

"In Ecostore We Trust":
Uncovering the Symbolic Meanings Of
Sustainable Products & Their Use in Building
Consumers' Self-Image

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the symbolic meanings consumers took from a brand of sustainable products. This interaction between consumer and product is modelled by McCracken's (1986) model of symbolic meaning transfer, which served as the study's lens of interpretation. The symbolic meanings of products are important as consumers use these to build their self-image. This transfer of symbolic meaning is completed through the act of consumption. The study looked to provide an understanding of the role of consumption in order to inform attempts to initiate a shift in cultural values towards consumption. The undertaking of this research is significant as it contributes to a greater understanding of the sociological and symbolic function in conceptualisations of sustainable consumption. This would help to inform solutions that improve the sustainability of modern consumption.

The study interviewed seven consumers of Ecostore products, a brand of sustainable household cleaning and body care products. The questions in the interview were informed by the model of symbolic meaning transfer and sought to allow participants to tell their consumption stories and rituals of the product. Questions explored the actions that participants took with Ecostore-branded products. The data collected was analysed by way of thematic analysis.

The findings uncovered symbolic meanings of virtue, personal and collective values, health and trust in Ecostore products. Participants used these symbolic meanings to create their self-image through the ritual of consuming them. These rituals included the actions of buying, using, gifting and the disposal of the product. The self-image that participants built expressed that they were virtuous, responsible, contributing and risk-averse members of society. Further, the personal and collective values of participants could be expressed through the consumption of the product. This ability to build self-image from Ecostore products was important to consumers and contributed to their decision to select them over others.

This study has contributed to knowledge in the area of sustainable consumption by highlighting the symbolic significance of the consumption practice in the context of sustainable products. The symbolic meanings identified could be reflected in new product development, marketing management and advertising communications. This could help to increase levels of the consumption of sustainable products.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Concerns over sustainable development of the global population first came to the attention of the public in the World Commission on Environment and Development's Brundtland report in 1987 (Sanne, 2002). Unsustainable levels and patterns of consumption are a major cause of ongoing environmental degradation, particularly in industrialised countries (Connolly & Prothero, 2003; Durning, 1994; UNDP, 1998). Modern consumption is unsustainable¹ as it is reliant on finite and non-renewable resources and generate unacceptable environmental impacts (Jackson, 2006). Many agencies have estimated more than five planets will be necessary to support the current flow of energy and materials (World Wildlife Fund, 2006). Resources are being used at a rate greater than they can be regenerated.

The issue of sustainability continues to increase in prominence today (Chan & Lau, 2004). Research in the field of sustainability can be considered vital and urgent given its implications for societies and environments. Rampant consumption is taxing on finite and non-renewable natural resources (N. Myers & Kent, 2004) and has contributed to issues such as global warming, pollution and soil erosion (Tanner & Kast, 2003).

Households affect the environment through their use of energy and water, waste generation, transport patterns and food choices (A. M. King, Burgess, Ijomah, & McMahon, 2006). Research in understanding consumption practices is a means of addressing the environmental degradation. Some academics have debated whether the issue is consumption levels or patterns of consumption (Kong, Salzmann, Steger, & Ionescu-Somers, 2002; Mont & Plepys, 2008). However, there is a consensus that an adjustment of individual actions, lifestyles and behaviours is necessary. Advancing

¹ In a strict sense there are no truly sustainable consumption levels, as all products will inevitably have some negative environmental impact. Instead, products that have low environmental impacts are regarded as environmentally sustainable.

knowledge can be considered both urgent and critical given the rapid rate of resource depletion and ongoing adverse impacts on the environment.

1.2 Problem Orientation

Schaefer and Crane (2005) identified that consumers do not necessarily establish profound relationships with products, but instead use products in highly visible ways and are conscious of the inferences that others draw from them. As well as performing utilitarian functions, people consume products to create their self-image (Baudrillard, 1997; Belk, 1988; Featherstone, 1990; Kernan & Sommers, 1967; Solomon, 1983). Consumer products are capable of serving self-image because they are embedded with symbolic meaning (Belk, 1988; Leigh & Gabel, 1992; Solomon, 1983). Brands incorporate the symbolic meanings of products as well as functionality and experiential benefits (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986). The symbolic meanings of products are important because they complement the product's utility and influence consumption behaviour. According to Banister and Hogg (2004, p. 850):

"Consumers often decide whether to accept or reject products and brands on the basis of their symbolic (as opposed to the functional) attribute, investing items with either positive or negative symbolic meaning."

Thus, identifying what the symbolic meanings are for sustainable products and how consumers transfer symbolic meanings to their self-image gives an insight into what motivates the decision to use them. The symbolic meaning is not always constructed by the manufacturer or marketer, as consumers themselves invest symbolic meaning in products (Sirgy, et al., 1997). Consumption is the means by which consumers invest symbolic meaning. Symbolic meanings represent what individuals see in the products they consume, as well as being products in themselves of what has been invested in them. Because products can be invested with symbolic meaning, they can function as symbols to a person's individuality and uniqueness (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004).

Symbolic meanings have implications for increasing the general consumption of sustainable products. The symbolic meanings of products are determinants of their consumption (Solomon, 1983). Schneider, Ledermann, Fry and Rist (2010) found that where products' symbolic meanings contradicted with a person's identity, behaviours

would be refused. This suggests that in order for sustainable consumption to take place, individuals must first see symbolic meanings in sustainable products that align with their desired self-image. Personalised meaning, in contrast to cultural and advertiser-construed, has also been suggested to have higher levels of enduring involvement, greater salience and result in stronger motivations for cognitive processing and elaboration (Fournier, 1991).

The model of symbolic meaning transfer² (McCracken, 1986) is used as a lens of interpretation for this study. According to this model, consumption actions are a means of transferring symbolic meaning from products to an individual's self-image. Crewe and Gregson (1998) have previously called for research attention towards how the symbolic meanings of products are “unhooked” and transferred, and how consumers construct meaning and change the value of the products they consume. They suggest an approach emphasising rituals of consumption and cultural and symbolic dimensions of exchange. The model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) orientates the research objective to address this gap. The research objective will now be stated.

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this study was to analyse the symbolic meanings that consumers see in a brand of sustainable consumer products and how this symbolic meaning may be transferred to their self-image through the individuals' consumption practices. As such, the research objective of the study was to answer the following:

What symbolic meanings do consumers take from sustainable products to build their self-image?

This research objective will be achieved through the use of the model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1988) to explore the consumption experiences of individuals who consume a particular brand of sustainable products. The model describes how types of consumption actions enable the transfer of symbolic meaning from product to an individual's self-image. The symbolic meaning of products is

² This model is explained in detail in Section 2.5.1.

formed through the cultural world, consumer interaction, interpretation and branding. The achievement of the research objective will help develop an understanding of consumer's feelings, experiences and perceptions related to sustainable consumer products. The value in answering the research objective will now be outlined.

1.4 Contribution of Study

This study is amongst the first to explore the symbolic meanings of sustainable products through actual consumption actions. Previous studies have focused on the purchase decision and have not accounted for what happens after. The symbolic significance in consuming sustainable products has yet to be accounted for (Soror, 2010). Examining the consumption actions and rituals around sustainable products is a means of developing an understanding of this symbolic significance.

The findings of this study highlight the symbolic meanings that individuals see in sustainable consumer products. These symbolic meanings are drawn and cultivated through the ritual actions consumers take with products. By providing an in-depth account of consumption histories and practices, the movement of these meanings from product to self-image can be understood. Consumers actively draw symbolic meaning from products to their self-image. This transfer of symbolic meaning for sustainable products is illustrated in the findings of this study. The study also contributes to current knowledge through identifying the nature of the self-image that consumers built.

Studying what symbolic meaning consumers of sustainable products wish to acquire presents multiple benefits. These benefits pertain to marketers and governments, as well as wider society that stand to gain from more sustainable consumption behaviours. Uses of the symbolic meanings could be in new product development, marketing communications, as well as social marketing campaigns to increase the general consumption of sustainable goods. These areas of practice can help to encourage a shift in cultural values in the way individuals think about their consumption.

1.5 Organisation of Study

This chapter has provided an overview of the background to the issue and has outlined the focus of this study. It has presented the objective of the research and has highlighted the significance of undertaking the study. The contribution of this study has been discussed. The remainder of this study is structured as follows:

Chapter Two provides a review of literature that relates to the research objective. Firstly, the study's conceptualisation of sustainability is provided. Previous approaches to address issues of sustainable consumption are reviewed. The review of literature illustrates a gap in knowledge pertaining to the symbolic meanings of sustainable products. Symbolic meanings are used to build the self-image of the individuals who consume them. Knowledge around the symbolic value of products, brands and consumption actions is synthesised. The model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) that is used as a lens of interpretation is explained with its value in achieving the research objective stated.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the epistemological beliefs and theoretical perspective of the researcher. It presents the approach to the collection and analysis of data. In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect data around participants' consumption experiences of a particular brand of sustainable products. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The ways in which trustworthiness have been established for the study are outlined. Finally, Chapter Three the ethical considerations of the research are addressed.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study. In answering the research objective, the symbolic meanings of the selected brand of sustainable consumer products are explored and outlined. The meanings are explained and supported through quotes from the interviews.

Chapter Five concludes this research by demonstrating that the research objectives have been achieved. It states the key findings of the study. The value of these findings are laid out and linked back to knowledge in the field. Chapter Five notes the contribution of the study and outlines its implications for managerial practice. The limitations of the study are stated and addressed. Directions for future research in the area are considered before providing a concluding statement.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews literature surrounding sustainable consumption and related concepts to provide a background to the research objective and support the decisions and assumptions that have been made in the study. Research in the field of sustainable consumption is overviewed. The symbolic meaning of products is an important influence in the decision to consume and this is discussed. The role and function of branding in imbuing products with symbolic meaning is also outlined. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of the model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) and outlining its value in its use as a lens of interpretation.

2.2 Sustainable Consumption

The focus of this study lies in sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption broadly refers to the purchase and use of more efficiently produced products (Seyfang, 2005) and environmentally friendly consumption practices (Halkier, 1999). This study acknowledges the view that actions of consumption may not be necessarily sustainable in themselves, only that the nature of the consumption can be less unsustainable in respect to the resources used or environmental impacts generated. The conceptualisation of what sustainable consumption is will now be further outlined.

2.2.1 Conceptualisation of Sustainable Consumption

The term “sustainable consumption” first entered the international policy arena at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (Seyfang, 2005). It was contained in the action plan for sustainable development. Proposed solutions to sustainability issues included promoting eco-efficiency and using market instruments to shift consumption patterns (UNCED, 1992). Policy documents have frequently defined sustainable consumption as the following:

"The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations." (European Environmental Agency, 2005, p. 13)

There have been a number of reviews of what sustainable consumption means to different groups (see Cohen & Murphy, 2001; Jackson, 2006; Jackson & Michaelis, 2003; Seyfang, 2004). Currently, there is no consensus on what precisely sustainable consumption entails. Sustainable consumption has ultimately been used as an umbrella term for a variety of social and environmental issues (Mont & Plepys, 2008). Despite this, it has grown to become a core area of policy objectives in both national and international domains (Seyfang, 2005). Governments have increasingly incorporated sustainable consumption into policy, which demonstrates the growing importance of the issue and the necessity for solutions. To develop a solution, researchers need to understand the value individuals see in acts of consumption.

Dolan (2002) noted that previous conceptualisations of sustainable consumption did not incorporate the social and cultural meaning found in consumption practices. Soron (2010) adds that sustainable consumption has important communicative and identity-orientated functions that are missing from current conceptualisations. The ways in which individuals consume also house meanings and possess value that extends beyond the utilitarian. As such, Dolan (2002) calls for sustainable consumption to fully engage in the sociological and anthropological significances of consumption. Much of modern consumption is symbolic, so it is thus necessary to draw on theoretical frameworks that incorporate this. Previous literature that has attempted to conceptualise sustainable consumption has not accounted for the symbolic meaning of products in the acts of consuming them.

