

Table 5.21: Participant's quotations of specific environmental concerns

Category	Quote
1. Human factor	''There is no planet B we must take care of what we have!'' ''We are killing the planet and it all started with us as humans'' ''Just in general the way things are changing and degrading, the things humans do to the environment, it is not getting better'' ''The fact that people are not thinking about the consequences of what they are busy doing'' ''people destroying everything''
2. Climate change	''I would say mostly climate change causing heat waves, droughts, water shortage and ground erosion'' ''Global warming'' ''Hmmm global warming'' ''Mostly global warming'' ''my focus is actually on renewable energy to move away from fossil fuel''
3. Plastic pollution	'' Non-recyclable plastic '' ''like packaging it should be recyclable to help the environment'' ''Pollution such as ocean pollution – plastic'' ''Uhm pollution and littering that is the most concerning'' ''Littering''

Once the specific environmental concerns of the participants were established, it was necessary to determine what drives the participants' consideration of purchasing food products with sustainable labels. Therefore, the researcher asked the following question: ***''Do you think your concern for the environment is driving your consideration of these labels when purchasing food products? If not, then what is the major driver that is making you consider food products with these labels? If not the environment, then what is the most important thing that is driving your attention to these labels?***'' (Question 1.3.3 Appendix E).

Most of the participants (13 participants), as seen in Table 5.22 below, indicated that their concern for the environment drives their consideration to purchase sustainable labelled food products. Participants mentioned ''*Yes I do think so''* and *''Yes there are a lot to consider when buying; where applicable I try and buy sustainable labels''.* Another participant added that *''yes I think so because it fights for environmental issues''* additionally this participant adds that ''*yes, I believe so because I would like to make a difference in the world to have a sustainable future''.* Trudel (2019) stated that consumers do not want to compromise the environment through their product purchases. It is suggested that most of the participants within this study, would purchase sustainable labelled food products because they are of the opinion that these products may not be as harmful to the planet than products without the sustainable labels.

Even though most of the participants are driven by their concern for the environment it may not be enough to ensure that participants purchase sustainable products as one participant indicated ‘*’No not at all. I don’t think about recyclable or do it as we should to improve the environment”*. This points to the importance of other facts that overshadow the importance of sustainable product purchases. Whereas another participant indicated that *‘’I do not think before, but especially now that you have made me aware again by having this conversation it will definitely influence my decision in the future”*. This participant highlighted the opportunity to change their consumption which emerged earlier in the study when participants were asked: ***“In which way does environmental sustainability influence your decision to buy a food product?”***. Suggesting that consumers who are not driven by environmental concern to purchase sustainable labelled food products might be driven by it if they understand the benefits thereof and are educated in what sustainable labelling is. This notion is supported by Vittersø and Tangeland (2015) who found that consumers are more likely to change towards sustainable food options when information and food labelling schemes are available by looking at the role of consumers in transition towards sustainable food.

Table 5.22: Participant’s quotations in terms of whether environmental concern drives their purchasing decisions

Category	Quote
Yes	‘’Yes, I do think so’’ ‘’yes, I definitely think so because firstly it makes me feel better about myself ‘’ ‘’Yes, there are a lot to consider when buying, where applicable I try and buy sustainable labels’’ ‘’Yes’’ ‘’Yes, it is ‘’ ‘’Yes, I think so because it fights for environmental issues’’ ‘’Yes’’ ‘’Uhm what matters to me is which product packaging is recyclable so yes, my concern is driving me’’ ‘’Um yes, I think so because I would rather buy a brand name like WW because they have lots of quality and they won’t litter in the ocean’’ ‘’Yes definitely’’ ‘’Definitely’’ ‘’Yes, it might affect my thoughts in purchasing a product’’ ‘’Yes, I believe so because I would like to make a difference in the world to have a sustainable future’’
No	‘’No not at all. I don’t think about recyclable, or do it as we should to improve the environment’’
Changeable consumer	‘’I do not think before, but especially now that you have made me aware again by having this conversation it will definitely influence my decision in the future’’

As soon as the researcher established that the participants are driven by environmental concerns, it was important to establish whether the participants would be more inclined to purchase a product containing sustainable certifications. Because environmental sustainability is becoming more important day by day to reduce the harmful impacts of production practices on the environment (Hameed et al. 2019). Hence, the researcher asked the participants: ***‘’Would you be more likely to purchase a product if it had one of these certifications***

(UTZ or Fairtrade) printed on it?''. Fifteen participants, as seen below in Table 5.23, indicated that they would be more likely to purchase a product if it had UTZ of Fairtrade certifications printed on it, through statements such as*: ''Yes, then you will visibly be able to tell if the product is sustainable without doing lots of research''*, *''Yes definitely''*, *''If I had to compare it to something else, let's say there are two of the same products next to each other and the one has the label, and the other doesn't I would choose the one with the label''* and *''Yes, I think yes''*. Trudel (2019) stated that consumers do not want to compromise the environment through their purchases. The participants' willingness to purchase products with sustainable certifications printed on them suggest that they are willing to potentially assist the environment by purchasing products that are potentially not as harmful as conventional products. However, one participant indicated *''No''* they are not likely to purchase a product if it had one of these certifications printed on it. The reason for this answer was not explained to the researcher.

Table 5.23: Participant's quotations of likeliness of purchasing a product if it contained a sustainable label

Category	Quote
Yes	''yes, if I am aware of what the label actually means then I will be more inclined to purchase such a product'' ''Yes, I think yes'' ''Yes, then you will visibly be able to tell if the product is sustainable without doing lots of research'' **''**Yes'' **''**Yes'' ''Yes definitely**''** ''If I had to compare it to something else, let's say there are two of the same products next to each other and the one has the label, and the other doesn't I would choose the one with the label'' ''Uhh Yes'' ''Yes'' ''Yes, I would'' ''definitely if I go to the store with this in mind right now'' ''I do not always look for them but Yes because it makes me feel good if I see it on the label'' ''Like I said Jah I bought the WW products with the UTZ labels on it'' ''Yes, I would'' ''Yes, I would''
No	''No''

5.5 The influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels have on the intention to purchase food products (Objective 2)

Objective 2 examined the influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels have on the intention to purchase food products. As this study focused on these two specific sustainable labels found on South African food products, it was deemed important to consider participants' perception related to the influence it might have on their purchasing intention. Owing to the fact that food

manufacturers are improving their environmental stance through applying sustainable labels to their food product packaging (Szabo and Webster, 2021). Cho et al. (2017) compared brand processing and information availability in a retail laboratory-based experiment and found that if the sustainable information is easily accessible on the packaging it suggests positive evaluations of the product. Reiterating the importance of establishing the influence Fairtrade and UTZ might have on the consumers' purchasing intention.

Consumers generally have different expectations of products and services in terms of price and quality (Samadara et al. 2019). Therefore, it is important to gain insight into participants' expectations of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels to ensure manufacturers, marketers and sustainable labelling schemes can meet consumer expectations. The participants were asked: ***''What do you expect when you see Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels?''*** (Question 2.1 Appendix E). From the responses to this question four categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.24, namely, (i) environmentally friendly, (ii) credibility, particular to (iii) product quality, and (iv) price sensitivity, surrounding these labels, that related to the participants' expectation when they see Fairtrade or UTZ certified labels.

Sidali et al. (2016) found that consumer expectations concerning sustainable food labelling included five categories namely: (i) ethical traits, (ii) naturalness, (iii) health aspects, (iv) farming practices, and (v) improvement. Four categories emerged from the data analysis of which two of the four categories namely credibility and environmentally friendly overlap with the categories Sidali et al. (2016) found. Nevertheless, two new categories emerged in this study that were not identified by Sidali et al. (2016) namely product quality and price sensitivity. The first category: **environmentally friendly,** reflect participants' expectation of sustainable food labels to be *''good for the environment''* and that these labels would ensure a *''sustainable future that helps the environment''.* Liu et al. (2019) state that consumers are aided by sustainable certifications to evaluate whether a product is environmentally friendly or not, suggesting that consumers are aware that Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels indicate environmental friendliness.

The second category which emerged in relation to participants' expectation of Fairtrade and UTZ labels was **credibility.** In this instance the participants indicated that they expect the product to be *''trustworthy''*, *''law abiding''*, and *''abiding by the rules''*. Jager and Weber (2020) found that credibility is mediated by product messages, product perceived sustainability and quality. Consequently, suggesting that consumers need sustainable labels to echo exactly how the product containing the sustainable label was certified sustainable, through marketing messages which lead to education in terms of how the specific sustainable label abides by their rules and regulations to ensure the product is indeed sustainable.

The third category which emerged from the data was product **quality** which was noted by the participants as something that they expect from Fairtrade and UTZ *labels ''I expect a good quality product''* and *'' I expect good quality and packaging and ingredients''*. A study by Petrescu et al. (2020) found that consumers use freshness, taste as well as appearance to assess food quality. Therefore, suggesting that participants not only expect products containing the UTZ and Fairtrade label to protect the planet but also to look and taste good.

The last category to emerge from the data was **price sensitivity** which was in this instance only mentioned by one participant that expects that the ‘*’prices should be market related''*. Ivanova et al. (2018) found that consumers from the United States are willing to pay a premium for sustainable labelled food products. Yet it is noteworthy to acknowledge that the United States is a first world country, placing these consumers in a better position to pay premiums for sustainable labelled food products. Furthermore, Ivanova et al. (2018) determined that products showcasing sustainable labels impacted consumers to a point where they would pay a premium for it. However, this study suggests that participants of higher income in a developing country might also be open toward purchasing sustainable labelled food products at a higher price point because of the environmental and quality benefits.

Table 5.24: Participants' quotations regarding their expectation when encountering UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels

Category	Quote
1. Environmentally friendly	**''**good for the environment'' ''good for the environment'' ''not in a way that would deplete the resources or harm the environment'' ''not harm my surroundings'' ''healthier for the environment'' ''sustainable future that helps the environment'' ''has been made in a sustainable way'' ''used in a sustainable way'' ''sustainably sourcing materials'' ''produced sustainably'' ''it stems back from where it comes from and how it was made'' **''**I think it is a good start, there is someone who cares about the environment'' ''also trying to give back in some way to the environment and the people'' ''not going to harm me in any''
2. Credibility	''law abiding'' ''abiding by the rules'' ''trustworthy'' ''standards they are adhering to are implemented'' ''with all of their systems in place to ensure good stuff'' ''people checking the standards'' ''standards which other products don't have'' ''a checklist that sustainable products were used to make the product''
3. Product quality	''Quality. The whole package'' ''I would expect quality'' ''I expect good quality and packaging and ingredients'' ''I expect quality'' ''I expect a good quality product'' ''A safer product''

4. Price sensitive'	''prices should be market related''

The opening question established the participants' expectations in terms of Fairtrade and UTZ sustainable labelling. The following question intended to establish the importance of sustainable labelling when it comes to food products. Therefore, the question that was asked was presented as: ''***How important is environmental sustainability to you when it comes to food products?''*** (Question 2.2 Appendix E). Two groups of participants emerged from the data, participants who indicated environmental sustainability is (i) not important in terms of food products and participants who value (ii) the importance thereof when purchasing food products.

A few participants from the first group stated that environmental sustainability is *''not really important''* and *''not that much''* of an importance to them. However, most participants in the second group indicated that sustainability was important to them when it comes to food products, such as represented through UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels. The participants specifically mentioned as seen below in Table 5.25, that it is *''Very important''* and *''I feel very inclined''*. The group of participants who valued the importance of environmental sustainability of food products indicated two characteristics of importance in relation to the importance of environmentally sustainable food products which were **sustainably action driven** and secondly a **philosophical viewpoint to environmental sustainability** of food products.