Schaefer and Crane (2005) outline a number of views of consumption, each possessing a different relationship with the concept of sustainability. Here, the view of consumption that has been adopted for the research is "sociological and anthropological". Under this conceptualisation, consumption is not examined from an information or psychological perspective, but from a social and cultural one. This view emphasises:

“Less on how people perceive, evaluate and select different consumption options and more on the function that consumption has in their lives, both individually and as members of social groups.” (Schaefer & Crane, 2005, p83)

The sociological and anthropological view of consumption emphasises the importance of consumption in facilitating social and cultural expressions. As such, consumption can be conceptualised as being an intrinsically positive force in allowing individuals to construct and express their self-image (Borgmann, 2001). This is the conceptualisation of sustainable consumption that informs this study and is justified through the reported findings. The conceptualisation is valuable as it begins to recognise that consumption has an important function in building one's self-image. The following section will review where research attention in sustainable consumption has been previously, and where a gap in knowledge currently exists.

2.2.2 Addressing Sustainable Consumption

Early attempts to address the issue of sustainability focused on production aspects such as operational efficiencies and environmentally benign processes. However, it was quickly noted that any gains in these areas were counteracted by increasing consumption (Rothenberg, 2007). Thus, researchers have since turned their attention to individual consumers and their consumption as a means of addressing sustainability issues.

The literature in sustainable consumption has often focused on identifying who the green consumer is (e.g. Abeliotis, Koniari, & Sardianou, 2010; Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003). The green³ consumer was seen as a solution to consumption issues. As such, researchers were interested in identifying who they were. Some of the areas they have sought to explore were the green consumers' demographics (Roberts, 1995; Schultz, Oskamp, & Mainieri, 1995; Straughan & Roberts, 1999), their personalities (Balderjahn, 1988; Kinnear, Taylor, & Ahmed, 1974) and their attitudes (Shrum, McCarty, & Lowrey, 1995). However, the issue with this focus on the consumer is that the findings of these studies have repeatedly contradicted one another (Kilbourne & Beckmann, 1998; Straughan & Roberts, 1999;

³ This study understands the green consumer to be one that is engaging in sustainable consumption.

Wagner, 1997). One explanation is that sustainable consumption behaviour is not consistent in itself (Alwitt & Pitts, 1996; Moisander, 2007; Peattie, 1999; Thøgersen, 2004; Uusitalo, 1990). Green attitudes do not always correlate with green consumption behaviours. Researchers have called this the "attitude-behaviour" gap.

The "attitude-behaviour gap" has been extensively explored in a number of studies (Connolly & Prothero, 2003; Hughner, McDonagh, Prothero, Shultz, & Stanton, 2007; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Kraus, 1995; Padel & Foster, 2005; Swann, 2002; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010). One example of this gap is that while just under half the population hold favourable attitudes towards organic produce, only about ten percent of the population purchase organic produce (Hughner, et al., 2007). Some explanations offered are that other factors such as price, perception of performance and convenience take precedence in decision criteria (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Weatherell, Tregear, & Allinson, 2003). Others in the field state it is due to a lack of alternatives, a disbelief of claims and a lack of information (de Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005). This means that consumers do not always feel that they can trust the claims of manufacturers and brands. This compromises the consumers' commitment to social and ethical issues, of which sustainability is one.

This study takes that belief that all consumers, rather than just green consumers, have some capacity and potential to make some or more sustainable consumption choices in their lives (Kardash, 1976; Young, et al., 2010). It does not attempt to provide an explanation of why consumers may or may not always consume sustainable products consistently. The focus of this research moves away from who the consumer is and instead looks at what role the process of consumption has to consumers. Products and their consumption have important psychological roles that have been previously underestimated by sustainability researchers (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). This study intends to contribute to current knowledge by identifying what symbolic value any consumer may obtain through the consumption of sustainable products.

Consumption activities have a distinct cultural meaningfulness that has been neglected in production-focused perspectives on sustainable consumption (Dolan, 2002). The practice of consumption is an individual's primary means of self-definition (Durning, 1994). This is because consumption is "inextricably linked with values and social meaning" and products act as "signifiers of cultural allegiance and social

relationships” (Seyfang, 2004, p. 324). Sustainable consumption needs to start drawing from consumer research addressing consumption to understand the drivers and roles it plays in self-image creation (Soron, 2010). Consumption is able to create self-image because products have symbolic meanings. This study will explore the symbolic meanings of sustainable products to develop understanding of why consumers choose them. Developing this understanding of consumption is valuable as it supports a shift to a consumer culture that addresses sustainability concerns (Dolan, 2002).

Some authors have previously called for a major shift in the cultural values of consumption to address sustainability issues (Dolan, 2002; Michaelis, 2003). Consumer culture is seen as being responsible for the growth of unsustainable consumption levels (Featherstone, 1990; Michaelis, 2003). However, shifting culture is not easy. Consumer culture is embedded in existing material and social infrastructure and as such, can face resistance (Heiskanen & Pantzar, 1997; Schein, 1997). Any attempt to initiate a shift in culture needs to first understand the nature and the role of consumption. This study proposes that examining the consumption practices around sustainable products is a means of achieving this understanding through the findings of symbolic meanings. The following section will lay out why the symbolic meanings of products are important to consumption.

2.3 Meaning of Products

Consumers purchase products and services not only for their functional utility, but also for their symbolic meaning (Baudrillard, 1997; Bauman, 1990; Campbell, 1987; Dittmar, 1992; Elliott, 1999; Levy, 1959; Miller, 1995). This notion has long been recognised as important for consumer research (Levy, 1959; Mick, 1986; Solomon, 1983; Zaltman & Wallendorf, 1979). Levy (1959) noted that transactions between marketers and consumers are, above all else, exchanges of meaning. If these exchanges can be understood, then there is potential for increasing the general consumption of sustainable products. This section reviews knowledge around the symbolic meanings of products and brands and their subsequent value in the process of self-image creation.

2.3.1 Symbolic Value of Products

Consumer research has suggested that products have value on a number of levels. Firstly, Products have utilitarian value in fulfilling functions and resolving problems (Fennell, 1978; Fournier, 1991). This purely utilitarian role has already been widely acknowledged (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1978; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1988; Prentice, 1987). Secondly, products have experiential value in sensory pleasure, the arousal of emotion and serving as pacifiers and comforters. (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; E. Myers, 1985; Prentice, 1987; Settle & Alreck, 1989; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Thirdly, products have value in their ability to express one's self-image through their symbolic value (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1978; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1988; E. Myers, 1985; Settle & Alreck, 1989). These beliefs about the value of a product have led to researchers adopting different stances towards understanding consumption behaviour.

Research in understanding the nature of human motivation for consumption behaviour can be seen as being in two distinct schools of thought. These are based on the values seen in products as outlined. The rational school suggests that consumers are economic and act to maximise the total utility of given scenarios (e.g. Bettman, 1979; Howard & Sheth, 1969). As such, consumers are seen to behave based on objective criteria of price, performance and comparisons (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). However, a growing number of researchers have noted that this school of thought does not adequately capture the motivation formed from consumers' emotional wants (Dichter, 1960; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook, 1980a, 1980b; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Levy, 1959; Sheth, 1979). Consumption offers experiential and symbolic value, drawing and following from the three types of product value outlined. Under this belief, Consumers use personal and subjective criteria such as taste and desire for expression to guide their consumption decisions. Consumers are driven by functional and utilitarian needs, as well as their motivations for the symbolic and expressive (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Sirgy & Johar, 1999).

The focus of this study lies in the symbolic value of sustainable products. The area of sustainability is a modern science and as such, consumers have an uncertainty in knowledge (Giddens, 1991). Consumers are not certain of the value their actions have on the environment. Consumers raise questions of "who to believe" and "how to

decide how to believe" (Macnaghten, 2003). As such, the choice to purchase sustainable products is difficult to make under the rational school of thought. Furthermore, other authors have noted that the rational and utilitarian consumer is unlikely to be the basis for addressing sustainability (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). For these reasons, research in sustainable consumption needs to be developed from the symbolic and expressive perspective of consumer behaviour. This presents the greatest potential to further the conceptualisation of sustainable consumption presented in Section 2.2.1.

Consumer products have long been recognised as having the capacity to carry and communicate cultural and symbolic meanings (Baudrillard, 1997; Douglas & Isherwood, 1978; Featherstone, 1991; McCracken, 1986, 1988a; Sahlin, 1972). Products can be used to create cultural notions of self, demonstrate social connections and acquire or sustain lifestyles (Douglas & Isherwood, 1978; McCracken, 1988a; Prentice, 1987; Solomon, 1983, 1988). The symbolic meanings have long been recognised in impacting consumption behaviours (Levy, 1959, 1964; Solomon, 1983; Zaltman & Wallendorf, 1979). As yet, there has been no empirical investigation⁴ of the role of symbolic meanings in the context of sustainable products. Developing an understanding of the symbolic meanings of sustainable goods is valuable in identifying what symbolic meanings consumers desire in their consumption.

Focusing on the symbolic value of products is useful because consumers' behaviours towards products are largely based on the ascribed symbolic meanings (Kleine & Kernan, 1991). For example, a magician's hat and a top hat share similar physical properties. However, one is used for entertainment and the other is a historical formal headpiece. This distinction in their usage is due to the symbolic meanings that are held in the products. As it has been noted that symbolic meanings are often determinants of a product's consumption (Solomon, 1983), it is valuable to explore the symbolic meanings of sustainable products to develop understanding of why individuals select these over non-sustainable products. Researchers have understood the symbolic meaning of products to impact consumption in different ways. This stems from the different conceptualisation of symbolic meaning that researchers have taken.

⁴ To the best of the author's knowledge.

One of the earliest conceptualisations of symbolic meaning in consumer research was in the work of Levy. Levy (1959, p117) regarded products as being “symbols for sale”. The symbolic value of products was simply another dimension that complemented the functional value. This conceptualisation focuses on uncovering the structures of symbolic meaning. Other authors, such as McCracken (1986, 1988a) instead focused on the transfers of symbolic meaning. Under his view, products serve a cultural function through representing symbolic meanings that were previously abstract. McCracken's (1986) focus on the transfer of symbolic meaning explains how products come to acquire symbolic meaning, as well as how consumers use symbolic meaning. Products not only gain symbolic meaning from their physical attributes and interpretation from society and culture, but also from the branding of the product (McCracken, 1986; Mick & Buhl, 1992). The role and value of brands in imbuing symbolic meaning to products will now be discussed.

2.3.2 Symbolic Value of Brands

Products are images that are perceived by consumers as having symbolic meanings (Dolich, 1969). The symbolic meaning of products is also attached to individual brands, and thus symbolic meaning is communicated through the use and consumption of brands (Gottdeiner, 1985; McCracken, 1986). To understand the symbolic meanings of a product, the role and influence of brand needs to be acknowledged. This is because brands reflect the meanings that consumers see in products (Keller, 1993). At its most basic level, the role of the brand is to create an image that differentiates a product offering from that of competitors (Dibb, Simkin, Pride, & Ferrell, 1997; Gardner & Levy, 1955; Kotler, 1997).

The process of branding differentiates products through changing the symbolic meanings of the product. For example, the Levi's brand adds new symbolic meanings of quality and history to its jeans over unbranded products. This allows Levi's to be differentiated from other products and have symbolic value. Brands can imbue symbolic meaning because they associate products with new personality dimensions (Aaker & Schmitt, 1997; McCracken, 1986, 1989; Plummer, 2000) as well as ideas and attributes (Gardner & Levy, 1955). The abstract qualities of a brand allow symbolic and value-expressive functions to the consumer (Shavitt, 1990). For example, the Levi's consumer can express their taste and status through wearing the product.

The product and brand are distinct from each other and are capable of undergoing change independent of each other (S. King, 1973). As such, manufacturers use brands to imbue new symbolic meaning for products with similar or the same attributes. For example, milk can be sold under the brand of Anchor or Home Brand, providing differentiated symbolic meaning yet retaining the same product qualities. Brands have significance in providing symbolic value through extending beyond the product's utilitarian value. The brand is often seen as separate from the functional product, yet to the people who consume it, it is still just as real as the product itself (Kim, 1990; Meenaghan, 1995).

Brands develop symbolic meanings from a variety of sources. The product attributes and benefits are a part of this symbolic meaning (Keller, 1993; Plummer, 2000). Additionally, the symbolic meanings of products are created from a combination of brand management and society's interaction and interpretation of products and brands (Underwood, 2003). This forms a more substantial contribution to symbolic meaning than the product's attributes alone. Advertising and marketing create beliefs about what is desirable and acceptable (Belk, 1985). The practice of advertising communicates the meaning of brands and products to society (Domzal & Kernan, 1992). Consumers use advertising to discover what the symbolic meanings of brands are, through connecting aspects of the cultural world with products (McCracken, 1986). Advertising brings together the product and a widely accepted symbol of meaning in such a way that the audience sees a similarity between the two. This allows the particular symbolic meaning to be a part of the brand (McCracken, 1990). The advertising system educates consumers about products, and this is how symbolic meanings become ascribed to them. For example, the product of Coca-Cola can carry symbolic meanings of happiness and fun. The process of branding is the means of attribution of social and symbolic dimensions to products (Davies, 1992).

The brand concept management framework of Park et al. (1986) proposes that all brands should be based on a brand concept in accordance with consumers' functional, experiential and symbolic needs. These needs follow the three types of value seen in products as outlined in the preceding section. Park et al. (1986) view the concepts of symbolism and functionality as unilateral, thus brands are either considered as functional or symbolic brands. Functional brands satisfy immediate and practical

needs, while symbolic brands satisfy needs of self-expression with their practical usage only being incidental. For example, in the category of writing instruments, Bic would be considered a functional brand as its primary value lies in being able to write. Conversely, Montblanc would be considered a symbolic brand because of its use as a status appeal, with its ability to write only incidental. Park et al (1986) advises that the brand concept must be maintained and that brands must either be functional or symbolic, but not both. However, other researchers have seen functionality and symbolism to be more distinct (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). As such, brands are seen as being able to operate on both functional and symbolic levels. This research follows this belief in maintaining that while sustainable products and brands can have symbolic value, they still serve functional needs. Some brands and product categories may have heightened symbolic or functional value, and this is acknowledged by this study with considered selection criteria highlighted in the methodology chapter.

Brands are important tools for managing the symbolic meaning of brands. As brands are often regarded as a symbolic creation in itself, the management of symbolic meaning needs to underlie marketing strategy (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003). The symbolic meanings of brands have implications on consumer behaviour. Brands can be effective for motivating consumer choices because they impact on the affective domain (Travis, 2000). Rational decision-making becomes translated to emotional preferences. This suggests that brands can be tools for shifting consumer attitudes to more sustainable consumption (Ottman, 1993; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Pooley & O'Connor, 2000). Affective processing has been shown elsewhere to be a key means for converting passive green consumers into sustainable consumption patterns (Ottman, 1998; Pooley & O'Connor, 2000). Exploring consumers' consumption of a brand of sustainable product presents a means for understanding the motivators of such behaviour. Consumers are not necessarily loyal to individual brands, but what the brands represent to the consumer.

"It is not to brands that consumers will be loyal, but to images and symbols, especially to images and symbols that they produce while they consume." (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995, p. 251)

Brands are important sources of symbolic meanings for products. Any investigation that involves branded products must acknowledge that symbolic meanings are

attributable to the process of branding. Sustainable products do have product attributes that imbue some symbolic meaning, but the branding of sustainable products grants far greater symbolic meaning. Consumers see value in the symbolic meaning of products as they can use them for their own means. These symbolic meanings can help consumers to manage their self-image and this will now be overviewed.

2.3.3 Products as Self-Image

Consumer products have long been considered as being extensions of the self (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992; Sartre, 1943). Products can be used to construct a consumer's social world and then to define the consumer's place in it (Douglas, 1976). This is because, as outlined in Section 2.3.1, products carry symbolic meanings. Consumers use these symbolic meanings as a means of creating, fostering and developing their identities (Belk, 1988; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Leigh & Gabel, 1992; McCracken, 1988a; Solomon, 1983). These symbolic meanings allow individuals to express themselves and communicate with others (Dittmar, 1992; Douglas & Isherwood, 1978; Gabriel & Lang, 1995; McCracken, 1988a; Wattanasuwan, 2005). As such, consumers choose products and brand with symbolic meanings that are perceived to be congruent with their personality (Aaker, 1999; Graeff, 1996; Kassarian, 1971; Sirgy, 1982). Products can also serve as tangible linkages to family (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) or past experiences (Prentice, 1987; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Understanding the symbolic meanings of sustainable products is important, given that:

“The core of man’s cultural activity lies in his capacity to generate meaning, to communicate, to transmit and to order those meanings; it lies in the creation of a specifically symbolic level of existence.” (Silverstone, 1981, p. 2)

The centrality of symbolic meaning in a person’s life indicates it is important to consumers. Consumers value the self-image function of products. They deem products as significant based on what identities they enable, and how important the product is in contributing to an overall sense of self (Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993). Exploring this sense of self allows researchers to understand the way consumers make choices in the context of symbolic meanings attached to brands (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987).

Connolly and Prothero (2003) suggest that if sustainable consumption is considered as communication, it can be used in identity construction and could thus further advance the prospect of a green commodity culture. As indicated in the Section 2.2.2, a shift in consumption culture is often seen as what is necessary to address concerns of sustainability.

A valuable starting point for understanding consumption culture is examining those who have already shifted. Consumers who are already using sustainable products have started using the products to build their self-image. The symbolic value of products is cultivated over time and stem from the "psychic energy" that is invested in them (Rochberg-Halton, 1979). Consumer products are regarded as part of the self as they have emerged in part, from the self (Belk, 1988). The act of purchasing products is one such means of investing self in products. The symbolic value of products is drawn from an individual's consumption experiences associated with a particular product (Holbrook, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Consumption practices and rituals are a means for consumers to ascribe and transfer symbolic meaning from products to themselves (McCracken, 1986). Thus, consumption actions serve a role in managing the symbolic meaning of consumer products. The following section examines the role of consumption in creating value from the symbolic meanings of products.

2.4 Meaning of Consumption

The practice of consumption is an essential ritual of modern life (Wattanasuwan, 2005; Wright & Snow, 1980). It has been asserted that the act of consumption is not a practice; rather it is a moment in almost every practice (Warde, 2005). As well as serving its utilitarian function, acts of consumption are a means of developing and managing the symbolic meaning of products. Exploring consumption actions is useful as all meaning is created through actual experiences and interactions (Blumer, 1969; Hirschman, 1986). This section reviews knowledge around the act of consumption in building one's self-image. This follows the conceptualisation of sustainable consumption provided in Section 2.2.1.

2.4.1 Self-Image Through Consumption

Consumers are often highlighted as being active producers of symbolic meaning through their appropriation of products, as opposed to merely being passive receivers (Chevalier, 1999; De Certeau, 1984; Money, 2007; Storey, 1999). They take symbolic meanings from products and work these into the construction of their self and their world (McCracken, 1986). Consumers achieve this through consumption of their products. The desire to consume is in part, due to the consumer's desire to construct their self-image (e.g. Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994).

The act of consumption is a highly social function, and as such consumption becomes a language through which personal values such as status, taste and social relationships are expressed (Bourdieu, 1984; Douglas & Isherwood, 1978; Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Consumption is not only for sending messages, it is also used to receive them as well (Appadurai, 1986). Acts of consumption are deliberate actions that consumers engage in. Individuals are conscious of the inferences drawn from the products they consume (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Consumption actions thus serve an important role as they involve the careful selection of products. The act of consumption is a cultural strategy in which people make visible their social and cultural differences (Dolan, 2002).

Self-image is no longer created through involvement in a moral community or in occupation, and instead is seen as being formed in relation to one's consumption (Bourdieu, 1984; Veblen, 1899/1998). Individuals seek symbolic meaning through what products they buy and use (Du Gay, 1996; Friedman, 1994; Miller, 1995). This is because, as demonstrated in Section 2.3.1 and Section 2.3.2, products and brands carry symbolic meaning. In modern times, the symbolic meaning of consumption is a major factor in creating and maintaining one's self-image (Giddens, 1991). It has long been evident that individuals use consumption to express themselves (Prelinger, 1959). In fact, the drive to create self-image is virtually inseparable from the act of consumption itself (Elliott, 1997; Gabriel & Lang, 1995).

Utilising a theoretical framework that considers the creation and transfer of meanings within the consumption process will allow identification of why people consume sustainable products over non-sustainable products. To the author's knowledge there has been no examination of the symbolic meanings in sustainable consumer products and how these may be transferred from the product to the individual's self-image.

Illuminating what these meanings are and what happens to them are critical steps in understanding the motivations for purchasing and using them.

Consumer researchers have previously been active in investigating how broader cultural factors such as social setting, mass media, product symbolism, cultural ideals, rituals, and traditions influence the consumption experiences of consumers (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Hirschman, 1988; McCracken, 1988a; Rook, 1987; Scott, 1990; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1990). However, there has not yet been an investigation into the same cultural factors for the context of sustainable products. Understanding the meaning of consumption and meaning obtained when individuals consume is vital for achieving sustainable consumption (Connolly & Prothero, 2003).

Sustainable products may have particular ideals, rituals and traditions that feature in the act of consumption. This merits attention, as it is these ideals, rituals and traditions that may determine and highlight why they are consumed over other products. Any differences between behaviours towards sustainable versus non-sustainable products may also give rise to differences in symbolic meaning. Consumption rituals are important to understand the symbolic meanings in sustainable consumer products as they represent routine behaviour. As demonstrated in this section, the act of consumption has important symbolic qualities. Thus, ritualised consumption serves to continuously draw out any symbolic meanings of products over extended periods of time. The distinction of the consumption ritual and its role in the creation of self-image will now be discussed.

2.4.2 Consumption Rituals

Products are employed in their symbolic capacities to complete rituals (Solomon & Anand, 1985) and ritualised behaviours. Although the notion of ritual may conjure images of religious acts, this also includes rituals that are cultural (e.g. Valentine's Day), family (e.g. bedtime), and personal (e.g. household rituals) (Rook, 1985). The understanding of ritual used in this study is drawn from the conceptualisation provided by Tetreault and Kleine (1990). Their work provides a distinction between habit, ritualised behaviour and ritual. Ritualised behaviour serves as the focus of this study as it best reflects the means in which consumers take symbolic meanings from

their products. The fundamental characteristics of ritualised behaviour versus ritual are outlined in the following table.

Table 2.1 Key Characteristics of Ritualised Behaviour and Ritual⁵

Ritualised Behaviour	Ritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gradual assimilation• Mundane repetition across time and place• Private enactment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Instantaneous” transition• Bracketed in time and space, repetition over cycle of time• Public enactment, requiring at least two actors

Source: Adapted from (Tetreault & Kleine, 1990)

Rituals⁶ were noted over three decades ago to be a constant reinforcement of the symbolic meaning of products (Erikson, 1977, 1982). As rituals are repeated across time, they serve a central role in developing and maintaining one's self-image. Rituals allow consumers to interact with products of culture and invest symbolic meaning in them (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986). Individuals select products, and combine meanings in a process of experimentation (Belk, 1988; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Individuals use rituals to continuously draw symbolic meanings from products into their self-image (Munn, 1973; Turner, 1969). Rituals themselves can also have their own symbolic meanings too (D. Marshall, 2005).