The participants who **take action** to ensure that the food products they purchase are sustainable mentioned that they *''shop less products that are not sustainable, because of my concerns for the environment''* they also *''act in a sustainable way''* and stated that *''everyone is more familiar with the urgency to focus on using products in a more sustainable way''*. A study conducted in Vietnam by Nguyen et al. (2019) investigated the effects of factors contributing to attitude and purchasing behaviour of organic meat, their findings suggest that consumers are concerned about the environment however their positive attitude does not translate into an actual purchase. However, the data which emerged from this study is contradicting findings by Nguyen et al. (2019). Since the participants not only indicated the importance of environmental sustainability of food products but also suggest the characteristics of going into action and deliberately purchasing sustainable food products. Furthermore, the participants who described a characteristic in terms of a **philosophical viewpoint** indicated that they are *''learning about it, but I am keen to learn about it more because that is the future''* as well as stated that '' *I think I am becoming more aware of the environment since I have not done it so much in the past, I am educating myself, after educating myself I will go into action''*. According to (Mazac and Tuomisto, 2020) sustainable

philosophical perspectives could assist with the transition to sustainable diets which could possibly assist with sustainable food purchases.

Table 5.25: Participant quotations of the importance of environmentally sustainable food products

Categories	Quote
1. Not important	''not that important'' ''not that much'' ''not important
2. Important	''I feel very inclined'' ''like it to be more important'' ''Very important'' ''very important'' ''Rather important.'' ''quite important'' ''very important'' ''very important'' ''quite important'' ''very important''
2.1 Sustainably action driven	''act in a sustainable way'' ''shop less products that are not sustainable, because of my concerns for the environment'' ''think I am helping if I buy these labels'' ''processed sustainably'' ''how the planet is going'' ''everyone is more familiar with the urgency to focus on using products in a more sustainable way''
2.2 Philosophical viewpoint	'' think I am becoming more aware of the environment since I have not done it so much in the past, I am educating myself. After educating myself I will go into action'' ''we get back what we put in so if you disregard the environment we are going to get less and less back and that may result in a problem'' ''learning about it, but I am keen to learn about it more because that is the future''

After determining the importance of sustainability when it comes to food products, participants were asked: ***"In which way does environmental sustainability influence your decision to buy a food product?"*** (Question 2.3 Appendix E). The data revealed two main categories, as seen below in Table 5.26, in relation to how environmental sustainability would influence their decision to purchase a food product.

The first category which emerged from the data is described as a group of participants who **would not be influenced** by environmental sustainability, in this category participants indicated that *''it would not influence the product that I choose''.* Furthermore, a participant mentioned that environmental sustainability *''does not influence it''* another participant mentioned that environmental sustainability *''Usually not so much''*. These participants were tracked through their responses in the individual online interviews and resulted in dissimilarities with findings illustrated in Table 5.21. The same participants who indicated in Table 5.21 that environmental sustainability is important, now mention that environmental sustainability would not influence their decision to purchase a sustainable labelled food

product. Yamoah and Acquaye (2019) found that consumers have a positive attitude towards sustainable products, however, their actual behaviour does not translate the positive attitude into action pointing to the attitude-behaviour gap that can also be found in participants from this study. Furthermore, a sub-category developed from the category of participants who would not be influenced which is a **changeable consumer** group who are consumers ready to change should they need to do so. The changeable consumer indicated that *"I will choose a product if it has the label because I know what it stands for"* as well as mentioned that '*'going forward you have to think about it more and buy products that are sustainable"*. This explains that the participants can be influenced and convinced to opt for sustainable labelling products resulting in a changeable consumer group. Sanchez-Sabate & Sabate, 2019 suggest it is challenging to change consumer behaviour. However, Funk et al. (2021) are of the opinion that consumers differ in their environmentally sustainable motives, which may allow some consumers to switch and change their behaviour. Therefore, Thøgersen (2021) states that companies should focus on ensuring that the sustainable option should be the easy option for the consumer by ensuring sustainable products are more favourable than unsustainable products, as well as providing trustworthy labelling if more consumers are to be attracted by sustainable labelling. This will possibly assist the changeable consumer group to make the necessary switch to purchasing sustainable labelled food products.

The second category which emerged from the data can be described as the participants that **would be influenced by environmental sustainability** to purchase sustainable labelled food products. This category indicated that participants *"would like to buy the sustainable product"* also this participant who states that *"definitely it will be a big influence"* and another stating that it *"will definitely change my mind".* The category that would be influenced by environmental sustainability further developed into a subcategory of participants that would **go into action** to purchase environmentally sustainable food products. Participants mention that they will *"buy more of a brand that is sustainable"*. Other participants mention that *"If I had to choose between two products, I would definitely choose the more sustainable product"*. As well as this participant who indicates that he would purchase products with sustainable labels *"rather than one that does not have them".* A study by Nilssen et al. (2019) investigated the importance of sustainability as a purchase criterion in South African retailers and found that sustainability was a contributing factor within the purchasing decision. Suggesting that if participants are influenced by environmental sustainability, they are more inclined to go into action to purchase environmentally sustainable food products.

Table 5.26: Influence of environmental sustainability on food product purchases

Categories	Quotes
1. Does not influence	''does not influence it'' ''it would not influence the product that I choose'' ''not always influence my decision'' ''I don't usually recycle'' ''I would be honest I haven't considered environmental sustainability'' ''It doesn't '' ''Usually not so much''
1.1 Changeable consumer	''going forward you have to think about it more and buy products that are sustainable'' ''will choose a product if it has the label because I know what it stands for'' ''I do care'' ''it makes me feel positive'' ''I try and make sure I check the label'' ''after this it might influence it more''
2. Does influence	''I would like to buy the sustainable product'' ''definitely it will be a big influence'' ''It has a big influence'' ''definitely purchase a product that has a label on it'' ''would be very important to me'' ''it will help me to buy it'' ''It definitely does'' ''will definitely change my mind''
2.1 Goes into action	''If there is one product that is sustainable next to a product that is not sustainable, I would like to buy the sustainable product'' ''buy more of a brand that is sustainable'' ''rather than one that does not have them'' ''if I had to choose between two products, I would definitely choose the more sustainable product'' ''from unsustainable to sustainable which has a positive influence on my experience''

5.6 Qualitative findings regarding participants' attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and PBC towards sustainable labelling (Objective 3)

Objective 3 as well as the final section of the individual interviews addressed the participants' attitude, subjective norms, and PBC by using Ajzen's (1991) TPB. The TPB intends to describe and predict consumer intentions, to then execute or not execute a behaviour This objective was divided into three sub-objectives namely (v.vi. i) attitude towards behaviour, (v.vi.ii) subjective norms, and (v.vi.iii) PBC as per the sub-objectives of this study. The attitude towards the behaviour will be the first sub-objective discussed.

5.6.1 Attitude towards behaviour (Sub-objective 3.1)

Attitude toward the behaviour, describes the extent to which an individual has a fault-finding or constructive assessment of a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). To explore participants' attitude toward general sustainable food labelling participants were not asked to respond to sustainable food products again as this was asked in (Question 1.1.2 as in Appendix E), but rather to expand more about their attitude towards environmental sustainability. Therefore, the question was asked: ***''How do you feel about environmental sustainability?''*** (Question

3.1.1 Appendix E). The qualitative findings generated from this question resulted in two categories, as seen below in Table 5.27, that emerged from the data that best described the participants' attitude towards ''environmental sustainability''.

The first category indicates a (i) **positive attitude towards environmental sustainability**. Similar results were found in the study by Maichum et al. (2017) who explored the factors that influence consumers in Thailand's purchasing intention towards sustainable products and found a positive attitude towards environmental sustainability. This is suggesting that there might be a general positive attitude towards sustainable products nationally and internationally. The positive attitude is described by this participant who says '*''it makes me feel good''* and this participant who also indicates that *''I feel positive towards the future, food and the environment''*. Another participant mentions that '*''it is good that people realize that the environment is in danger and that we need to start doing something to make sure that we do not harm it any further''.* Maciejewski's (2020) also found that consumers in Poland and Slovakia showed positive behaviours towards sustainable foods due to positive attitudes towards the idea of sustainable foods, therefore, confirming the positive consumer attitude towards environmental sustainability that is also found in this study.

In addition to the positive attitude that was generally expressed by the participants, the second category can be described as a **hopeful attitude** the participants defined this category as *''I feel hopeful for the future''* as well as indicated that they feel *''Safe because I know there is a future''*. Vermeulen et al. (2020) also found overall hopefulness in terms of future sustainability due to new conversations in social movements and businesses in terms of sustainable demands in today's food systems. Thus, participants are not only positive towards environmental sustainability but also hopeful, which may be attributed to manufacturers' communication and engagement towards more environmentally sustainable practices.

Table 5.27: Participant quotations regarding attitude towards sustainability/environmental sustainability

Categories	Quotes
1. Positive attitude	''good feelings'' ''Good'' ''it is good that people realize that the environment is in danger and that we need to start doing something to make sure that we do not harm it any further'' ''it makes me feel good'' ''I feel good and happy feelings'' ''it is exciting that there are people who care about sustainability'' ''positive feelings'' ''it is a positive thing'' ''I feel positive towards the future food and the environment''
1.2 Hopeful attitude	''I feel hopeful for the future'' ''Safe because I know there is a future''

	''hope'' ''I think it's the future'' ''it makes me think long term''

5.6.2 Subjective norms (Sub-objective 3.2)

Subjective norms can be described as the consumer's alleged feeling towards social pressure to do or not to do something in a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Paul et al. 2016). The first question that explored the subjective norms towards sustainable labelled food products focussed on the pressure participants felt to purchase or not to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The first question to address participants' subjective norms was: ***''Is there any social pressure from family, friends, peers etc who are pressuring you to buy or not to buy sustainable labelled food products, if so, where is the pressure coming from, and why do you feel pressured?''*** (Question 3.2.1 Appendix E). The responses to this question could be categorised into three participant groups, as seen below in Table 5.28, that represented the state of pressure experienced in relation to sustainable labelled foods. The first group of participants **have experienced pressure** to purchase sustainable labelled food products, the second group **has not experienced** pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products and the last group does not experience pressure but rather **pressures people around them to purchase sustainable labelled food products**. The participant group who experienced pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products could further be broken down into four subcategories which describe where the pressure was coming from which was mainly due to (i) the internet, (ii) Parents, (iii) Product confrontation, and (iv) "friends".

The social pressure on consumers to purchase sustainable products has an important impact on sustainable consumption (La Rosa and Johnson, 2021). Only a small group of four participants stated that they **have experienced pressure** to purchase sustainable labelled food products and provided four examples of the pressure they had experienced. The first example indicated that *''the **internet** has a big influence''* on the pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The following example indicated that the participant felt pressure *''from my **parents**''*. However, Sun and Wang (2019) found that consumers perceived less pressure from friends and family in the social media context, after observing consumer attitude towards purchasing intention of sustainable products in China. Therefore, suggesting that participants in a developing country such as South Africa might experience pressure from online platforms and from family although Sun and Wang found less pressure in a first world country. Although the responses were limited the responses do suggest that there is a variety of sources that may be responsible for some of the use of sustainable labelled food products by consumers.

Furthermore, **product confrontation** emerged as an example which a participant described as *''I would feel more pressured to buy the sustainable labelled food product ''*. Suggesting that the participant might feel obligated to purchase a sustainable food product when confronted with these products. Therefore, indicating that if the sustainable food products are labelled on the front where participants are confronted with it, it might assist in the purchasing intention of sustainable food products.

The last example from the data was friends**,** the participant noted that the pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products comes from their *''**Friends**''*. A study by Tandon et al. (2020) studying consumer motivation to purchase sustainable products found that consumers are motivated through social pressure to purchase sustainable products. That suggests that friends are keeping one another accountable to purchase sustainable labelled food products to keep the planet safe.