Consumer researchers have often suggested that consumption rituals have great potential for conceptualising and interpreting aspects of consumption (Belk, 1979; Kehret-Ward, Johnson, & Louie, 1985; McCracken, 1986, 1988a; Rook & Levy, 1983; Sherry, 1983; Solomon & Anand, 1985). Rituals are critical to furthering understanding of consumer behaviour, as they involve the actual consumption of products (Luna & Gupta, 2001). Even recent research (e.g. Larsen, Lawson, & Todd, 2010) continues to support the notion that consumption rituals reinforce symbolic

⁵ Refer original paper (Tetreault & Kleine, 1990) for full discussion.

⁶ With the distinction noted, rituals are used through the remainder of this study to refer to ritualised behaviour.

consumption. The rituals of dancing to music and discussion of music helped to associate the symbolic meanings of music to the individual's self-image (Larsen, et al., 2010). Participants needed to perform such rituals to demonstrate ownership or possession of a particular musical preference. As such, Luna and Gupta (2001) have called for ongoing investigations of rituals, given their significance in driving consumption behaviours. This is important to the context of sustainability, as Section 1.1 has shown that consumption behaviours are a major cause of environmental degradation and wider sustainability issues.

In order to use rituals to investigate consumption behaviour, it first needs to be understood as part of a theoretical framework. This is because there have been differences in how researchers have used the notion of rituals to investigate issues. Rook (1985, p. 252) defines rituals as a "type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviours that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence and tend to be repeated over time". Rook's view focuses on the form that rituals take. McCracken's (1986) view of rituals differs, in that he emphasises the goal of ritual behaviour. According to McCracken (1986, p78) rituals are a "social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorisation". This is the understanding of rituals that has been applied in this study. It recognises the centrality of symbolic meaning in the process of consumption as has been highlighted in this chapter. Through considering rituals as being beyond utilitarian and merely operational, the use of symbolic meanings in building one's self-image can be investigated. This will allow the sociological and anthropological view of sustainable consumption to be furthered.

McCracken (1986) developed a meaning-based framework that explains the process of symbolic meaning transfer. This is based on his beliefs about symbolic meaning as being transferable as outlined in Section 2.3.1, and the role of rituals in self-image creation as outlined in this section. Rituals are seen by McCracken as an important part of the process of meaning transfer, as individuals need to claim, exchange, care for and use products in order to appropriate the embodied meanings (Cheal, 1988; McCracken, 1988a; Rook, 1985). McCracken's (1986) model serves as a lens of interpretation for this study. The model will now be overviewed and explained in the following section.

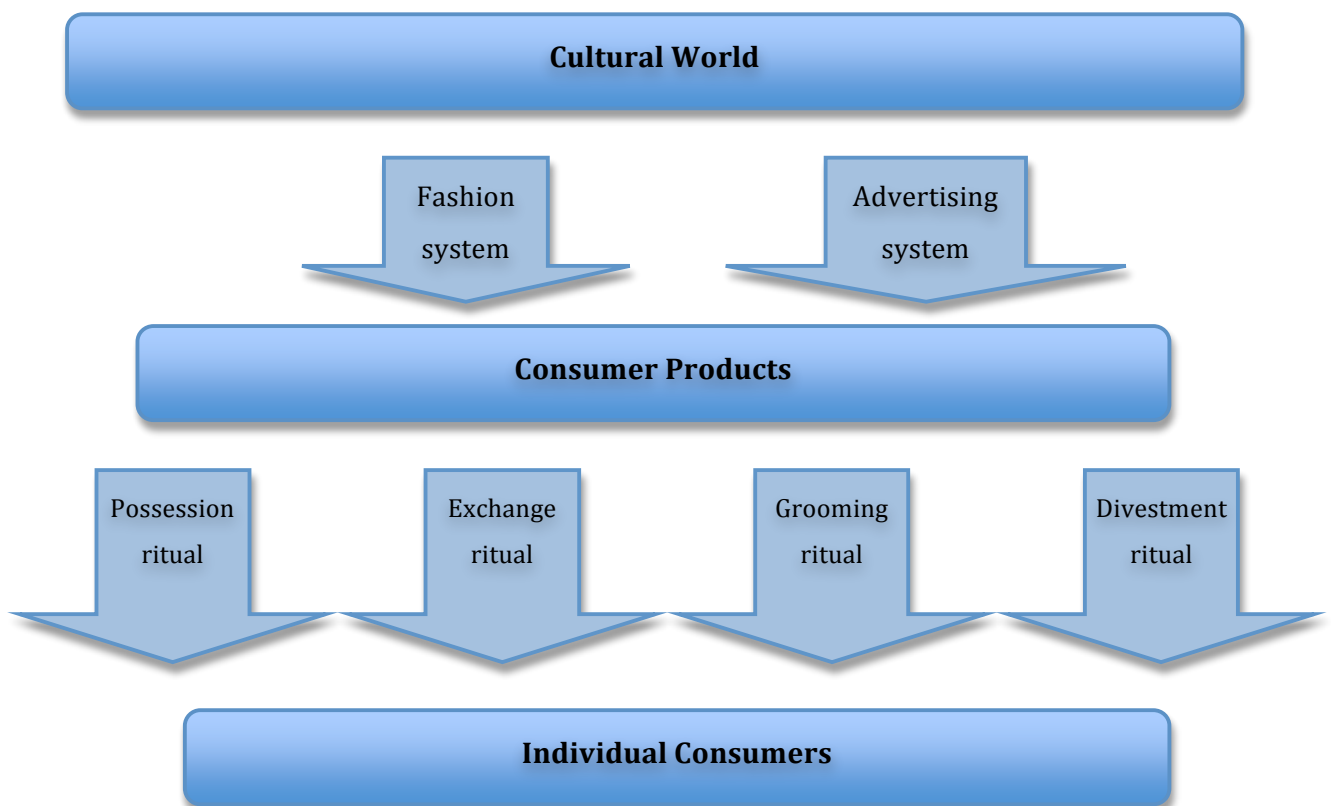
2.5 Model of Symbolic Meaning Transfer

McCracken's (1986) model of symbolic meaning transfer is valuable as a lens of interpretation to uncover findings that answer the research objective. The premise of the model, its components and application is overviewed in this section. Critique of the model will also be addressed. Lastly, the value of using the model will be discussed.

2.5.1 Premise of the Model

McCracken's model was developed on the understanding that consumers constantly canvas the consumer world for products with useful symbolic meanings (McCracken, 1988). The model examines the relationship between culture and consumption. It embraces notions of symbolic meaning creation involving products, marketers, consumers and rituals (McKechnie & Tynan, 2006). The model of symbolic meaning transfer is replicated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Model of Symbolic Meaning Transfer



Source: (McCracken, 1986)

According to the model, symbolic meaning is located in three places. These are the cultural world, consumer products and individual consumers (McCracken, 1986). There are two points of transfer of symbolic meanings. Symbolic meanings are transferred from the cultural world to product and also from product to consumer (McCracken, 1986). Symbolic meaning is drawn from the cultural world and transferred to consumer products. Then, symbolic meaning is drawn from the consumer product and transferred to individual consumers. Various instruments of meaning transfer enable these movements.

The cultural world supplies products with symbolic meaning. McCracken (1986) identifies the cultural world as being the original location of all symbolic meaning. The cultural world supplies symbolic meaning to products through two instruments of transfer. These instruments of transfer are the advertising and fashion systems. Consumers recognise symbolic meanings in products because they become aware of them through systems of advertising and fashion.

The vehicle of advertising and marketing in creating symbolic meaning has already been detailed in the contents of Section 2.3.2. McCracken (1986) view follows the perspective outlined as he conceptualises the advertising system as one of the instruments of symbolic meaning transfer. Advertising imbues symbolic meaning to products from the cultural world. Arnould, Price and Zinkham's (2004) modern conceptualisation of McCracken's advertising instrument extends to other aspects of marketing communications.

In the Eighteenth century, aesthetic and stylistic considerations began to take precedence over utilitarian ones for some individuals, in what McCracken (1988a) calls the growth of the fashion system. Status was redefined and ever since, consumers have used products to carry symbolic meanings. These symbolic meanings may pertain to status or one's self-image. The fashion system is the other instrument of meaning transfer from the cultural world to product. Fashion connects the cultural world with the product through establishing and reforming cultural categories and principles. For example, the fashion system has developed traditions of rings being used for weddings. As well as connecting existing meanings, the fashion system can invent new symbolic meanings. For example, uniforms develop new symbolic meanings once beliefs form around the personality or characteristics of the people

who wear them. The fashion system is dynamic in that it can change what symbolic meanings consumers see in products.

According to the model, these instruments of advertising and fashion are how consumer products come to acquire symbolic meaning. In this model and as illustrated in Section 2.4.1, consumers draw symbolic meaning from consumer products and into their self-image (McCracken, 1986). The model and the contents of Section 2.4.2 demonstrate that consumers achieve self-image through engaging in rituals to repeatedly draw out the symbolic meanings of the products they select. As shown in Section 2.3.1 examining these symbolic meanings are valuable because they determine what consumers do with their products. McCracken (1986) identifies four categories of consumption rituals that are used to transfer symbolic meaning from products to consumers. These will now be discussed.

2.5.2 McCracken's (1986) Rituals

McCracken's formation of the model's rituals is informed by his conceptualisation of rituals that has been shown in Section 2.4.2. The four categories of consumption rituals are possession, grooming, exchange and divestment. These categories are described in this section with further detail and examples in Table 2.2, overleaf.

Possession rituals allow consumers to "take ownership" of products (McCracken, 1988a). Possession rituals include housewarming parties, trying on new clothes and meal times. They allow consumers to overcome the alien meanings of mass-produced products and assimilate these into their lives (Campbell, 2005). It can be as simple as talking about a product.

Grooming rituals further reinforce symbolic meanings (McCracken, 1988a). They refer to the actions consumers take to maintain the performance or life of a product. These include washing a car, polishing furniture and the ironing of clothes.

Exchange rituals refer to occasions where consumers exercise interpersonal influence. They are situations where consumers involve others in the life of a product. This could take the form of a birthday gift or recommendation on a product.

Lastly, consumers engage in divestment rituals, such as repairing and cleaning items for sale (McCracken, 1986). They represent what consumers do with the product after it has been used for its utility or function.

Table 2.2 Instruments of Symbolic Meaning Transfer From Product to Individual

Ritual	Explanation	Examples of Actions
Possession Rituals	Rituals involving the acquisition of a product that involve claiming "possession". Actions are attempts to draw qualities from the product that are bestowed by other forces. The products form markers and move the symbolic meanings from the products and into an individuals' life.	Purchase Display Putting away Reflecting on product Comparison of products Discussing product Personalisation
Grooming Rituals	Rituals where symbolic meaning is drawn out on a repeated basis. The purpose of the ritual is to insure that properties are drawn to life in the life of the consumer. More practically, it is the use of the product for its intended function.	Using the product Product maintenance Cleaning Repairing Refilling
Divestment Rituals	These rituals involve products being emptied of invested meaning. It is an implicit acknowledgement of the mobile quality of the meaning with which products are invested. Practically, it is what consumers do with the product once it has been used for its function.	Cleaning packaging Disposal De-personalisation
Exchange Rituals	These rituals are a means of exercising interpersonal influence. In acting as gift-givers, consumers are made agents of symbolic meaning transfer through the selective distribution of products with specific properties.	Gifting Recommendation

Source: Adapted from McCracken (1986, pp. 78-80)

These consumer rituals are examined in this study. The following section considers the critique and value of the model to justify and explain its choice as a lens of interpretation.

2.5.3 Critique of McCracken (1986)

This section reviews critique on McCracken's model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986). It also considers how this study has addressed or mitigated the potential limitations of the model in serving as a lens of interpretation.

The structuralist perspective that informs the model of symbolic meaning transfer has been subject to criticism. It has been felt that the structuralist perspective subscribes to the view that there is a one-to-one relationship between products being consumed and their symbolic meaning (McKechnie & Tynan, 2006). As such, the model has been critiqued for being focused on a one-flow of culture between products and their uses (Bradshaw, McDonagh, & Marshall, 2006; McKechnie & Tynan, 2006). This view has been seen to minimise the role of the consumer in simply being a receiver (DeBerry-Spence, 2008). This unilateral trajectory transmittance is seen by some researchers as the major limitation of the model (DeBerry-Spence, 2008).

While there has been some support for such a position on locations of symbolic meaning and its use by consumers (Appadurai, 1986; Lunt & Livingstone, 1992), there has been criticism on the grounds that a two-way process exists. The consumption process as viewed is seen as less linear for other researchers. They state that the consumer is more involved in their role of the construction of symbolic meaning (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006). A number of academics have identified that consumers play an active role in linking the product and consumption meanings (Kozinets, 2001; O'Donohoe & Tynan, 1997). Consumers actively produce symbolic meaning in addition to being transferred the symbolic meaning through the advertising and fashion systems (Schröder, 2002; Scott, 1993, 1994; Tharp & Scott, 1990).

Several authors have developed approaches that attempt to remedy and overcome the limitations identified. Kozinets (2001) presents an alternative model of how cultures of consumption are produced through an interplay of individuals, subculture, wider

culture and cultural producers with consumer-media articulations occurring in a mass media culture of consumption. He views the consumer, which he refers to as a fan, as being driven by an affective relationship with entertainment media. It features a heavy investment of self in cultural text that underscores the consumption practices. However, the model is not suitable for this study as Kozinet's model is premised on building foundations between simulation and reality. The entertainment and media category is much more affective than the category of everyday consumption, so its applicability to this study and research objective is limited. Furthermore, the research objective of this study does not seek to understand how or where the symbolic meanings may have originated from.

This study avoids the identified limitations of the model of symbolic meanings transfer, as the model only serves as a lens of interpretation. The model is used to provide a premise and framework for understanding that consumers use consumption rituals to draw symbolic meaning and build their self-image. Based on the research objective, the entirety of the model is not used. Instead, the study focuses on a particular aspect of the model of symbolic meaning transfer. This aspect lies in the interaction only between product and consumer. This is further outlined in the following chapter. With this in mind, the study is not intended to be a replication or extension in any way. Thus, the structural limitations identified by other authors are not present in this study. The value of the model as a lens of interpretation will now be outlined.

2.5.4 Value of the Model

According to Slater (1997) researchers need to contextualise consumer practices in terms of social relations, structures, institutions and systems. Using McCracken's (1986) model as a lens of interpretation allows the examination of such ritual practices in the processes of symbolic meaning transfer. It places the act of consumption in the context of the cultural world and the consumer. This is reflective of what the research objective seeks to explore. The model is also seen as a start for development of an understanding that recognises symbolic meanings as being pluralistic in nature and influenced by a number of sources (DeBerry-Spence, 2008).

The model illustrates that products have symbolic meanings that consumers use to build their self-image. It provides a basis for understanding the movement of these symbolic meanings (DeBerry-Spence, 2008). As illustrated in the contents of this chapter, this model is reflective of the beliefs of many researchers in consumer research, as well as the beliefs of the author. The model is valuable because it demonstrates that symbolic meanings are central to the consumption of the product. Using the categories of rituals that McCracken (1986) identified allows a researcher to examine the full biography of a product category and its environment (see Kopytoff, 1986). Here, the product category being explored is sustainable consumer products. Crewe and Gregson (1998) have noted that researchers do not always examine actions post-purchase and as illustrated in Section 2.2.2, much of sustainable consumption literature has focused on the purchase action. The model of symbolic meaning transfer evidently includes actions and rituals that lie beyond the purchase. Thus it is valuable to apply the model to the context of sustainable products to explore an aspect that has been previously ignored.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of literature that has been used to guide the decisions and assumptions made in this study. Sustainable consumption is a critical and urgent area of knowledge to develop as it has major implications for the environment, economies and all aspects of society. To address this issue, authors in this field have called for a cultural shift in attitudes, values and behaviours. In order to initiate this shift in culture, this study proposes understanding the current culture behind sustainable consumer products. Products and their brands have long been noted for possessing symbolic values. These symbolic values are in part, why they are consumed. The act of consumption is a means of transferring symbolic meaning to an individual's self-image. The work of McCracken (1986) models this process. McCracken's understanding of consumption rituals as instruments of meaning transfer has been used to provide a lens of interpretation for this study.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by outlining the purpose of conducting the research. It provides an overview of the researcher's beliefs about knowledge and how it is collected. These have influenced the methodological decisions made in the study. The method of collecting data, the participants involved and the means of data analysis are explained. This chapter provides a detailed account for the research approach. Establishment of the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed.

3.2 Research Purpose

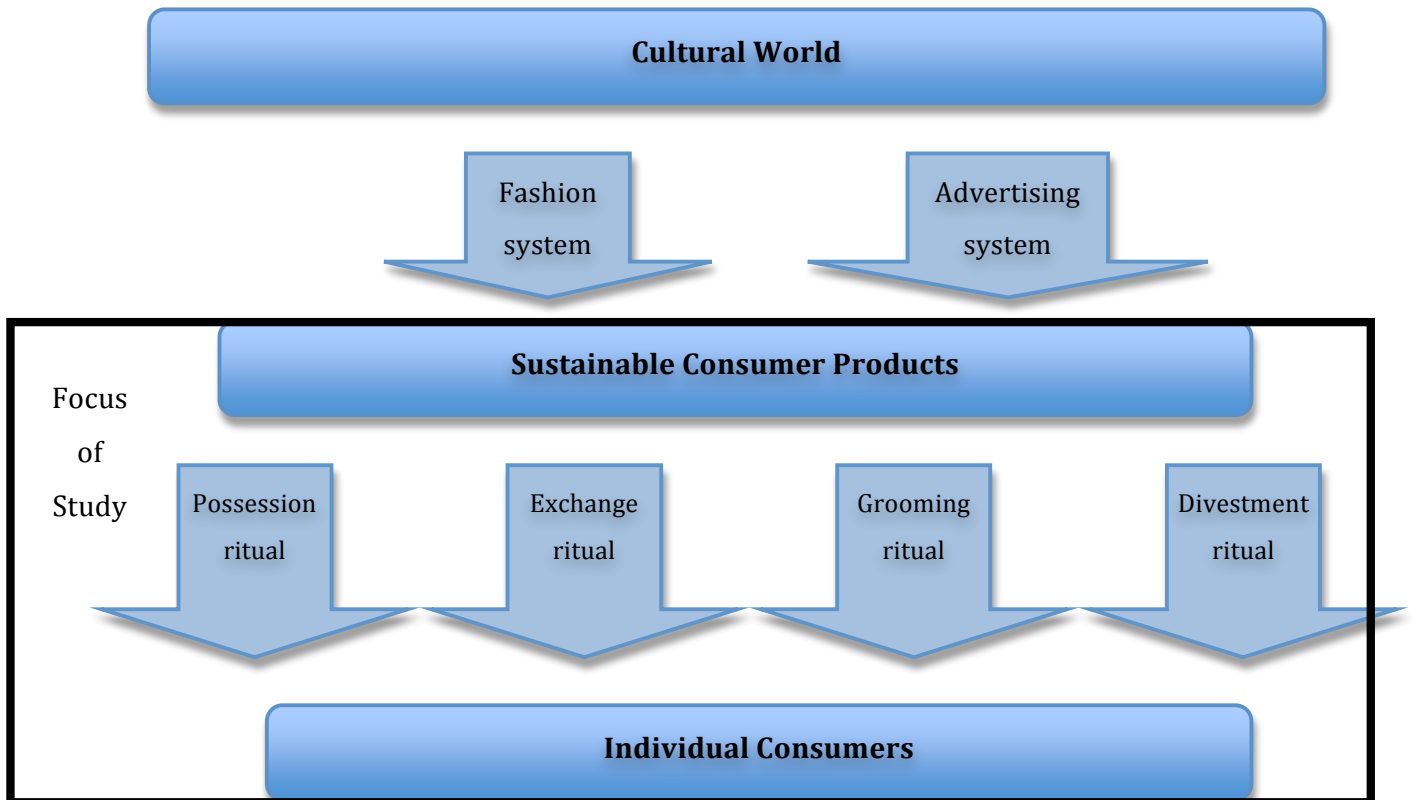
The aim of this research was to explore the symbolic meanings behind a brand of sustainable products and how they are transferred to the consumers' self-image. It sought to identify the meanings inherent in sustainable products through the specific consumption actions that individuals took. The model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) overviewed in Section 2.5.1, has informed the study's understanding of this process. Understanding these meanings and how they may or may not be transferred will aid examination of why consumers are motivated to consume sustainable products over others.

Thus the research question that is the purpose of this study is:

What symbolic meanings did consumers take from sustainable products to build their self-image?

McCracken's (1986) understanding of consumption rituals as outlined in Section 2.5.2 was used to identify and categorise the actions taken with the product. The focus of this study as a part of this model is highlighted in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Area Explored in This Study



Based on the research objective, the focus of the study lies in the transfer of symbolic meaning from sustainable products to the self-image of consumers. The model of symbolic meanings transfer is useful as a lens of interpretation to identify the symbolic meanings and understand how consumers use them.

3.3 Epistemology

An epistemology refers to a researcher's stance on what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000) and the nature of the relationship between researcher and participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 1994; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The epistemological belief of this research is the view of constructivism.

Constructivism assumes that knowledge is created through interactions, the interpretations of behaviours and the social situations in which they occur (Adler, 1997; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Greene, 1994). Based on the research objective, this

study seeks to examine consumers' interpretations of the symbolic meanings of sustainable products. These interpretations are created through the interaction of the participant and the researcher (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher works with participants to facilitate their constructions on the subject matter being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). This human participation in the construction of knowledge is highlighted in the following:

"The perspective of the observer and object of observation are inseparable; the nature of meaning is relative, phenomena are context-based and the process of knowledge and understanding is social, inductive, hermeneutical, and qualitative." (Sexton, 1997, p. 8)

Developing knowledge is dependant on the interpretations created between participant and researcher (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). These interpretations are called constructs and provide meaning to behaviours and communications. They are the means by which subjects of interest can be examined.

Constructivism involves developing an understanding of why people interpret things in particular ways. Under the constructivist view, how one constructs knowledge is a function of experiences, mental structures and beliefs. Individuals use these to interpret products and events. As such, constructs are unique to participants. This is because participants have backgrounds and experiences that create their lens of interpretation (Schwandt, 2000). Similarly, the background and experiences of the researcher are also an influence on how constructs are interpreted (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 1994; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). As a result, there can be multiple realities, which are created in the context of each individual (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). One of these realities is that of the researchers' when they themselves interpret the constructions of participants (Schwandt, 2000).

Given that multiple realities exist in constructivism, there is no one truth. Instead, the aim of this perspective is to generate a consensus of the participants' constructs. The researcher needs to understand the similarities and differences of constructions. This allows the researcher to become more aware of the context and meaning of constructions (Anderson, 1986; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Peter, 1992; Peter & Olson,

1989). The researcher gains a consensus of multiple realities through comparing the representations of different individuals. Ultimately, this will create a general worldview of that group of individuals regarding the subject studied (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; J. Smith, 1989).