The participant group who **had not experienced pressure** to purchase sustainable labelled food products, was mostly expressed by participants, indicating that *''no there is no social pressure from anyone"* and that they do not feel *''pressured at all''*. That might suggest that participants do not necessarily see the urgency to purchase sustainable labelled food products, which is contradictory to the responses, in Question 1.2.17, where participants indicated sustainable labels as beneficial to not only the environment but also to all individuals living on it. This may suggest that although participants have a positive attitude towards sustainable products their actual behaviour does not show it as found previously in objective 1 and significant of the attitude behaviour gap which has been suggested by various researchers (Yamoah and Acquaye, 2019; Witek, 2019; Tölkes, 2020).

The last participant group to emerge from the data, with only two participants, can be described as the group who **exerts the social pressure** to purchase sustainable labelled food products onto others. Indicated that *''I am pressuring my husband to switch off lights and support sustainable lifestyles''* as well as ''*I am pressuring people into buying more sustainable products''.* This finding suggest that these participants are pressuring friends and family to exert sustainable behaviour to help the planet.

Table 5.28: Participant quotations in terms of pressure in purchasing or not purchasing sustainable labelled products

Categories	Quotes
1.Pressure	'' a bit of pressure'' '' Yes'' '' Yes'' '' Yes''
1.1 The internet	'' the internet has a big influence''
1.2 Parents	'' from my parents''

1.3 Product confrontation	‘’ I would feel more pressured to buy the sustainable labelled food products ‘’
1.4 Friends	‘’ Friends’’
2.No-pressure	**’’** No not all’’ ‘’ I feel no pressure’’ ‘’ no that I can think of’’ ‘’ no one pressures me’’ **’’** No not at all’’ **’’** No not at all’’ **’’** No there is no social pressure from anyone’’ **’’** No one is’’ **’’** No not pressured at all’’ **’’** No, I don’t feel pressure’’ **’’** Nobody forces me’’
Pressuring other people	‘’ I am pressuring my husband to switch off lights and support sustainable lifestyles’’ ‘’ I am pressuring people into buying more sustainable products’’

After determining which participants experienced social pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products the researcher also established how the pressure makes the participants feel. Only the participants that indicated that they have experienced pressure to purchase or not to purchase sustainable labelled food products were further questioned to ensure accurate answers were captured. Therefore, the participants who indicated examples of pressure were asked: ***’’How does the pressure make you feel?’’*** (Question 3.2.2 Appendix E). Participants who have not experienced pressure to purchase or not to purchase sustainable labelled food products were not further asked to explain how the pressure makes them feel, as it was assumed that they would not be able to share any meaningful opinions with the researcher. Although only four of the participants indicated that they felt pressure, as seen below in Table 5.29, to purchase sustainable labelled food products, it was important to understand how the pressure made them feel. However, only three participants indicated their feelings of pressure to the researcher. Two categories emerged, as illustrated in Figure 5.26, that represents their emotions as experiences of (i) guilt and for some (ii) a positive experience.

In this respect, participants distinguished between guilty experiences and positive experiences to explain how they experienced the pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products. In terms of **guilt** participants explained that *it ‘’makes me feel bad’’* and it makes me feel *‘’guilty’’.* Nguyen et al. (2021) also found that Vietnamese consumers tend to feel guilty when purchasing conventional meat instead of sustainable alternatives after investigating organic meat’s purchasing intention. Therefore, the findings from this study are supported by Nguyen (2021) in terms of participants experiencing guilt when purchasing unsustainable food products, as well as suggesting that participants are aware that it is the right choice to help save the planet. Additionally, the second category which emerged from the data was **positive experiences since** a participant explained that they experience *‘’good feelings because then I have the knowledge to make a better decision’’.* Yang et al. (2020) found that consumers in

the United Kingdom had positive feelings towards products containing sustainable ingredients after measuring their emotional responses and acceptance towards sustainable food products. Therefore, purchasing sustainable labelled food products can be associated with positive experience since this was corroborated by Yang et al. (2020).

Table 5.29: Participant quotations of emotions experienced as pressure

Categories	Quote
1.Guilty	'' makes me feel bad'' '' guilty''
2.Positive	'' good feelings because then I have the knowledge to make a better decision''

After determining how the pressure made the participants feel it was important to establish who participants perceived as groups who would approve of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Therefore, the participants were asked: ***''Are there any specific individuals or groups you would like to mention whom you think would approve of you buying sustainable labelled food products?''*** (Question 3.2.3 Appendix E). From this question eight examples emerged, as seen below in Table 5.30, that best represented who would approve of participants buying sustainable labelled food products: (i) vegans and vegetarians, (ii) hippies and nature lovers, (iii), most people, (iv) colleagues, (v) Woolworths's consumers, (vi) family (vii) friends and a non-tangible specific category (viii) no one in particular.

When considering groups approving of buying sustainable labelled food products, seven categories emerged from the data. The participants indicated that *''vegans and vegetarians''* are accepting towards purchasing sustainable food labels. Bain et al. (2021) mention that vegan and vegetarian diets are more beneficial for the environment. Which might suggest that participants assume that vegans and vegetarians would approve of purchasing sustainable labelled food products since their diets are more beneficial for the environment. Additionally, a participant identified *''hippies and nature lovers''* as a group that would approve the purchase of sustainable labelled food products. The Hippie movement can be described as individuals with counter-culture values in the 1960's (Gemie, 2017) which was based on changing attitudes towards military action, rock music, sexual freedom and drugs (Yicheng, 2020). The connection between hippies and sustainability might be due to Hippies refusing to participate in the American economy which led to them becoming self-sustaining (Kurak, 2020). Furthermore, participants indicated that ''*most people will approve''*, similar findings were found by Pérez-Ramírez et al. (2015) who studied consumer acceptance of eco-labelled fish among Mexican participants and found that consumers favour the idea of sustainability. Additionally, participants indicated that *''peers at work''* would approve of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. A study in Southeast Europe by Ham et al. (2015) found

that young people are under the influence of their peers after investigating the role subjective norms have on green purchasing intentions. Suggesting that the participants in this study might experience approval from their peers since most of the participants in this study are classified as millennials and the younger generation. The data also revealed that participants perceived ‘*’Woolworths’s consumers”* as accepting of sustainable food labels, which was also one of the places that participants indicated that they have noted sustainable labels such as UTZ. *It was also mentioned that ‘’family”* and ‘*’friends*’’ would approve of their sustainable labelled purchases, which was also indicated as one of the examples of pressure. Two participants indicated that no one in particular would approve of sustainable labelled food products.

Table 5.30: Participant quotations incited of approving the purchasing of sustainable labelled food products

Categories	Quotes
1.Vegans and vegetarians	‘’ vegan and vegetarians ‘’ ‘’ vegans’’
2.Hippies and nature lovers’	‘’ hippies and nature lovers ‘’
3.Most people	‘’ most people will approve ‘’
4.Collegues	‘’ peers at work ‘’ ‘’ colleagues ‘’ ‘’ work mate ‘’ ‘’ colleagues ‘’
5.Woolworths’s consumers	‘’ Woolworths’s consumers ‘’
6.Family and friends	‘’my family ‘’ ‘’ my mother ‘’ ‘’ My parents ‘’ ‘’ Friends ‘’
7. No one in particular	‘’ No’’ ‘’ No not really’’

The following question considers the participants’ experience of groups or people who would disapprove of the participants’ purchasing of sustainable labelled food products. It is important to identify the main individuals who would influence their purchasing decision of sustainable labelled food products. The question therefore asked: ***‘’Are there any individuals or groups of people you would like to mention who would disapprove of you purchasing sustainable labelled food products?’’*** (Question 3.2.4 Appendix E). From the data analysis, as seen below in Table 5.31, a large number of the participants did not think there was anyone who would disapprove of them purchasing sustainable labelled food products. However, three examples emerged that represent the groups participants thought would disapprove of them purchasing sustainable labelled food products which are (i) price sensitive consumers, (ii) fast food retailers and (iii) the older generation.

In recent years sustainable products have grown considerably due to environmental concerns among consumers (Naderi and Van Steenburg, 2018). Additionally, most participants

indicated that **no one** would disapprove of the purchase of sustainable labelled food products. Participants mentioned *that ''I do not think there is anyone who disapproves''* and *''No, I don't think there is anyone''*. However, only one participant has indicated possible groups disapproving of the purchase of sustainable labelled food products. Participants identified **price sensitive consumers** as a group who would disapprove of the purchase of sustainable labelled food products *''someone who focusses on price and budget''*. Yue et al. (2020) investigated the role of environmental concern and price sensitivity among Chinese consumers and found that consumers who are price sensitive are not as likely to purchase sustainable products as consumers with low price sensitivity. Therefore, corroborating the example that consumers who are price sensitive would disapprove of sustainable labelled food products. However, a study by Ghali-Zinoubi (2021) found that if Tunisian consumers are sensitive towards premium prices of organic foods, they will not be able to purchase it. Therefore, it is important to note that price sensitive consumers might want to purchase sustainable food products however cannot afford it. Furthermore, the participants identified **fast food retailers** through mentioning *''fast-food people''* as another group that would disapprove of purchasing sustainable food labels. A study by Teng and Wu (2019) investigated the effect of sustainable development in the hospitality industry and found that green restaurants have been converting towards a greener operating system due to consumers wanting sustainable options. Additionally, Starbucks which is available in all major cities of South Africa uses Rainforest Alliance certified Cocoa and tea within their beverages (Starbucks, 2022) as well as 98.7% of the coffee sourced by the McDonalds Café is certified by sustainable certifications such as Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, and Fairtrade International (McDonlads, 2022). Thus, suggesting that fast-food retailers are moving towards sustainable practices. Lastly, the participants identified the **older generation** as another group who would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products by identifying them as "*older people''.* Dabija et al. (2019) indicated that generation X and Z are more inclined to consider products that are better for the environment. However, this study mostly consisted of millennials and the younger generation, therefore it is unknown to the researcher whether South African participants from the older generations would approve or disapprove of sustainable labelled food products.

Table 5.31: Participant quotations of Groups disapproving of the purchase of sustainable labelled food products

Categories	Quotes
1. No one	''I would not say so'' '' no, I do not think so'' ''No'' ''I would not say there are anyone who would disapprove'' '' No'' ''I do not think there is anyone who disapproves''

	‘’no’’ ‘’No’’ ‘’No’’ ‘’No one’’ ‘’No’’ ‘’No’’ ‘’No’’ ‘’No, not at all’’ ‘’No, I don’t think there is anyone’’
2. Price sensitive consumers	‘’ someone who focusses on price and budget’’
3. Fast food retailers	‘’ fast-food people’’
4.Older generation	‘’ older people’’

Following the above-mentioned question, the focus shifted towards groups that come to mind when thinking about sustainable food labels, the question was: ***‘’Are there any individuals or groups that come to mind when you think about sustainable food labels in particular?’’*** (Question 3.2.5 Appendix E). This question revealed groups such as healthy lifestyles, older generation, younger generation, colleagues, family, Woolworths’s buyers, vegans and vegetarians, the food industry and no one in particular. From the analysis of the data, it was evident that some of the categories from the groups who would approve of the purchase of sustainable labelled food products in general, resurfaced in this question. However, two new categories emerged, as seen below in Table 5.32, namely (i) healthy lifestyles and (ii) the younger generation (iii) the older generation and (iv) the food industry.

The first group which emerged, as indicated in Table 5.32 below, from the data was identified as **healthy lifestyles**. Participants mentioned *‘’health guru’’* and another mentioned ‘*’gym junkies”* as a group of people which comes to mind when thinking about sustainable labelling. Oroian et al. (2017) mention that sustainable consumption has increased due to consumer health and lifestyle choices which can be an indication of participants identifying healthy lifestyles as a group that comes to mind when thinking about sustainable labels. The next group to emerge from the data was described by the participants as *‘’the younger generation’’*. Although, sustainability has received increased attention among consumers (Sogari et al. 2017), the **younger generation** has continuously demanded more transparency and better ethical standards from food manufacturers (Lodorfos et al. 2018), thus, indicating that younger consumers are possibly more aware of sustainability. Thereafter the **older generation** emerged as a group from the data when a participant mentioned the *‘’older generation’’*. This directly contradicts question 3.2.4 where the older generation emerged as a group who would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Sanchez-Bravo et al. (2020) mention that older consumers are less aware of sustainability in general. Therefore, suggesting that the older generation might not be a group associated by sustainable food labels. Lastly, the **food industry** emerged as a group associated with sustainable labels when a participant mentions *‘’people that work in the food industry’’*. Chalupová et al. (2020) state

that the food label allows the food industry to promote beneficial selling points of food products. Sustainable food labels can be categorised as one of those beneficial selling points. By creating the food labels, people working in the food industry are exposed to various labels including sustainable food labels.

Table 5.32: Participant quotations of Groups identified in sustainable labelling

Categories	Quotes
No one in particular	''Not at this moment'' ''No'' ''No'' ''No'' ''No''
Vegans & Vegetarians	''vegetarians, vegans''
Healthy lifestyles	''gym junkies'' ''health guru's''
Family	''My daughter''
Younger generation	''our younger generations''
Colleagues	''peers at work'' ''colleagues.'' ''colleagues''
Older generation	''older generation''
Woolworths's buyers	''Woolworths, Woolworths's people and Woolworths's buyers'' ''Woolworths''
Food industry	''people that work in the food industry''

5.6.3 Perceived behavioural control (Sub-objective 3.3)

The third and last category explored the participants' PBC toward general sustainable food labelling. PBC is described by Ajzen, (1991) as the effortlessness or difficulty in which individuals must perform a specific behaviour. The first question in this subcategory was to establish how the participant feel post purchase of sustainable labelled food products by asking the participants **''When you think about the fact that you have bought sustainable food products, how does that make you feel?''** Question 3.3.1 Appendix E. The data analysis indicated three examples, as indicated below in Table 5.33, of participant feelings post-purchase of sustainable labelled food products. Three examples emerged namely (i) positive experiences, (ii) proud experiences, and one participant indicated the experience of (iii) relief.

The first example of participant experiences post purchase of sustainable food products was a positive experience. A participant mentioned that they experienced a *''good feeling''* another mentions that it *''makes them feel good''*. The second experience was described as proud experience which participants mentioned that they *''feel impressed with myself''* and this participant that indicated that "*it makes me feel like I am making a difference''*. The last experience which emerged was relief, only one participant contributed towards this experience

mentioning *''it makes me feel relieved''.* Therefore, there was a general positive experience noted by participants when purchasing sustainable labelled food products.

Table 5.33: Participant quotations of Participant experience post-purchase of sustainable labelled food products

Categories	Quotes
1.Positive	'' good feeling'' '' makes me feel good'' '' Good like a better person'' '' It makes me feel good about myself'' '' It makes me feel good'' '' feel good'' '' It makes me feel good'' '' good'' '' Great'' '' Happy!''
2.Proud feelings	'' I feel impressed with myself.'' '' Makes me feel like I am making a difference.'' '' I don't think it makes me a good person; I just do whatever I need to do for the future.'' '' Proud'' '' proud''
3. Relief	'' It makes me feel relieved''

After establishing the participants' feelings towards purchasing sustainable labelled food products it was important to establish whether the purchase was automatic or concerted. Therefore, the participant was asked: ''***Does buying sustainable labelled products come naturally to you or not, is it a concerted effort or something you do automatically and specifically where these two are concerned, do you really go out of your way to look for them and if so why or why not?''*** Question 3.3.2 Appendix E. The data revealed two main categories, as shown in Table 5.34 below, namely (i) Concerted effort, and (ii) Automatic response. Additionally, four examples formed under the main concerted effort category that is (i.i) habitual purchases, (i.ii) health concerns, (i.iii) no label observation, and (i.iv) rushed buying.

Participants distinguished between two main categories the (i) concerted effort and (ii) automatic response, which were two terms used within the question asked to the participants. The **concerted effort** category was significantly larger with eleven participants contributing to this category. The participants explained through mentioning '*'no, it does not come naturally''* and *''it's more of an effort''.* Another participant mentioned that *''it is not coming naturally''* and this participant who mentions '*it is more forced now''*. The participants further explained the concerted effort category through mentioning that it is a concerted effort because of habitual purchases since '' *people like a thing you know or always buy so you do not browse or look for something new''*. The example of health concerns also emerged due to participants

mentioning ‘’ *I look at labels to look at the diabetic friendly logo”*. Furthermore, it was evident that no label observation was also noted as a reason for the concerted effort, when a participant mentioned’ *I would say in certain cases I would not even know I am buying it”* and another adding that they are *‘’ not checking every product’s packaging”.* The last example which emerged due to concerted effort was rushed purchases, the participant indicated that it is a concerted effort due to ‘’ *I am in a rush”*. The second smaller category with five responses was categorised as **automatic responses**. Participants mentioned that *‘’I do it automatically”* and *‘’yes it would come naturally”* as well as it *‘’sometimes” comes automatic.* The data analysis might suggest that participants do not automatically purchase sustainable labelled food products.

Table 5.34: Participant quotations of the natural occurrence of purchasing UTZ and Fairtrade labelled food products

Categories	Quotes
1. Concerted effort	‘’ no, it does not come naturally’’ ‘’ it is more forced now’’ ‘’ not do automatically’’ ‘’ No, it is not something I do out of habit or automatically’’ ‘’ It doesn’t come automatically’’ ‘’ it is not coming naturally’’ ‘’ I don’t think its naturally’’ ‘’ doesn’t come naturally’’ ‘’ I would say no’’ ‘’ it’s more of an effort’’
1.1 Habitual purchases	‘’ people like a thing you know or always buy so you do not browse or look for something new’’
1.2 Health concerns	‘’ I look at labels to look at the diabetic friendly logo’’
1.3 No label observation	‘’ I would say in certain cases I would not even know I am buying it’’ ‘’ not checking every product’s packaging’’
1.4 Rushed purchase	‘’ I am in a rush’’
2. Automatic	‘’ Sometimes yes’’ ‘’ I do it automatically’’ ‘’ Yes, it would come naturally’’ ‘’ yah it comes naturally’’ ‘’ Certain things come automatically’’

Once the participants’ effort towards purchasing behaviour was established it was important to determine whether the participant encounters any obstacles which would hinder the purchase of sustainable labelled food products. Therefore, the participants were asked: ***‘’Is there anything that hinders or makes it difficult for you to purchase sustainable labelled food products?’’*** (Question 3.3.3 Appendix E). From the data analysis five categories emerged that reflected the hinderances participants thought made it difficult for them to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The five categories are illustrated below in Table 5.35 namely: (i) no obstacles, (ii) cost implications, (iii) laziness, (iv) product availability, and (v)knowledge.

The first category which emerged was **no obstacles** the participants mentioned that ‘*’no’’* they cannot establish any obstacles. The second category which emerged from the data indicated **the cost implication**, participants mentioned that the food products are *‘’overpriced or too expensive’’* they also mentioned that the food product *‘’comes at a premium’’*. A study by Nguyen et al. (2019) which investigated the influence of personal factors on green marketing among Vietnamese consumers, that found premium prices of sustainable food products act as an obstacle for consumers. The cost implication category had the majority responses, indicating that participants might purchase more sustainable labelled food products if the products were within the same price range as food products without sustainable labels. In addition, the data revealed **laziness** as the third category. The participant mentioned that *‘’overall laziness’’* was indicated as an obstacle to purchase sustainable food labelling. A study by Vrancina et al. (2019) investigated consumer perception in terms of green marketing among Indian consumers and found that consumers are overall concerned about the environment, however, the actual purchase behaviour indicates laziness which suggests insincere motives towards environmental concern. The fourth category which emerged from the data indicates **product availability**, as shown below in Table 5.35, participants mentioned *‘’the availability’’* of sustainable labelled food products. Annunziata and Scarpato (2014) explored the factors affecting Italian consumer attitudes towards sustainable food products and found that the availability of the products is important since it limits the consumers’ attitude toward the sustainable labelled food products if they are not available. The last obstacle to emerge from the data was **knowledge** the participant described the obstacle as *‘’I think maybe not knowing something’’*. A study by Khan et al. (2020) found that knowledge has a positive effect on sustainable behaviour among consumers in Thailand and Malaysia.

Table 5.35: Participant quotations of Experienced obstacles to purchase sustainable labelled food products

Categories	Quotes
1.Nothing specific	‘’ no’’ ‘’ No not really’’ ‘’ No’’ ‘’ No’’ ‘’ Not really’’
2.Cost implications	‘’ overpriced or too expensive’’ ‘’ it comes at a premium’’ ‘’ it is a bit more expensive’’ ‘’ just the price’’ ‘’ Prices might be too high’’ ‘’ prices’’ ‘’ they are more expensive’’
3.Laziness	‘’ overall laziness’’
4.Availability	‘’ the availability thereof’’
5.Knowledge	‘’ I think maybe not knowing something’’

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings according to the main objectives of the study. The findings revealed that participants have a general understanding of sustainability, and it was also clear that participants are concerned with the general well-being of the planet for future generations. The participants in general were more familiar with the UTZ sustainable label compared to the Fairtrade sustainable label, but also associate the UTZ label with cocoa containing products. The participants are of the opinion that sustainable labels are not well-known in South Africa but also that UTZ is more well-known than Fairtrade labels. The next chapter presents the conclusions from the findings while an interpretation of the most important findings are presented. The following chapter also includes a study contribution, recommendations, limitations, and possible future research to be conducted on sustainable food labelling, are also suggested.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In this chapter final conclusions are drawn from the study, the contribution of the study is highlighted, recommendations for future research proposed and limitations of the research identified.

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presented the findings according to the objectives of the study. In this chapter, final conclusions are presented in relation to the objectives during which an interpretation of the findings will be made that will address the practical implications of the findings. Particular attention is focussed on three areas where this study makes a contribution namely (i) the contribution towards the TPB which was used in this research is addressed, (ii) the contribution towards the methodology that was applied in this study is addressed and (iii) the contribution towards the literature regarding sustainable food labelling. The contribution of the study is followed by the study limitations and recommendations for future research. A brief demographic profile is presented next to confirm that the conclusions of the study are aligned to the context in which the study was performed.

6.2 Demographic profile of the participants

The participants in this study consisted of 16 participants, residing in South Africa. These participants formed the study sample on which the findings of this study are based. This study used three sampling strategies namely purposive sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling to recruit participants. Purposive sampling was applied to this study with an inclusion criterion to choose participants with purpose to ensure in-depth information regarding the focus of this study. Snowball sampling was also used to ensure participants with sustainable label familiarity can be reached through participants who already meet the criteria. Lastly the convenience sampling strategy was used to recruit willing and accessible participants to participate in the study during the Covid-19 restrictions via Facebook. Most participants were women between the age of 18-29 years of age with a tertiary degree. Therefore, this study consisted mostly out of educated female millennials and the younger generation. Consequently, the older generation and male's opinions are unknown at the time of this study.

6.3 Research problem in brief

The ongoing negative environmental changes have been rapidly taking place globally. These negative environmental changes are impacted by many different sources such as food

manufacturing. Although sustainable food certification schemes such as UTZ and Fairtrade have been introduced into the South-Africa retail space, awareness campaigns have been underplayed in regard to the sustainable food label's role in protecting the planet and reaching a SDG-12 as set out by the United Nations. South Africa currently stocks a variety of food products containing sustainable labels. However, these sustainable labels and the related certification have been underutilised due to marketers, manufacturers and retailers focussing on organic food products. The benefits of sustainable food labels for future generations as well as the future of the planet have not been marketed effectively for it to be a well-known fact among South Africans. Consequently, limited consumer information exists about sustainable food labels including the consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC and how this would influence the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products.