Constructivism is in line with the beliefs around the model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) that is used in this study as a lens of interpretation. As already explained in Section 2.4.1, the actions of consumption can have symbolic functions attached to them. This is because products have symbolic meanings. However, for symbolic meaning to be assigned to actions it must be agreed upon by actors in the environment. Therefore, in order to research the symbolic meaning of products, the researcher needs to use the interpretive understanding of the people who consume them. Constructivism is a view that permits this interpretive understanding to occur.

Constructivism is suitable for achieving the research objective as it recognises that individuals construct their own interpretation of reality. Different people will see different symbolic meanings in the same sustainable products. Furthermore, different individuals will desire a different self-image. Constructivism presents criteria for coming to a consensus on an agreed view of what symbolic meanings sustainable products possess, and what role this has in the creation of self-image. This will allow the objective of the research to be fulfilled.

3.4 Theoretical Perspective

A theoretical perspective guides the choice of methodology and helps to create their selection criteria (Crotty, 1998). The above assumptions of constructivism have led to a theoretical perspective based on hermeneutical beliefs. Hermeneutics has been previously outlined to be compatible with constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). It allows for the interaction of participant and researcher that is needed to achieve a consensus among the findings.

Hermeneutic philosophy is concerned with the interpretation of understanding (Bernstein, 1983; Bleicher, 1980). Hermeneutics was originally developed to help explain how researchers interpret text written in historical eras (Gadamer, 1960/1998). Gadamer's (1975) proposition was that the interpreter cannot put aside

their frame of reference, nor would the interpreter ever want to. The researcher is seen as serving an active role in the collection and interpretation of data. The researcher's background serves as a frame of reference to support the interpretation of constructions (Thompson, Pollio, & Locander, 1994). This background and knowledge is referred to as pre-understanding (Arnold & Fischer, 1994; Gadamer, 1960/1998).

Pre-understanding can be evident in forms such as beliefs, practices, metaphors and rituals. The researcher may have pre-conceived notions about the subject matter being studied. Pre-understanding exists prior to interpretation because the researcher is already a part of the participants' and subject matter's world. They may have acquired or developed knowledge through their personal experiences or studies as a researcher. Pre-understanding supports the interpretation of constructions through providing a reference point by which the research can assess differences in opinion (Arnold & Fischer, 1994).

Hermeneutics also sees constructions as different for each individual due to the individual's own background and experience. The personal histories of consumers frames their perception in meaning systems (Holt, 1997; Thompson, et al., 1994). Hermeneutics views constructions as social in that they are realised and created through social interaction. As such, hermeneutical techniques allow for the interaction between researcher and participant to create a consensus among the findings. These beliefs are shared by the view of constructivism as outlined in Section 3.3. Reaching this consensus is necessary to generate the findings of the worldview that will fulfil the research objective.

The focus of hermeneutic research is to highlight an "unspoken" background of socially shared meaning which individuals use to interpret experiences (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Thompson, et al., 1994). Hermeneutics stresses that language is the means in which understanding occurs (Gadamer, 1960/1998). Language is seen as communicating a person's construction on subject matter (Arnold & Fischer, 1994; M. W. Johnson, 1987; Rorty, 1979; Winograd & Flores, 1987). Language links the construction with its meaning (Arnold & Fischer, 1994). As such, language aids the researcher in obtaining a deeper understanding of an individual's constructions. Hermeneutic philosophy supports the achievement of the research objective as it

recognises that meaning is interpreted from the cultural and historical context from which it is taken.

The hermeneutic circle is a central concept to hermeneutic philosophy. The hermeneutic circle is the belief that the understanding of constructions is developed through pre-understanding and an iterative process of understanding text. The meaning of the whole text is determined by individual elements of the text and vice versa (Bernstein, 1983; Crotty, 1998). The hermeneutic circle aims to produce an understanding that is free of contradictions through its iterative process. It supports the issue of objectivity, because a researcher cannot ignore a recurring construction from multiple participants (Arnold & Fischer, 1994).

Hermeneutics is suitable for this study as it allows for the understanding of constructions and recognises that meanings are communicated through language. Consumers will use language as a means of articulating what symbolic meanings they see in sustainable products. Consumption stories are an important source of insight in highlighting the symbolic meanings formed through social and historical relationships (Laverty, 2003; Thompson, 1997). Hermeneutics focuses on illuminating seemingly trivial aspects of experiences to create meaning and understanding (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). As such, hermeneutic philosophy is suitable in allowing the interpretation of language and constructions of meanings. This will allow the research objective to be answered.

3.5 Methodology

Methodology is the way in which the researcher believes they can go about finding the reality and knowledge they think can be found (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, 1994). It informs the design and approach about methods being used (Crotty, 1998). This includes what contexts are studied and how data is collected and analysed (Silverman, 2006). The methodology used in this research, which aligns with the researcher's epistemology and theoretical perspective, is semi-structured in-depth interviews.

The selection of semi-structured in-depth interviews followed the beliefs of the researcher. As outlined in Section 3.3, constructivism sees knowledge as created through the social interaction between researcher and participant, while Section 3.4

explained that hermeneutic philosophy sees language as the form in which meanings are communicated. The in-depth interview emerges as a methodology that is in congruence with these beliefs and allows the research objective to be achieved. The research objective is concerned with the symbolic meanings of sustainable products and their use in building an individual's self-image. The in-depth interview allows consumers to provide consumption stories that will generate findings that fulfil the objective of the study. Furthermore, the in-depth interview is suitable when the research objective or question is clear (Taylor & Bogdan, 1988). It allows for the probing of issues that help participants to recall decision-making processes and communicate it (Sampson, 1996).

The aim of the in-depth interview is to provide a deeper understanding of consumers' experiences and feelings. In the same belief as Thompson and Haytko (1997) the primary objective of the interview lies in allowing each participant to articulate the networks of meanings that constitute their personalised understanding of the subject matter. The in-depth interview allows the researcher to enter the perspective of the participant (Patton, 1990). In interviews, dialogue is seen as a collaboration between the interviewer and participant (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Silverman, 2006; Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). This follows the perspective of constructivism that has informed this study. The collaboration allows interviews to be participant-led to some degree (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The semi-structured in-depth interview in this study used an indicative question framework, with further questions being formulated in concert with the participants' responses. The purpose of further questioning was to expand descriptions of specific experiences. As noted by McCracken (1988b) the success of the interview lies in drawing out the participant in the right manner at the right time. Probes and follow-up questions were informed by the interviewers'⁷ familiarity of the research and insights gained in the interview process. This follows the concept of pre-understanding that is discussed in Section 3.4 as a key belief of hermeneutic philosophy.

The qualitative interview is seen as being particularly valuable in accessing consumers' attitudes and values (Byrne, 2004). In holding a constructivist perspective, the interviewer and the interviewee are seen as being actively engaged in constructing

⁷ The researcher was the interviewer in all cases.

their social worlds and reality (Silverman, 2006). The interview becomes a means of contemporary storytelling, where consumers provide accounts in response to inquiries (Gubrium & Holstein, 1998). The relevance of the in-depth interview is that they will enable a greater understanding of sustainable consumption behaviour and the symbolic meanings of sustainable products. This will reveal findings that relate to the study's research objective.

3.6 Method

Methods are the specific techniques and procedures of conducting research (Madison, 1988; Silverman, 2006). They are the means of gathering responses from participants (Crotty, 1998). This section details the process that was undertaken to collect data, and the means of data analysis. The source of data for this research was provided from in-depth interviews with consumers of a particular brand and category of sustainable consumer products. The development of the study's selection criteria will be outlined, with the selection explained.

3.6.1 Development of Selection Criteria

Selection criteria in this study were used to determine the category of product and brand that would serve the focus of this study. The selection criterion was developed from the conceptualisation of sustainability and consumption ritual provided in Section 2.2.1 and Section 2.4.2 respectively, as well as the research objective. Per Table 2.1 in Section 2.4.2 the key characteristics of the consumption behaviour examined is mundane repetition over time and wholly private enactment. Furthermore, as this study is intended to address issues of sustainability, the products selected need to align with the conceptualisation of sustainable products provided in Section 2.2.1.

Various categories of products were assessed in relation to these selection criteria by the researcher and research supervisor. Categories of food and fashion were considered, but as their enactment is not consistently private they did not meet the selection criteria. Ultimately, the category of household cleaning and body care products was selected for the focus of this study. The use of these products is inconspicuous, private and repeated over time. As they are not designed to be seen, their role in building self-image is also seen as occurring within an intensely private

sphere (M. L. Smith, 2007). This means the category is useful in answering the research objective, which focuses on the transfer of self-image from product to consumer and not from any other actors or aspects of the cultural world. This follows the focus of the study as indicated earlier in Section 3.2.

Household cleaning and body care products form part of the FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) sector. The FMCG sector is categorised by short-life, regular purchases (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2006) making it a critical area for sustainable consumption. The FMCG sector is widely recognised as being one of the most developed in sustainable consumption in having the most established range of sustainable options (McDonald, Oates, Thyne, Alevizou, & McMorland, 2009). As such, the household cleaning and body care category presented a number of sustainability or environmentally focused products and brands. As explained in Section 2.3.2, the branding of the product is an important influence on its held symbolic meanings. This research intended to focus on a single brand of sustainable product to minimise the differences in symbolic meaning occurring from different branding.

The brand of products selected for this study was Ecostore products⁸. Background⁹ to the company, brand and rationale for its selection will now be outlined to illustrate its fulfilment of the selection criteria.

Ecostore Company Limited¹⁰ is a New Zealand-based manufacturer, distributor and retailer of sustainable household and body care products (Ecostore, 2010). The company promotes the use of safer, healthier plant and mineral based products that contain no “unnecessary” chemicals (Ecostore, 2010). As a player in the household cleaning products industry, they remain very small, but have grown rapidly since gaining access to the supermarket sector (Harris, 2007). The New Zealand market for laundry powders alone is estimated to be worth approximately \$300 million per annum, but in 2004, Ecostore was estimated to have taken less than 0.01 per cent of market share (Rands, as cited in Harris, 2007). The products are noted to occupy the highest price quartile of products and the public do perceive the products as being

⁸ A full overview of products with the Ecostore brand is provided in Appendix 7.1.

⁹ A more detailed business description and background is provided in Appendix 7.2.

¹⁰ Herein referred to as Ecostore, denoting both the brand and products.

more expensive (Harris, 2007). Ecostore responds to this by maintaining their slogan of “a little goes a long way” (Ecostore, 2010).

Ecostore was selected as it represented a collection of products that were a sustainable alternative, compared to other products in the household cleaning and body care category. There are a number of product attributes across the Ecostore ranges that justify its classification as a more sustainable alternative in following the conceptualisation provided in Section 2.2.1. These are detailed in Table 3.1 overleaf:

Table 3.1 Justification of Ecostore as a Sustainable Consumer Product

Manufacturer Claim¹¹
Plant and/or mineral based products.
No "nasty" chemicals (specified as triclosan, petrochemicals, optical whiteners, synthetic perfumes, synthetic dyes, sodium lauryl sulphate, added phosphates, chlorine bleach, ammonia, triethanolamine, monoethanolamine, parabens, propylene glycol, nonylphenol ethnozylates). GE-product free.
Safer ingredients procured from renewable resources whenever possible.
Formulated to be better for consumer health, safer for the environment.
Meet the highest environmental standards.
Packaging is recyclable, bottles made of High Density Polyethylene; cardboard boxes made of mostly recycled materials.
Not animal tested (accredited by "Choose Cruelty Free").
No enzymes in laundry products.
Member of the RSPO (Roundtable for the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil).
New Zealand-based company. Most products manufactured locally.
Green Tick ¹² .
Factory has Diamond Enviromark and is ISO14001.
Option to buy bulk volumes (at online or retail store). Option to refill products (at retail store location).
Assessment processes incorporating environment and sustainability aspects.