6.4 Conclusions

The conclusions to this study are presented in relation to the main findings of all three objectives and the related sub-objectives.

6.4.1 Objective 1 - Consumers' understanding of sustainable labelling:

This objective aimed to determine the consumer's understanding of sustainable labelling through exploring the term sustainable labelling and the consumers' interpretations and usage of UTZ and Fairtrade labelling. The importance of environmental concern and the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision were also established. An overview of the main findings related to the sub-objectives is presented, while the implications of the findings are discussed.

6.4.1.1 Exploring the meaning of the term sustainable labelling (sub-objective 1.1)

It was apparent that participants had a general understanding of sustainability as expected in relation to an environmentally sustainable approach. This notion emerged from exploring what the participants knew or thought they knew about the term 'sustainability'. The participants suggested that the term 'sustainability' represents the idea of long-term sustainability and a healthy environment. In this instance participants are considering the fact that sustainability brings about the long-term preservation of resources, as well as general protection of the environment from which future generations may benefit. Sustainability was further connected to a healthy environment that resembles a consciousness towards ''keeping the planet healthy'' thereby ensuring that the environment remains intact as a safe and habitual environment. Therefore, it emerged that participants were clear on the purpose and effect of sustainability which points to a general understanding of sustainability.

When exploring the term ‘sustainable food product’, participants responded in relation to sustainably manufactured products emphasising the importance of the way products are produced. This association suggests that consumers expect or assume that the manufacturing processes remain true to what is defined within the definition of sustainability they provided in the above-mentioned discussion. Subsequently consumers expected food products without sustainable certification to not include sustainable manufacturing processes. It is, however, not certain whether the participants were directed by the word ‘sustainability’, through directing them in terms of what they thought a sustainable labelled food product entails by bearing the principles of environmental sustainability in mind and applying them to food products. Therefore, creating the idea that manufacturing processes ought to be sustainable where food products are concerned.

6.4.1.2 Exploring the consumers’ interpretation and use of UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels (Sub-objective 1.2)

To explore the participants’ interpretation and use of UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels, participants were shown a picture of each certified label found on South African food products. The certification labels were provided as visual aids to ensure the participants do not confuse these specific sustainable labels with other sustainable labels. Participants in this study had prior exposure to one or both sustainable labels due to the inclusion criteria set for this study.

In this instance it was apparent that the majority of participants had noticed the UTZ certified label on food products, possibly making it a more known sustainable label among South African consumers. More specifically the UTZ label was associated with products from a well-known retailer in South Africa, of which the UTZ label was recognised on the retailer’s packaging. It was also thought to be part of the products produced by the retailer and thus significant of the labelling used by the retailer. UTZ is therefore rather more known to be part of product offerings, such as cocoa containing products from one specific retailer and possibly less so for what UTZ stands for.

Further exploration of what participants knew about the UTZ certified label, established that the participants were informed and knew that the UTZ label represents sustainable farming and products. It was also clear that participants knew that the UTZ certified label was not only beneficial to the environment but also beneficial to the farmer. Interestingly, it was again highlighted that participants linked the UTZ label to products containing cocoa because the retailer mostly exhibited the UTZ label on products containing cocoa powder.

When considering the data on what drew the participants’ attention to the UTZ label, their attention was drawn to the features or aspects of the label which raised their curiosity. In this

regard the red colour as well as the arrow-like feature of the UTZ label caught their attention. The participants also mentioned the arrow shape of the UTZ label relating to label related aspects, which drew their attention to the UTZ label. Interestingly, the design of the UTZ label may have drawn the attention of some of the participants that made them curious about the label as it seemed new and was thus unfamiliar to them, but also an interesting feature on food products. It suggested that the UTZ sustainable label has been designed effectively and functionally in terms of raising awareness of sustainable food labelling while protecting the planet.

The participants' self-assessed knowledge regarding the UTZ label seemed to be certain. This assumption emerged by exploring what the participants thought they knew about the UTZ certified label. Participants determined that the UTZ certified label is found on a ''product that has been made on a farm where good working conditions and farming methods are used'' and is ''beneficial for the environment''. The UTZ certified label was again associated with cocoa. This association suggests that South African consumers associate the UTZ certified label with products containing cocoa. Although the UTZ certification scheme certifies a wide variety of food products, UTZ certified cocoa is widely available and used by South African food manufacturers. Therefore, consumers might be associating UTZ with cocoa due to frequent confrontations and familiarity of the food products containing cocoa. Furthermore, the participants' responses suggest that they have a good understanding in terms of what UTZ represents, although they assume that UTZ is mainly connected to products containing cocoa, due to frequent exposure to it.

While exploring the participants' interpretation of Fairtrade certified labels, it was clear that the majority of participants had not noticed the Fairtrade certified label on food products, possibly making it an undiscovered sustainable label among South African consumers. This might be due to only selected food products containing the Fairtrade label or perhaps consumers not noticing the Fairtrade label on food products. When considering the participants' knowledge regarding the Fairtrade certified label, it was evident that the participants were uninformed and made assumptions such as (i) comparing Fairtrade to UTZ, and (ii) using the name Fairtrade to describe what it stands for. Their responses suggest that they used their knowledge regarding the UTZ certified label and gave a response comparing the two labels with one another, not necessarily having an in-depth understanding or knowledge regarding the Fairtrade certified label. Thus, suggesting that South African consumers are not well-informed regarding the Fairtrade certified label.

In order to explore whether additional information would emerge the participants were provided with actual definitions of the UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels as a stimulus. By

providing the participants with the definitions, the participants were able to identify further important attributes of both labels, however, no noticeable difference was noted between the labels. After having been presented with the definition of the UTZ certified label the participants once more identified environmental concerns however participants also mentioned fair working conditions through mentioning ‘’it is for the people, for everyone concerned from the labourer to the supplier’’. The participants seemed intrigued by the notion that the UTZ label represents fair working conditions not only for the farmer but for all parties.

As soon as the participants were presented with the Fairtrade definition, fairness, credibility, and education emerged, suggesting that they were not informed about Fairtrade to adequately answer the previous questions, thus indicating a lack of knowledge regarding the Fairtrade sustainable label. This notion might be due to Fairtrade product availability being scarce within South Africa. Participants clearly expressed that credibility of sustainable labels is important. This expression emerged after determining the most important aspects of sustainable labelling according to the participants, suggesting that consumers want to know that a sustainable labelled food purchase is ‘’made according to a sustainable process and not just marketing’’.

It was clear that participants believed that sustainable labels in general are not well-known among South Africans. The participants’ notion was further explored by understanding if they thought UTZ and Fairtrade were specifically known among South African consumers. The participants were not of the opinion that UTZ and Fairtrade were well-known among South African consumers. However, they believed UTZ was more well-known than Fairtrade. Although participants believed UTZ and Fairtrade were not well known among South Africans, it was apparent that they would purchase a food product with either label mainly due to the sustainable benefits.

6.4.1.3 Establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during food purchases (Sub objective 1.3)

In this instance it was clear that all of the participants were concerned about the environment. This notion emerged through establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels during food purchases among participants. The participants suggested that they are concerned about the environment because humans are not taking care of the environment and that global temperatures are increasing worldwide as well as plastic pollution being an ongoing issue. Participants were also more inclined to purchase a food product if it contained either an UTZ or Fairtrade label, suggesting that participants are willing to protect the environment by purchasing food products that are potentially more beneficial towards the environment. It was apparent that the participants’

concern of the environment was driving their consideration of sustainable labels, because of the notion that sustainable labelled food products are not harmful to the environment. Therefore, suggesting that South African consumers are willing to assist the environment by purchasing UTZ and Fairtrade labelled food products because of their environmental concern.

6.4.2 Objective 2 - Examining the influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels have on the intention to purchase food products

This objective aimed to determine the influence of UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels on the consumer's intention to purchase food products. Through exploring the consumers' expectation regarding UTZ and Fairtrade certified labels specifically, the importance of participants' perception related to the influence environmental sustainability has on the purchasing intention of food products emerged. An overview of the main findings is presented related to the objective and the implication of the findings are discussed.

In this instance it was apparent that the majority of participants expect UTZ and Fairtrade sustainable labels to be environmentally friendly, credible and that the product is of good quality. in terms of stating that they expect UTZ and Fairtrade to be ''good for the environment''. Furthermore, participants expected UTZ and Fairtrade to be credible, in terms of trusting the manufacturers and marketers to not merely put a sustainable label on food products for selling purposes, but also, to ensure the sustainable label abides by laws and ensures the trustworthiness the product is associated with. In fact, to ensure the label actually contributes towards environmental friendliness and does not merely represent it for marketing purposes. Additionally, it was noted that participants expect the food product containing the sustainable label to be of good quality therefore, suggesting that consumers are eager to assist the environment, however have expectations that need to be met by marketers and manufacturers.

When considering the importance of environmental sustainability to the participants, the data suggested that environmental sustainability was significant to the majority of the participants. Interestingly, the participants who valued the importance of environmental sustainability approached it in terms of either being sustainably action driven or from a philosophical viewpoint to environmental sustainability. Participants mentioned that they ''act in a sustainable way'' and ''shop less products that are not sustainable'' suggesting that they are actively doing something to assist the environment because of its importance to them. However, other participants mentioned ''I am becoming more aware'' suggesting that environmental sustainability is important to them, but it has not pushed them to go into action yet, suggesting that some consumers are inclined to purchase sustainable labelled food products whereas other consumers might need more information to do so in the future.

Furthermore, the data showed that participants were divided in terms of being influenced by environmental sustainability to either purchase a food product, or not being influenced by environmental sustainability to purchase a food product. More specifically, participants indicated ‘’it would not influence the product that I choose’’ indicating an attitude behaviour gap since participants were tracked through their responses within the individual interviews and resulted in discrepancies, due to previously indicating the importance of environmental sustainability and now indicating that it would not influence them. Therefore, suggesting that the participants have a positive attitude towards environmental sustainability however does not show it in their actual behaviour. However, these participants suggest a changeable tendency in terms of changing if they need to or have enough information. Therefore, through providing the consumer with enough information regarding environmental sustainability, they can be convinced to purchase the products.

6.4.3 Objective 3 - Qualitative findings regarding participants’ attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and PBC towards sustainable labelling

This objective aimed to describe and predict the consumer’s intention to execute or not to execute a behaviour, the behaviour being the intention to purchase a sustainable labelled food product by addressing the participants’ attitude, subjective norms and PBC within Ajzen’s (1991) TPB. This objective was divided into three sub-objectives namely (v.vi. i) attitude towards behaviour, (v.vi.ii) subjective norms, and (v.vi.iii) PBC as per the sub-objectives of this study.

6.4.3.1 Exploring consumers’ attitude towards sustainable labelling (sub-objective 3.1)

It was clear that participants’ attitude toward sustainable food products was determined earlier in objective 1, therefore the researcher focused on establishing the participants’ attitude toward environmental sustainability. It was evident that participants had a positive attitude towards environmental sustainability. The notion emerged from exploring how the participants felt about environmental sustainability. The participants suggested that they felt ‘’positive’’ and ‘’hopeful for the future’’. The general positive attitude towards environmental sustainability suggests that if consumers are made aware of the positive impact that sustainable labelled food products have on environmental sustainability, it might result in them purchasing sustainable labelled food products to assist the environment.