Source: (Ecostore, 2010)

¹¹ Self-declared unless otherwise specified.

¹² Sustainability certification system used in Australia and New Zealand (see Harris, 2007).

Ecostore was one of the first “eco-brands” in the New Zealand FMCG market and is widely recognised through its national distribution through all major supermarket retailers. The Ecostore brand covers a wide range of different products, which would aid collection of data across a number of product types. Ecostore is a brand that does not function under a pre-existing parent company, which is less common in the supermarket FMCG category. Ecostore formed the focus in the study’s collection of data. The research utilised in-depth interviews that focused on consumer’s experience of the purchase and use of Ecostore products. The development of the in-depth interviews is outlined in the next section.

3.6.2 Development of Interview

Based on the research objectives, an interview guide¹³ containing indicative research questions was drafted. The model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) identifies the types of consumption actions that facilitate transfer to self-image and these informed the questions to be included. There was at least one question pertaining to each type of ritual, as well as further questions, to help to provide an understanding of the participants’ context. The full list of draft questions was discussed with the research supervisor who provided feedback and suggestions.

3.6.3 Pre-Testing of Interview

The pre-testing of the interview was carried out at multiple levels. Firstly, the researcher drafted questions and these were discussed and tested on the research supervisor. Upon feedback and results, the interview guide was adjusted. The interview was then tested on a postgraduate student and a general consumer. These different levels allowed for changes and refinements to ensure that the interview questions were effective in eliciting discussion and allowed for potential issues such as the level of fatigue to be addressed before occurring.

The questions were refined to ensure that they were in an appropriate format, in a logical order and that they were clear to participants. Per the research objective, the questions were to allow participants to discuss the symbolic meanings of the brand of

¹³ Interview guide supplied in Appendix 7.3.

sustainable products and how they may have used these to build their self-image. The pre-testing of the interview also allowed the researcher to practice and refine his interview technique.

3.6.4 Participants

Individuals were required to have purchased and used Ecostore products in the past to participate in this research. This was necessary because the research objective calls for people who have already had experiences in consuming the product. As such, the interview questions focused on personal usage of the products. Consumers of Ecostore products were valuable to explore as they hold expert opinion on the product and brand through their lived experiences. Following the constructivist beliefs of the researcher explained in Section 3.3, actual experiences with Ecostore products help participants to construct knowledge, as their background serves as a lens of interpretation. The premise of the model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) provided in Section 2.5.1 sees symbolic meanings as created in the interaction between product and consumer. In order to investigate what the symbolic meaning is, the interaction needs to have already taken place. This follows much other consumer research that has explored symbolic meanings of brands through the actual experiences of people who have consumed them (e.g. Star Trek fans in Kozinets, 2001; Harley-Davison owners in Schembri, 2009). Rather than simply provide a biography of these consumers, these studies have uncovered the nature and meaning of the consumption. The meaning of consuming these products was relevant to all people, including people who were not current Star Trek or Harley-Davison consumers. Thus, studying the consumption of Ecostore consumers is a means of understanding what any person may gain from using Ecostore products.

The frequency and history of participant's Ecostore consumption did differ, with some being frequent and loyal purchasers, whilst others being more occasional. Under the constructivist view explained in Section 3.3, all perspectives on reality were of value (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Variation in participants' consumption history and personality impacted on the length of the interview, which varied from 30 minutes to over one hour.

Participants were recruited through personal networks of the interviewer due to convenience. The nature and purpose of the research was verbalised in person and electronically. Prospective participants were provided an information sheet¹⁴ outlining the focus of the research. They were invited to forward the information sheet to others who they thought might have been interested in participating. The sample is suitable for the study as purposive sampling is generally used in research of a qualitative nature (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additional participants were recruited at the site of the Ecostore retail store with permission of the company. Shoppers were advised of the nature of the research and asked if they would be interested in participating. Contact details were obtained with a time for the interview arranged with each participant.

Overall, seven participants were interviewed in this research project. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) maintain that six participants is more than adequate for qualitative interviews. Participants ranged in age group from their mid-twenties to forties. This group has been previously noted as being more sensitive to environmental issues (Diamantopoulos, et al., 2003). In taking a constructivist belief, the research does not claim to be generalisable to the wider population, but only representative of the population studied (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; J. Smith, 1989).

3.6.5 Data Collection

In-depth interviews were conducted in-person. The interviewer contacted individuals who agreed to participate and arranged a time and location to meet. Interviews were held in a private office. As advised by McCracken (1988) and Thompson et al. (1989) the interviewer sought to create an atmosphere in which participants felt at ease and comfortable in expressing their feelings and discussing their experiences and perceptions. An atmosphere of trust between interviewer and participant is important, as it is a condition of reciprocal disclosure (Oakley, 1981). Informing the participant of the aim and nature of the research created this trust. This was done through verbal communication prior to the interview and in the participant information sheet.

¹⁴ Participant information sheet supplied in Appendix 7.4.

Participants were asked to bring an Ecostore product of their choosing to the interview, which was generally done. The interviewer also provided some products for display. The presence of the product in question would allow the interview to be more focused, as well as allowing participants to interact with the product. Having the packaging present aided the participants in recalling their experiences with the product.

At the start of each interview, the researcher introduced himself and outlined the structure of the session. Participants were encouraged to provide as much detail as possible when answering. Participants were asked to sign a consent form¹⁵ prior to the commencement of the interview. Opening questions were designed to keep dialogue in an open-ended manner. Doing so allowed and encouraged participants to offer their own definitions of activities and ideas (Silverman, 2006). This is important as language can alter and communicate the subjectivity of one's reality (Harmon, 1990). As such, the interview reflected the language used by participants where possible. For example, some of the participants used the term "eco", with others tending to use "green" when describing the product concerned. The language used by participants was reflected in the researcher's responses and phrasing of questions. This follows the beliefs around language that is a part of hermeneutics as outlined in Section 3.4.

Interviews followed general guidelines across conducting interviews (Armstrong, 1985; Carson, et al., 2001). This includes the use of encouragers to signal understanding, maintaining eye contact, use of appropriate gestures, and utilising the active listening technique. The researcher attempted to avoid any academic terminology, allowing the participant to guide the order of topics, and avoid interrupting an answer. As per McCracken's (1988b) recommendation, the interviewer attempted to portray himself as accepting and curious, being prepared and eager to listen to their testimony with interest.

Grand tour questions were used throughout the interview to encourage the participant to share information with minimal prompting. These are described as general, open-ended inquiries (J. Johnson & Weller, 2002). An example of this is in asking a participant to describe their first purchase of an Ecostore product.

¹⁵ Participant consent form supplied in Appendix 7.5.

Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their stories and habits of using the products (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). The interview guide served as a foundation for conducting the interviews. In practice, the interviews were adjusted based on the individual participant. For example, the responses of participants may have meant some areas of interest were addressed earlier or later in the interview. This naturally resulted in different ordering across participants' conversations. Further, some areas were more relevant to some participants, so attention was applied to the tone and emotion behind participants' responses. Questions were also developed where it was felt that the topic of interest was more pertinent or relevant to the participant.

The interviews were characterised by a conversational quality in which the participant largely set the course of the dialogue. This was to ensure that the participant felt at ease in answering and that discussion did not become too technical. The interviewer focused questioning on aspects of the experiences being described. Where conversation moved off-topic, or areas that were not relevant to the research objectives, the interviewer moved conversation to the next question from the interview guide. The semi-structure improved data collection through allowing people to reflect on their own behaviour. It has been previously noted that people often shift perspectives after examining an issue (Warren, 2002). This was evident in data collection as several participants noted that they were not as "green" as they would like to be upon later reflection. Notes were only taken minimally during the interview to monitor conversation subjects and orient conversation. This was aimed to encourage participants to feel comfortable and converse in as close as informal manner as per normal conversation.

Concluding the interview, participants were supplied with the researchers' contact details. They had the option from withdrawing from the research up to one month after the interview by contacting the researcher. The consent form provided an opportunity for participants to receive a summary of the findings by supplying their contact details. Interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim by the interviewer within two days of conducting the interview. The researcher transcribed the interviews into a word processing format. This process allowed the researcher to develop a strong familiarity with the data. Familiarity allows a more thorough examination of dialogue and greater accuracy in

analysis (Bird, 2005; Heritage, 1984; Reissman, 1993). In agreeing with the beliefs of hermeneutics, transcribing after interviews would enable reflection, impacting later interviews and the formation of understanding of the subject matter being studied.

Pseudonyms were used to replace participants' names in interview transcripts to ensure anonymity and satisfy ethics responsibilities. In keeping with the hermeneutical technique outlined in Section 3.4, transcripts were reviewed multiple times. This allowed reflection on what areas should be probed in later interviews and development of an understanding of the whole. The review of data aided the recognition of themes, which were emerging and repeating.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was analysed by way of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is defined as the search for themes that are important from a description of any particular phenomenon (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksmann, 1997). Identification of themes involves careful reading and re-reading of data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Thematic analysis involves a form of pattern recognition in data, with themes becoming the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis is an appropriate means of data analysis as the research intends to see patterns across a number of individuals and their experiences with Ecostore products. This allows a worldwide view as outlined in Section 3.3 to be understood, fulfilling the objective of the research. The process of conducting the thematic analysis is outlined in Table 3.2 overleaf:

Table 3.2 Stages of Conducting Thematic Analysis

Stage	Features	Description
One	Memo taking (Field & Morse, 1985)	Notes were taken during and after interviews about potential ways of categorising the data. Interviews were transcribed.
Two	Becoming immersed in data	Initial reading of each transcript individually and noting initial ideas.
Three	Open coding (Berg, 1989)	All transcripts were read together with codes freely generated. Data for each code was collated.
Four	Category “collapsing”	The list of categories was reduced through sub-grouping of broader categories. Data relevant to each potential theme was compiled.
Five	Coding feedback	Feedback was sought from the research supervisor to guard against bias and ensure text units were accurate representations of the assigned theme.
Six	Re-reading	Re-reading transcripts and testing final list of categories. Confirming if it works within coded extracts and entire data set.
Seven	Coding	All transcripts coded based on final categories.
Eight	Compiling	Sections of interviews were aggregated based on the same code (maintaining context).
Nine	Reviewing themes	Aspects of each theme were defined, named and refined.
Ten	Writing up	The researcher selected examples to offer commentary to link examples. Final analysis of data and link back to research objective.
Eleven	Link to literature	Researcher linked commentary to current literature, to interpret patterns, summarise thematic networks and state key implications.

Adapted from (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard, 1991)

The interpretation followed the concept of the hermeneutic circle, as overviewed in Section 3.4 (Thompson, et al., 1994). This means that in practical terms, this entailed

an iterative process of reading, documenting and systemising the interview transcripts (Thompson, 1996). The data was analysed through the researcher developing a holistic understanding of each transcript by reading it and noting similarities across the analysed transcripts (see Hirschman, 1992; Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Thompson, et al., 1989). Through this process earlier readings will inform latter ones, and reciprocally, later readings would allow for the recognition and exploration of emergent patterns (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). The researcher attempted to make meaning of the data in identifying the key themes and patterns that emerged. Notions were developed on what the substantive content areas were, before being aggregated into meaning categories. These were used to develop the themes of the study.

The initial reading allowed a sense of the whole to emerge. The researcher then noted key phrases, metaphors and patterns of meaning that emerged. Through numerous iterations, interpretation was developed allowing a grasp of thematic similarities and meaning-based linkages. Participants were then compared and points of similarity were noted. Thematic structures were continuously challenged and modified as the researcher examined the transcripts. This was done in concert with the research supervisor to ensure that the text units remained accurate representations of the assigned codes and themes.