6.4.3.2 Exploring consumers’ subjective norms towards sustainable labelling (sub-objective 3.2)

While exploring the pressure experienced by participants to purchase or not to purchase sustainable labelled food products it was clear that the majority of participants have not

experienced pressure to purchase sustainable labelled food products. This might be due to sustainable labels being fairly 'new' to South-African food products, not allowing sufficient time for it to become part of the consumers' purchasing 'culture'. However, some pressure was experienced by some participants mainly originating from the ''internet'', ''parents'', ''friends'', and product confrontation, suggesting that some of the sustainable labelled food product purchases may be due to pressure experienced from a variety of sources; not necessarily due to the participants' own concern for the environment. Interestingly the data indicated that some of the participants exert pressure on others to act sustainably to protect the planet. Therefore, suggesting that specific participants are becoming informed regarding how to assist the planet however, is not yet a norm. When considering the data on how the pressure made the participants feel, it was evident that some participants felt guilty, but others also experienced positive feelings. In this regard, it was suggested that the participants are aware of the positive associations with sustainable labelled food products on the planet.

The data suggested that participants perceived several groups as accepting towards the purchasing of sustainable labelled food products. In this regard it was apparent that most people including family, friends and colleagues would approve of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Interestingly, participants also perceive vegans, vegetarians, nature lovers and hippies as accepting towards the purchasing of sustainable labelled food products which does not include the general consumer, more so, specific groups of consumers or social groups. The data also revealed that the majority of participants experienced that no one in particular would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. Therefore, highlighting that consumers are becoming more aware of the contribution towards saving the planet for future generations through not only identifying extremist groups such as vegans but also friends and family. However, price sensitive consumers, fast food retailers, and the older generation were noted as examples of groups who would disapprove of purchasing sustainable labelled food products, suggesting that consumers are aware that sustainable labelled food products have a higher price point than conventional food products and may only be specific to foods from certain retail contexts and not all. It is therefore proposed that manufacturers and retailers should work together to make sustainable labelled food products the norm by lowering the cost to an inclusive price point.

6.4.3.3 Exploring consumers' PBC towards sustainable labelling (sub-objective 3.3)

By exploring the participants' post-purchase experience, the data revealed a clear general positive post-purchase experience of sustainable labelled food products, suggesting that sustainable labelled food products are meeting the participants' product expectations, which indicates that repurchase is likely. Therefore, resulting in SDG-12 being met and the planet

and its resources being protected. The participants suggested that the purchase is not yet automatised because of habitual purchases in terms of ‘’people like a thing you know or always buy so you do not browse or look for something new’’, as well as health concerns, no label observation and rushed purchases. In this instance information regarding sustainable labels should be eye catching and widely available online and in store to ensure the habitual purchaser is (i) converted to sustainable food purchases, (ii) ensure the rushed purchaser’s attention is grabbed, and to (iii)) ensure information is available without observing the food label.

The data further revealed that consumers are experiencing obstacles in terms of purchasing sustainable labelled food products, in this instance the participant considers the higher cost implication of sustainable food products. It is suggested that if sustainable labelled food products and conventional food products are priced equally, more consumers would potentially overcome the cost obstacle. Manufactures, retailers and sustainable certification schemes should investigate solutions to overcome this obstacle to ensure the planet is preserved for future generations. Participants further elaborated that laziness, product availability and lack of knowledge regarding sustainable food labels also contribute to obstacles in terms of purchasing sustainable labelled food products, suggesting that marketers, retailers and sustainable food labelling schemes should focus on emphasizing the benefits of sustainable labelled food products to (i) convince consumers that the extra effort would be worthwhile for future generations and (ii) allow consumers to make an informed decision. It was thereby suggested that by providing more information to consumers, would allow them to possibly overcome the obstacles to purchase sustainable labelled food products, creating a bigger need for sustainable food labels and therefore expanding product availability to help the planet survive for future generations.

6.5 Contribution of the study

The contribution to the study will focus on the following sections:

6.5.1 Contribution of the study in relation to the TPB

This study used Ajzen’s TPB (1985) with all three constructs namely attitude, subjective norms, and PBC to understand the consumer’s intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products namely UTZ and Fairtrade labelling. The TPB has not been used within South African research to understand the consumers intention to purchase sustainable labels (UTZ and Fairtrade). Thus, this study has provided an exploratory view of South African consumers’ attitude, subjective norms and PBC towards sustainable labels. In terms of Ajzen’s TPB (1985) it was evident that consumers had a positive attitude towards sustainable food labelling within

this study. Furthermore, the consumers' subjective norms were not apparent within this study and although some pressure was experienced from friends and family, it was not significant. Their PBC was associated with a good product related experience however the purchase is not yet automatic, indicating that the consumer needs constant and easily accessible information of sustainable food labels to assist with ease of purchasing.

From the findings of this study, the following amended conceptual framework is proposed in Figure 6.1 to illustrate the role purchasing obstacles, post-product purchase experience and consumer subjective knowledge play in the consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products. The figure below proposes that environmental concern influences the consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC. Therefore, the environmental concern of the consumers may be used to influence the consumer through awareness campaigns of the benefits sustainable labelled food products have on the wellbeing of the planet in contrast towards conventional food products' negative impact on the planet. The figure below also proposes that environmental concern is not the only influence on the consumers' attitude, subjective norms and PBC, but also, that the consumer's subjective knowledge influences the consumer attitude, subjective norms and PBC. It is further suggested that the consumers' subjective knowledge is influenced by the post-product purchase experience of food products containing sustainable food labels, whereas purchasing obstacles influence the post-product related experience through price, laziness, product availability and food label reading. These purchasing obstacles may result in a negative product related experience in relation to possible future sustainable food label purchases. Therefore, the consumers have to be provided with easily accessible sustainable food label information to ensure the sustainable food label related products are purchased, to convert the consumer towards sustainable behaviour through repurchasing these products and ensuring the environment is protected by reaching SDG-12.

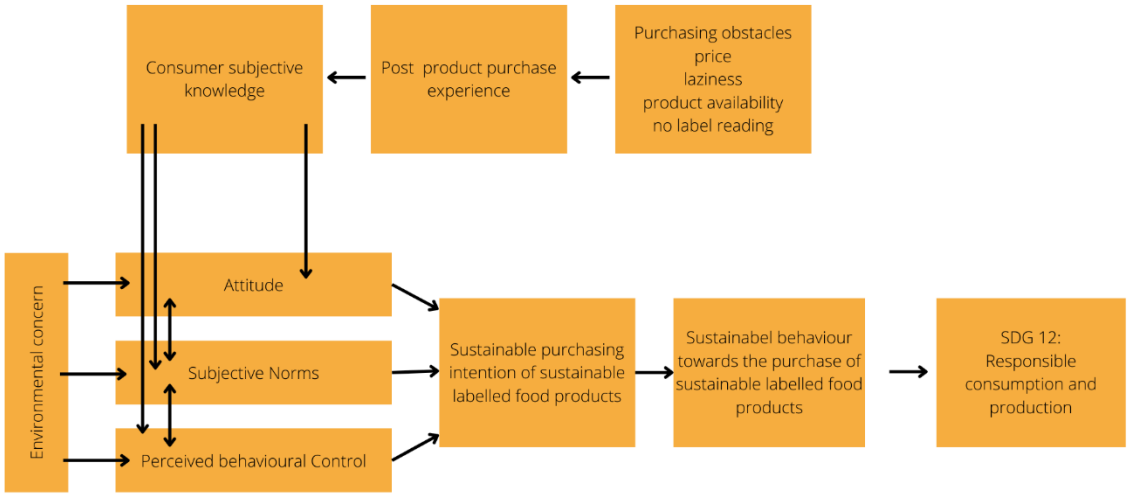

Figure 6.1: Amended conceptual framework

6.5.2 Contribution of the study in relation to the methodology

The study followed an interpretivist paradigm which assisted the researcher to understand the participants' beliefs and motives of sustainable labelled food products fully and deeply. The phenomenological and exploratory research design was also useful in this study to formulate a rich and full understanding of a previously unresearched topic within South Africa. This study further followed a qualitative research methodology. The individual online interviews were useful to explore the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchasing intention of food products. By using individual online interviews, data were generated by the participants which provided insight into consumers' intention to purchase sustainable labelled food products in South Africa.

The qualitative methodology applied to this study was useful in terms of exploring the research topic, because it allowed the researcher to examine verbal conversations through an online interview to pinpoint essential notions consumers hold about sustainable food labelling. This study has again established the value of online interviews through connecting the researcher with participants, not necessarily because of logistics or distance, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, not allowing social interactions. This data-gathering method provided the consumer with a safe environment to participate within this study. Furthermore, the sampling strategy namely snowball sampling became a necessary sampling strategy to ensure enough participants could be reached for this study, since it was conducted during the COVID 19 pandemic on alert level 3, which restricted social interactions. The sampling strategies allowed participants who were already part of the study to refer potential participants to the researcher's Facebook page, who would match the inclusion criteria and interested

participants to participate in the study. To the researcher's knowledge no previous research has explored the influence sustainable food labelling has on consumers' purchasing intention of food products, nor through the use of qualitative research. The researcher was thus allowed to review and further explore the conversations during the individual online interviews with the participants, with a clear understanding of the phenomenon. This study also established the value of projective techniques by providing the consumer with actual digital pictures and definitions during the data gathering of the specific sustainable food labels (UTZ and Fairtrade) being discussed in the online interview. It added an interesting factor during the conversation in each individual online interview. It furthermore produced data confirming facts, probed the consumer for more information and lastly ensured the consumer has no doubt about the specific sustainable label in question.

6.5.3 Contribution of the study in relation to theory in research

Studies relating toward sustainable food labels have mainly been focused on internationally. However, within the South African perspective, not many studies have been conducted exploring the influence sustainable food labelling has on the consumers' intention to purchase food products. This study contributes to the gap within the research in terms of showing the consumers' understanding of sustainable food labels. However, this study also contributes toward the UTZ and Fairtrade certification schemes. The data revealed a changeable consumer; in other words, a consumer with a positive attitude who needs more information to go into action in terms of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. This data would assist UTZ and Fairtrade certification schemes in understanding how to adapt their marketing tactics and educational programmes to provide the consumer with enough information to go into action. This action will contribute towards sustainable behaviour which would lead towards reaching SDG-12, which focusses on sustainable and responsible production and consumption. Through reaching these international SDG, we can create a prospering environment for humanity.

6.6 Limitations of the study

In view of this study being qualitative, exploratory, and using non-probability sampling methods, a few limitations emerged. The study was qualitative, therefore, the consumers' actual knowledge of sustainable food labels and experience with it was restricted through their opinion of what they thought they knew. Furthermore, the study was limited in terms of the data captured within this study which is only applicable to the study sample that was used because of the exploratory nature of the study. Therefore, the findings should not be transferred to any contexts other than what applies to this study, as specific inclusion criteria were used to provide the context of this study. Moreover, the inclusion criteria stipulating that

''participants were required to be familiar with sustainable labelling, in terms of thinking they know anything about sustainable labelling or have seen or heard of either UTZ or Fairtrade labelling'' posed a limitation in terms of participants thinking that they knew what the specific sustainable labels entailed but in reality, did not. Additionally, the data are particular to women with a tertiary education (as the majority of the participants), which may be considered a limitation. Furthermore, the older generation and male participants' opinions are unknown which can be considered a limitation for this study. Another limitation of this study is the relative newness and the limited availability of sustainable labelled food products, resulting in unfamiliarity of certain sustainable labels.

6.7 Future research

The influence sustainable food labelling has on the consumers' purchase intention; is of value not only to the environment but also to marketers to further develop this research. The data revealed a changeable consumer; in other words, a consumer with a positive attitude who needs more information to go into action in terms of purchasing sustainable labelled food products. It is therefore important to gather more consumer views regarding sustainable labelling to pinpoint the type of information needed to convince the changeable consumer to purchase sustainable labelled food products to decrease the negative impact conventional food products have on the environment and farmers. Therefore, future research can be performed by using a quantitative paradigm to understand a wider range of South African consumers' opinion of sustainable food labelling. Additionally, future studies may find it useful to study the difference between male and female participants where sustainable food labelling is concerned in South Africa. It is important to obtain additional experiences and views from South African consumers to determine further feasibility of increasing sustainable labels to more products to further assist the environment. In addition, studies measuring actual consumer knowledge of sustainable food labelling would be beneficial to determine what the consumer knows to create educational programmes targeting the specific knowledge gaps. Future studies should also set inclusion criteria that do not offer experience of either UTZ or Fairtrade trademarks but of both, or of UTZ and Fairtrade separately so that the group's experience is not limited by a smaller number of participants who cannot converse about the particular sustainable label.

6.8 Recommendations

The findings from this study suggests that consumers require additional information regarding sustainable labels in South Africa, particularly to Fairtrade. The information will provide them with the necessary information to understand why purchasing sustainable labelled food

products are beneficial in helping the planet. Consumer awareness campaigns can be launched to increase knowledge and understanding of the sustainable food labels by major retailers stocking the sustainable labelled food products or would like to stock it in the future. To therefore, raise awareness not only for the specific sustainable certifications and the retailers stocking these food products, but also for the benefit of the planet. Only through consumer education and awareness will the benefits of sustainable labels become common knowledge to improve the wellbeing of the planet.

Specific recommendations can be made towards farmers, manufacturers and retailers in terms of marketing of sustainable labelled food products in general and towards UTZ and Fairtrade specifically:

- Information regarding sustainable labelled food products should be more readily available, which can be first hand in the retail store when purchasing a sustainable labelled food product or online when the consumer is not going to the brick-and-mortar due to Covid-restrictions.
- The benefits of sustainable labelled food products should be emphasised.
- Sustainable labelled food products should aim to be price comparative toward conventional food products to ensure it is accessible to all consumers.
- Mayor retailers should drive awareness campaigns regarding sustainable labelled food products to ensure consumers actually know what sustainable labels entail.
- The sustainable labels should be easily noticed on the packaging of food products, through eye-catching colours such as red.
- Sustainable food labels are voluntary schemes which can be standardised by changing sustainable food labels to a mandatory requirement.
- It could be beneficial to apply different inclusion criteria to select possible participants for future research, the reason being the participants could have shared some information about UTZ and Fairtrade labels although they had not noticed the label on food products., in terms of thinking they have seen or heard of either UTZ labelling or Fairtrade labelling. Therefore, future research should include participants who have heard, seen or could recall any possible information of the UTZ or Fairtrade label.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the main conclusions of each objective and sub-objective to understand how sustainable food labelling influences the consumers purchasing intention. The researcher determined that consumers had a good general understanding of sustainable

food labels specifically in terms of the UTZ sustainable label which can be found on cocoa products. The findings indicated that most participants have seen the UTZ label on food products, however, the Fairtrade label was rarely noted. The findings further indicated that consumers are concerned about the environment but also need more information regarding sustainable labelled food products such as Fairtrade to assist the changeable consumer in 'actually' purchasing products containing sustainable food labels. Furthermore, the findings have been discussed in terms of the research contributions towards: (i) the study relation to the TPB, (ii) the study in relation to the methodology, and (iii) the study in relation to the gap in the research. Additionally, the research limitations have been indicated as well as future recommendations to enhance the current findings from this study.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE

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UNISA-CAES HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date: 08/03/2021

NHREC Registration # : REC-170616-051
REC Reference # : 2021/CAES_HREC/035
Name : Ms CC Naberman
Student #: 69051941

Dear Ms Naberman

Decision: Ethics Approval from 04/03/2021 to 28/02/2024

Researcher(s): Ms CC Naberman
69051941@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor (s): Prof EL Kempen
kempeel@unisa.ac.za; 011-471-2241

Working title of research:

An exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products

Qualification: M Consumer Science

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa-CAES Health Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years, **subject to submission of yearly progress reports. Failure to submit the progress report will lead to withdrawal of the ethics clearance until the report has been submitted.**

The researcher is cautioned to adhere to the Unisa protocols for research during Covid-19.

Due date for progress report: 28 February 2022

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the UNISA-CAES Health Research Ethics Committee on 04 March 2021 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2021/CAES_HREC/035** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Prof MA Antwi
Chair of UNISA-CAES Health REC
E-mail: antwima@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (011) 670-9391

Prof SR Magano
Acting Executive Dean : CAES
E-mail: magansr@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (011) 471-3649

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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APPENDIX B: PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: 2021/CAES_HREC/035
Research permission reference number: REC-170616-051

22.02.2020

An exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Caroline Naberman and I am doing research with Prof E. Kempen a professor, in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences, in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences towards a Masters at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled an exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could determine the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchasing intention of food products.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The in-depth interview guide has been designed to study the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products through establishing the consumer understanding, and influence, of sustainable labelling on subjective norms (This refers to whether a person approves or disapproves of a behavior) and perceived behavioural control on sustainable labelling (This refers to the perceived ease or difficulty in sanctioning a certain behavior). You were approached to participate in this interview because you are the responsible person for purchasing food products within your household and have heard of sustainable labelling before. If you are below the age of 18 years you will not be permitted to take part in this study. By taking part in this interview, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings. The approximate number of participants in this study will be 15 participants. More participants may be required.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves *an in-depth electronic interview on TEAMS that will be digitally recorded. The duration period can be anything between 30 -60 minutes depending on the level of interaction and engagement.* These are the type of questions that you will be asked:

1. When the word sustainability is mentioned, what comes to mind?

2. When you hear the word sustainable labelled food product, what comes to mind?

3. What do you know about sustainable labelling?

4. Do you know whether sustainable labels have any advantages?

5. Do you think sustainable labels are known amongst South Africans?

6. Have you seen sustainable labels on food products in any retail outlets and if so, which ones?

7. When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what comes to mind?

8. When you hear the word UTZ certified, what comes to mind?

9. Have you seen UTZ or Fairtrade certification on food products in any retail outlets and if so, which ones?

10. Do you look for these certifications before purchasing a food product?

11. Would you be more likely to purchase a product with one of these certifications present?

SECTION C: The influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels have on the intention to purchase food products

1. What do you expect when you look at a sustainably sourced food product?

2. How important is sustainability to you when it comes to food products?

3. In which way does sustainability influence your decision to buy a product

SECTION D: To explore consumers' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control towards sustainable labelling

To explore consumers' attitude towards sustainable labelling:

1. How do you feel about sustainability/environmental sustainability?
2. Regarding products that are sustainably labelled?
3. Would you feel inclined to buy sustainable labelled products and why?
4. In which way does sustainable labelled food products influence your decision to buy a

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
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product

5. What do you expect from a sustainable labelled product?

To explore consumers' subjective norms towards sustainable labelling:

6. Do you feel pressured socially to buy or not to buy sustainable labelled products, if so why?
7. If previously answered yes, from who does the pressure originate?
8. How does the pressure make you feel?
9. In which way does friends and family influence your decision to buy a sustainable labelled product?
10. Are there any individuals or groups of people who would approve of you buying sustainable labelled food products?
11. Are there any individuals or groups of people who would disapprove of you purchasing sustainable labelled food products?
12. Are there any individuals or groups that come to mind when you think about sustainable labels?

To explore consumers' perceived behavioural control towards sustainable labelling:

13. How does buying sustainable labelled products make you feel?
14. Does buying sustainable labelled products come naturally?

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. It is anticipated that the information we gain from this interview will help us to determine the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products. Through establishing the influence and understanding of sustainable labelling by the consumer through, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the interview and you can withdraw from the study prior to the in-depth interview meeting that has been scheduled on TEAMS.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not benefit from your participation as an individual, however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study will establish a better understanding of consumer purchasing patterns as well as consumption patterns to support producers of raw materials and manufacturers to apply sustainable practices in order to create a healthier planet. You may find by sharing your experience with the researcher, that your participation is meaningful to you.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by taking part in this in-depth-interview, however the following consequences in completing the in-depth interview might arise such as a

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

slight inconvenience of your time as well as data usage for the interview. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed hard copies will be shredded and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment or incentive will be provided when participating in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Caroline Naberman on 69051941@mylife.unisa.ac.za or indicate that the information should be emailed to you and ensure that your email is known to the researcher. Should you require any further information or want to contact the

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Caroline Naberman on 69051941@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof Elizabeth Kempen at, kempeel@unisa.ac.za or at (011) 471 2241. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the CAES Health Research Ethics Committee, Prof MA Antwi on 011-670-9391 or antwima@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Caroline Naberman

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
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APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer each question as honestly and as thoroughly as possible.

All information gathered within this study will remain confidential and will be recorded

SECTION A: Demographics

Please complete Section A by marking (X) in the appropriate box.

Participant number:		Tick next to the appropriate option
Q1	**Gender**	
	Male	
	Female	
Q2	**Age (years)**	
	18-29	
	30-39	
	40-49	
	50-59	
	60 years and older	

Q3	**Educational Status**	
	Lower than Grade 12	
	Grade 12	
	Diploma	
	Degree or higher qualification	
Q4	**Occupation**	
	Please type your current occupation	

Q5	**Have you heard of sustainable labelling?**	Yes		No	
Q6	**Are you the person responsible for purchasing groceries within your household?**	Yes		No	

APPENDIX D: TURNITIN RECEIPT

turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author:	C Naberman
Assignment title:	LCS 2022
Submission title:	M Consumer Science dissertation
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Page count:	196
Word count:	67,296
Character count:	389,575
Submission date:	17-Aug-2022 09:23AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	1883481358

An exploratory study of the influence of sustainable food labelling on consumers' purchase intention of food products

By

Caroline Naberman

69051941

To be submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF CONSUMER SCIENCE

In the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences

At the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Prof E KEMPEN

1

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Table 1: In-depth individual interview questions addressing the understanding of sustainable labelling.

Objective 1: To determine consumer's understanding of the term sustainable labelling by: **1.1 Exploring the meaning of the term sustainable labelling**
1.1.1 When you hear the word sustainability what comes to mind (what are you thinking about, what are your thoughts)? 1.1.2. Now when you hear the expression "sustainable food product", what comes to mind, what are you now thinking about?
1.2 Exploring the consumers' interpretation and use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels
View below picture of a sustainable label and answer questions subsequently    *Here is the first sustainable food product label I would like to focus your attention on.* 1.2.1 Have you noticed this label on food products? 1.2.2 What do you know about UTZ? 1.2.3 Where have you noticed it, on which food product? 1.2.4 If you have what specifically drew your attention to the label?? 1.2.5 When you hear the word UTZ certified, what are you thinking about?    **View below picture of a sustainable label and answer questions subsequently** *Here is the first sustainable food product label I would like to focus your attention on.* 1.2.6 Have you noticed this label on food products? 1.2.7 What do you know about Fairtrade? 1.2.8 Where have you noticed it, on which product? 1.2.9 If you have what specifically drew your attention to the label? 1.2.10 When you hear the word Fairtrade certified, what are you thinking about? **The description of UTZ certification will be provided to the participant hereafter.** ***UTZ –*** *UTZ stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers, their families and our planet.* 1.2.11 Now that you have heard what UTZ stands for what is now important to you about this label? ***Fairtrade*** - Fairtrade certification is a product certification system where social, economic and environmental aspects of production are certified against Fairtrade Standards for

Producers and Traders. The Fairtrade system monitors the buying and the selling of the product until it is consumer packaged and labelled. 1.2.12 Now that you have heard what Fairtrade stands for what is now important to you about this label? 1.2.13 Following on what you have just heard, what would you say are the most important things about sustainable food product labelling to you? 1.2.15 In your opinion do you think sustainable labels are well known amongst South Africans? 1.2.16 Now that you have heard some of the clarifications to each of the labels, do you think UTZ, and Fairtrade certification is well known among South African consumers? 1.2.17 Will you purchase a product with one of these labels? And why will you or why will you not?
1.3 Establishing the importance of environmental concern on the use of Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels during the purchasing decision?
1.3.1 Are you concerned about the environment in general? 1.3.2 what concerns you in particular? 1.3.3 Do you think your concern for the environment is driving your consideration of these labels when purchasing food products? If not, then what is the major driver that is making you consider food products with these labels? If not the environment, then what is the most important thing that is driving your attention to these labels? 1.3.4 Would you be more likely to purchase a product if it had one of these certifications printed on it?