The final stages of the thematic analysis revolved around defining the themes and the write up of the report. Themes were analysed in detail and related back to the research objectives. The objective of the thematic analysis is to tell the story of the data. In achieving the research objective, a thematic analysis would allow the consumption stories of Ecostore products to be understood. These consumption stories would provide findings that allow the research objective of the study to be answered.

A reflexive journal was used throughout the data analysis. The journal contained the researcher's notes on emerging and potential themes. This included observations and personal thoughts and reflection throughout all phases of the research to support the process of thematic analysis.

3.8 Establishing Trustworthiness

The study addresses the area of trustworthiness as a measure for reliability and validity (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 2000). The concepts of reliability and validity assume that there is a singular truth, so the concept of trustworthiness is addressed instead for research built on a different belief of reality. This research, as explained in Section 3.3, follows the belief of constructivism in that multiple constructions of reality can exist. Establishing trustworthiness is thus necessary for the research to be seen as credible (Guba & Lincoln, 2000).

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is equivalent to internal validity. Internal validity refers to the confidence in the findings of the research that the singular truth has been found with all other possible explanations eliminated (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). In taking a constructivist perspective, it is believed that there is no singular truth, and that instead multiple constructions of reality are able to exist. Therefore, for this research to be presented as credible, it is required to illustrate that the multiple constructions were represented and interpreted accurately.

Credibility was achieved through the research supervisor confirming that interpretations were made in a logical manner from reviewing the interview transcripts and coding stages. The research supervisor judged whether text units were valid representations of the themes they had been assigned. The research supervisor had 100% agreement that the text units were true representations of the assigned themes. In providing a rich description of context and method in this study, others would also be able to assess the credibility of the study (Denzin, 1989; Geertz, 1973; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The rich description of context is achieved through the provision of the interview transcripts in Appendix 7.7.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability equates to external validity. External validity relates to how well findings may be generalised in using different methods and samples (Cook & Campbell, 1979). As a constructivist perspective has been taken, it is believed that

individuals possess different constructions as a result of their differences in background and experience.

For this research, having findings that are generalisable would overlook the particular context of the study. This is because generalising would take away the context of the study. Furthermore, generalisation is also not possible as the phenomena is seen as intimately tied to the context in which it is found (Guba, 1981). Instead, transferability in this study is focused on ensuring sufficient information and description of the context has been provided. This allows other researchers to assess how applicable the findings would be on their own particular population of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The responsibility of transferability lies on other researchers, simply as it is not possible to predict what other contexts the findings would be transferred to (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A rich description has been provided to other researchers through a thorough discussion of findings in the following chapter and the full interview transcripts of responses in Appendix 7.7. Providing this rich description satisfied the transferability for this study as it ensures enough description of context has been supplied for other researchers to assess the transferability of findings to another research context.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the reliability of the research method. Reliability refers to the ability of findings to be replicated using similar methods and a similar sample (Ford, 1975). Dependability is usually achieved through replication, but in doing so assumes a singular truth of knowledge. In incorporating the constructivist view, multiple constructions on knowledge can exist. As a result, it is not possible for the same findings to emerge from a similar study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Instead, for the research to show its dependability, it must indicate that methodological processes, decisions and interpretations have been conducted in a logical manner (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Dependability was assessed through the use of a reflexive journal. The journal included information on the processes and decisions made in the research, the data and findings, as well as interpretive notes that explain the logic of the researcher's

interpretation of the data. As well, the methodological considerations have been illustrated fully in the content of this chapter. Throughout the course of the study, the researcher liaised with the research supervisor to ensure that the processes taken were logical and dependable. The research supervisor agreed that the researcher's processes were conducted in this manner.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of interpretation. This would mean that multiple researchers would agree on the interpretation of findings. However, based on the theoretical beliefs of the study, the interpretation of data is inevitably biased based on the researcher's "natural subjectivity" (C. Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 194). To address this issue, the focus shifts from investigator objectivity to data confirmability (Guba, 1981). For findings to be confirmable it must be found that the findings were not biased or influenced by the motivations, interests or the background of the researcher.

Practicing reflexivity is one means of achieving confirmability. This involves intentionally revealing the researcher's underlying assumptions that are used to formulate questions and present findings in particular ways (Guba, 1981). For this study, confirmability was established through the use of the reflexive journal throughout all stages of the research. Memos were recorded (Field & Morse, 1985) regarding the researcher's ideas and thoughts on the subject matter. This included the researcher's thought processes and ideas for coding, as well as ordering and reviewing thoughts on the research process used (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The action of writing helps the researcher develop a reflexive attitude (van Manen, 1966). It allows for any thoughts, decisions or emotions that may influence interpretation of data to be outlined (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The research supervisor used interview transcripts and the reflexive journal notes to confirm that findings were drawn from the data in a non-objective manner (Guba & Lincoln, 1985)

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This research followed the ethical principles that are established by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). An application for ethics

approval was submitted, and approved by the AUTECH committee on 30th August 2010 (AUTECH Reference Number 10/173).

Involvement in the research was voluntary and with the consent of participants. Prior to the interview, participants were provided a written explanation of the aim and process of the research verbally and in writing. A consent form was completed at the interview, and this allowed participants to consent to being recorded on audiotape. An opportunity to obtain findings of the interview upon completion was also provided.

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured through the use of pseudonyms in the analysis, with only the researcher and research supervisor having access to the data. Consent forms and data were kept separate in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. As the interview involved aspects of personal habits, which may have been sensitive, participants were provided the option to pass on any questions if desired. Further, if participants appeared uncomfortable in their response, the interviewer would move to the next question.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the researcher's perspective and approach undertaken for the research. The chapter has outlined the decisions made regarding how data was collected and analysed. The researcher holds a constructivist belief, and this led to the use of hermeneutical techniques. The study utilised a sample of consumers of Ecostore products. Data was collected by way of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis investigating the symbolic meanings of the product was used to analyse the data. In order for the research to be seen as credible, the trustworthiness of the approach has been established.

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings of the research. Based on the research objective and methodology, the findings of this study are presented as themes. These themes pertained to the symbolic meanings that participants took from the brand of sustainable products to build their self-image. These findings are explained and supported with text units from the in-depth interviews. The chapter is organised by the symbolic meanings that were identified in the thematic analysis.

Actions taken with consumer products, as illustrated in Chapter Two, are a means of transferring symbolic meanings from products to the consumer's self-image. A summary of the types of consumption actions taken with Ecostore products to develop these findings is provided in Appendix 7.6. The symbolic meanings consumers sought to build their self-image are outlined in the contents of this chapter.

4.2 Virtue

Participants indicated that they saw symbolic meanings of virtue in their use of Ecostore-branded products. In consuming Ecostore products they felt virtuous that they were doing the "right thing". Ecostore products were perceived as being "better" than others in the product category. When participants purchased and used Ecostore products, they felt they were being "better" individuals. The consumption actions of purchase and use facilitated this transfer of symbolic meaning. Participants felt they were able to make a difference through their choice of Ecostore. This purchase decision reflected a commitment or responsibility to the environment.

4.2.1 Being Good

Participants saw the symbolic meaning of goodness in Ecostore products. This was in respect to a number of factors. David's initial sentiment indicated he feels it is good for his self, as well contributing to a greater good, which he does not initially specify:

I guess the feeling is that yeah, one, better for you, but two, having a small impact on the greater good. (d178)

Upon further questioning, it becomes clear that the goodness he referred to was in the environmental and health sense. This was echoed across other participants and is explained in the excerpts below:

[I thought the product was quite good on] the fact that it was plant-based. Definitely stuff that comes from natural, plants and stuff has a tick in my book being better environmentally. Skin friendly and garden friendly also as well, and the fact that it says no nasty chemicals. (d408)

I think it beats normal brands in the job that it does, simply because it does the job and it's good at caring for our environment as well. (t512)

Ecostore products were seen as good for the environment due to its product attributes. The action of purchasing the product was the instance in which the symbolic meaning of goodness was transferred to David. He sees caring for the environment through the purchase action of Ecostore, as contributing to becoming a more virtuous individual because he is embracing notions of environmentalism. He alludes to the virtue he sees in his purchase action:

Certainly feel like it is the right thing to do. And a positive step towards kinda improving the environmental things. I certainly understand, that I probably could do more, and could be more proactive, but I think by virtue of doing something at all, is a good thing, you know, every little bit helps. (d489)

David's assertion that he could be doing more is indicative that he sees purchasing Ecostore is a contribution to the environment. His recognition of virtue in his action suggests he is conscious of the symbolic meaning transfer from the Ecostore product to himself. He does suggest that the virtue in taking the action is limited relative to other aspects of his lifestyle. His sentiments suggest that as he develops more capacity in respect to time and finance, his commitment to his values of environmentalism will

also grow. In a similar respect, Tanya also states that buying Ecostore products is in part, derived from being seen as a virtuous action:

[I was convinced to try them through] probably, just wanting to do the right thing. (t546)

Much like David, Tanya sees virtuous gain through the purchase of the product. For these participants, buying the product was seen as being a good thing, both to the environment and in respect to themselves. Lauren agrees that buying Ecostore is the right thing to do. Conversely, when she purchased another "eco-friendly" alternative that wasn't Ecostore, she felt an inner-consciousness of guilt:

So I have convinced myself that there is another product that is just as green, but somewhere in the back of my mind there's a little voice that says, don't, you know very well Lauren that if it is doing a better job, it is not likely to be as kind to the environment. (l583)

Lauren's sentiment suggest that she sees Ecostore products as the best choice in terms of helping the environment, even over other products that are also branded in a similar environmentally focused manner. In purchasing another product, Lauren needed to mentally justify to herself to enable the purchase to take place:

So I just have had just a little internal argument about whether I can believe them or not and convinced myself I can without actually checking, because I'm not sure I would have the same results if I checked the label but I need, need the job done. (l571)

Her sentiment suggests that she felt some guilt in not purchasing Ecostore and that she initially felt it difficult to place precedence on her own needs over the needs of the wider environment. Lauren sees using Ecostore products as compromising her resources of time, effort and finances. As a result, in choosing Ecostore she feels she is building a self-image that she is willing to makes sacrifices for the greater good of the environment.

Being good was relevant for Lauren and Jennifer in being, and becoming mothers. Lauren's decision to buy Ecostore was influenced by a desire for her child to have the opportunity to have the same nature-based experiences as she did in her childhood:

I understand that there's a trade-off and I'm not prepared to, I would rather have a bib with a few stains on it than put more caustic chemicals into the waterways. How about you? You're quite happy with that I think. Do you want your child to be able to go fishing when he's a big boy? 'Cause there might not be any fish left. (l194)

Through the action of purchasing Ecostore, Lauren genuinely felt she was taking action in enabling her son and other generations to share the same experiences of nature. By purchasing Ecostore, Lauren transferred the symbolic meaning of being a good mother, by protecting the experiences that she considered important. Jennifer also transferred symbolic meanings of being a good mother, through the grooming action of Ecostore products:

[I see Ecostore products as] non-toxic so you know not so harmful. I guess especially now being pregnant and stuff, I'm just conscious of what's going into my body, I always have been but that's quite important to me right now. (j225)

She felt that in using products that were safer, she was being a good mother by mitigating exposure to substances that may harm her child. As reflected in her sentiment above, Jennifer sees symbolic meanings of naturalness and safety in Ecostore products.

Participants saw degrees of virtue in Ecostore products, enabling the creation of virtuous self-image. Part of this virtue lies in using Ecostore products to contribute to a greater good. Participants felt they could use their consumption actions to draw symbolic meanings to reflect their commitment to make a difference and support worthy causes. These form the next themes that will now be discussed.

4.2.2 Making a Difference

Ecostore products were seen as contributing beyond their utility. Through selecting and consuming them, participants felt that they could make a difference in relation to the environment. Several of the participants differed in that they were more sceptical of their contribution. Part of making a contribution was in order to fulfil a perceived commitment that participants felt they had.

The