Table 2: In-depth individual interview questions addressing the influence Fairtrade and UTZ has on the purchasing intention.

Objective 2 **Examining the influence Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels has on the intention to purchase food products**
2.1 What do you expect when you see Fairtrade and UTZ certified labels? 2.2 How important is environmental sustainability to you when it comes to food products? 2.3 In which way does environmental sustainability influence your decision to buy a food product?

Table 3: In-depth individual interview questions addressing the influence sustainable labelling has on the purchasing intention.

Objective 3 **To explore consumers' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control towards sustainable labelling**
3.1 To explore consumers' attitude towards sustainable labelling: 3.1.1 How do you feel about sustainability/environmental sustainability? **3.2 To explore consumers' subjective norms towards sustainable labelling:** 3.2.1 Is there any social pressure from family, friends, peers etc who are pressuring you to buy or not to buy sustainable labelled food products, if so, where is the pressure coming from, and why do you feel pressured? 3.2.2 How does the pressure make you feel?

3.2.3 Are there any specific individuals or groups you would like to mention whom you think would approve of you buying sustainable labelled food products?

3.2.4 Are there any individuals or groups of people you would like to mention who would disapprove of you purchasing sustainable labelled food products?

3.2.5 Are there any individuals or groups that come to mind when you think about sustainable food labels in particular?

3.3To explore consumers' perceived behavioural control towards sustainable labelling:

3.3.1 When you think about the fact that you have bought sustainable food products, how does that make you feel?

3.3.2 Does buying sustainable labelled products come naturally to you or not, is it a concerted effort or something you do automatically and specifically where these two are concerned, do you really go out of your way to look for them and if so why or why not?

3.3.3 Is there anything that hinders or makes it difficult for you to purchase sustainable labelled food products?

APPENDIX F: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE OF PROOFREADING AND EDITING

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Fax: 0866 381 543
Cell number: 082 569 7457
Professional Editors' Guild

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SUPERVISOR: Prof E KEMPEN

Date: 14 July 2022

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MAURINE FISCHER

APPENDIX G: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S COVID-19 GUIDELINES: IMPLICATIONS OF ALERT LEVELS FOR RESEARCHERS AND POSTGRADUATE

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA COVID-19 GUIDELINES: IMPLICATIONS OF ALERT LEVELS FOR RESEARCHERS AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Issued by: Prof T Meyiwa, Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation

Date: 26 June 2020

Version 2.0

This guideline document is complementary to the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics, dated 8 April 2020, and the Unisa Covid-19 guidelines for ERCs, dated 28 April 2020. The document aims to provide ERCs, researchers and postgraduate students with practical guidance on the implications of the alert levels on research to limit the transmission of the coronavirus and reduce the risk for both the researcher and the research participants.

Unisa supports the continuation of research activities, where possible, and researchers are advised to follow national regulations and adhere to the restrictions imposed by the various alert levels. ERCs, researchers and postgraduate supervisors must consider the potential risks of harm to research participants, communities, researchers, postgraduate students and the university relating to the collection of data during this time.

1. **The potential risks of harm to the researcher/postgraduate student/members of research teams relating to Covid-19**

   1.1 Researchers, postgraduate students, and members of research teams might become infected with Covid-19 when:
   - 1.1.1 They come in contact with an asymptomatic/symptomatic person.
   - 1.1.2 They are handling objects contaminated by the virus.
   - 1.1.3 They are entering a high-risk/hotspot Covid-19 area.

   1.2 The aforementioned actions pose a risk of transmitting Covid-19 to their families and subsequently to the community.

   1.3 They could be fined or arrested for violating lockdown laws or appropriate lockdown level restrictions, such as:
   - visiting participants when social contact is restricted, and
   - travelling between provinces without the necessary permits.

   1.4 Researchers, postgraduate students, and members of research teams that are above 60, and have co-morbidities, could put their health in jeopardy when they collect data by means of face-to-face activities.

2. **The potential risks of harm to the University**

   Potential reputational harm to the University relating to risks of real or perceived non-adherence to governmental directives by staff, postgraduate students and members of research teams, as a result of:

2.1 Claims that the participants contracted Covid-19 due to their interaction with researchers or members of a research team.
2.2 Claims that researchers, postgraduate students, or members of research teams contracted the virus during the conduct of the study.

3. **The implications of the alert levels for researchers**:

3.1 The government is following a risk-adjusted approach based on the following criteria:
  3.1.1 The level of the infection rate;
  3.1.2 The rate of transmission;
  3.1.3 The capacity of health facilities;
  3.1.4 The extent of public health intervention;
  3.1.5 The economic and social impact of continued restrictions.
3.2 The restrictions for the alert levels are set out below. The current Covid-19 context is dynamic, and the implications below could change in tandem with adjustments to governmental directives.
3.3 Consider whether your data collection methods can be adapted considering the national restrictions.
3.4 Should researchers choose to adjust their data collection methods (for instance to electronic interviews), these amendments must be scientifically justifiable.
3.5 Requests for amendments must be submitted for approval by the relevant ERC.
3.6 In principle, any adjustments to data collection methods should limit the risks to researchers of breaking national Covid-19 regulations or putting the researcher at risk of contracting or spreading the virus.
3.7 Postgraduate students must consult their supervisors in relation to possible changes to data collection methods.
3.8 Issues of connectivity, online accessibility and data costs should be considered when switching to online means of data collection.

Alert levels	***Implications for researchers and postgraduate students***
Alert level 5: Drastic measures to contain the spread of the virus and save lives. Higher Education under total lockdown with only essential services allowed on campus.	○ No research activities e.g., laboratory work or contact with human participants. ○ Only critical clinical research as part of patient care or treatment and vaccine trial research or laboratory work linked to Covid-19 research. ○ Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants. ○ Online quantitative research, e.g., surveys.
Alert level 4: Extreme precautions to limit community transmission and outbreaks while allowing some limited activity. Higher Education under total lockdown with only essential services allowed on campus.	○ Essential laboratory work with a Unisa permit. ○ No research that requires physical human participant interactions in close proximity e.g. face-to-face interviews; focus groups or human sample collection (excluding clinical research as permitted by national guidelines and relevant Unisa permit). ○ Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants. ○ Online quantitative research e.g., surveys.

Alert level 3: Restrictions on many activities including workplaces and socially, to address a high risk of transmission. Maximum of 33% of students return to campus. Controlled return of students: ○ Final year students ○ Practical/clinical training ○ Laboratory work	○ Essential laboratory work with a permit conditional to level 3 restrictions and relevant Unisa permit. ○ Access to university and research facilities only if you are a final year student conditional to level 3 restrictions and relevant Unisa permit. ○ No research that requires physical human participant interactions nearby, e.g., face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or human sample collection (excluding clinical research as permitted by national guidelines and relevant Unisa permit). ○ Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants. ○ Online quantitative research, e.g., surveys. ○ No research is to be conducted in homes, communities, restricted government facilities for the aged.
Advanced alert level 3: 33% of the student population will be allowed to return to campuses which include: ○ All groups that have already returned. ○ Students in the final year of their programmes. ○ Student in years of study that require clinical training. ○ Postgraduate students who require laboratory equipment and other technical equipment.	○ Essential laboratory work with a Unisa permit. ○ Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants. ○ Online quantitative research, e.g., surveys. ○ Limited research that requires physical human participant interaction in close proximity conducted under strict conditions, in pre-arranged public space and adhering to strict safety conditions. ○ *Postgraduate students that need to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must inform their supervisors and notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the supervisor and student – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).* ○ *All other researchers that want to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the researcher – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).*
Alert level 2: Physical distancing and restrictions on leisure and social activities to prevent a resurgence. Maximum of 66% of the student population may return to campus. Controlled return of students: ○ Final year students ○ Practical/clinical training ○ Laboratory work ○ First-year undergraduate students	○ *Essential laboratory work with a Unisa permit.* ○ *Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants.* ○ *Online quantitative research e.g., surveys.* ○ *Limited research that requires physical human participant interaction in close proximity conducted under strict conditions, in pre-arranged public space and adhering to strict safety conditions.* ○ *Postgraduate students that need to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must inform their supervisors and notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the supervisor and student – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).*

	○ *All other researchers that want to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the researcher – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).*
Alert level 1: Most normal activities can resume with certain restrictions, precautions, and health guidelines to be followed at all times. 100% of the student population returns with: ○ Physical distancing ○ Health protocols ○ International students return Age and co-morbidity of staff and students managed	○ Essential laboratory work with a Unisa permit. ○ Telephone and/or online platform interaction with human participants. ○ Online quantitative research, e.g., surveys. ○ Research that requires physical human participant interaction in close proximity conducted under strict conditions in homes, communities, restricted government facilities, schools, facilities for the aged (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below). ○ *Postgraduate students that need to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must inform their supervisors and notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the supervisor and student – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).* ○ *All other researchers that want to proceed with data collection methods involving physical human interaction with participants must notify the ERC by completing an amendment form, signed by the researcher – the safety precautions must be clearly described (Refer to the "toolkit" in section 4 below).*

4. **Strict safety and protocol guidelines with human participant contact (alert 1 and 2) – also referred to as the "toolkit":**

The following guidelines are recommended to ensure the safety of the researcher(s) and participant(s):

4.1 Do not proceed with the intended contact data collection visit or meeting if the researcher and/or participant is feeling unwell.

4.2 Telephonic pre-screening before the visit is advised, as well as keeping a register of participants that were involved in face-to-face data collection activities.

4.3 The researcher and members of the research team must also be screened before any human participant contact. Keep evidence of the screening data signed by a witness.

4.4 Useful Covid-19 guidance is provided on the Department of Health WhatsApp group +27 60 012 3456.

4.5 When the visit can go ahead, please be mindful of the following procedures:

4.5.1 Wearing an appropriate cloth mask. Do not touch your face and advise the participants to do the same.

4.5.2 The researcher has to ensure that the research team and participants have masks and sanitizer.

4.5.3 In specific contexts, it will be essential to handout sanitiser and sealed cloth masks to the participants.
4.5.4 If possible, do a pre-screening by measuring the participants' temperature (including those of the researcher) and ask questions that were not included in the telephonic pre-screening.
4.5.5 Keep a physical distance of 2 meters;
4.5.6 Sanitize hands with 70% alcohol-based sanitizer or wash with soap and water for at least 40 seconds before commencing any activities.
4.5.7 Sanitize all surfaces before commencing activities and again before leaving.
4.5.8 Avoid the exchange of paper between participants and researchers, unless the use of paper is ethically or scientifically justified.
4.5.9 Use disposable gloves with the handling of hard copies of documents, put it in a paper envelope, and store it away. Researcher and participants to remove the gloves or sanitize your hands since the novel coronavirus can reside on paper for up to 3 days.
4.5.10 Store documents for a minimum of 3 days before taking them out.
4.5.11 The risk of contagion during the use and exchange of pens, digital devices, smartphones, and tablets must be considered and mitigated. Please refer to the links below, how to clean these devices.
4.5.12 No food may be shared. Pre-packed, sanitized items such as chips or water could be handed out if necessary.

Resources:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-health-and-safety-resources

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- M. Greeff (21 May 2020), Implications of Alert Levels for Researchers and Postgraduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Guideline document.
- M. Greeff (11 June 2020), Implications of Alert Levels for Researchers and Postgraduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Webinar hosted by AUTHeR, North West University.

Additional resources consulted:

Watermeyer, J, Knight, J & Small, M, WITS non-medical REC guidelines for research during Covid-19.

South African Government, Webpage - Corona information and updates, https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus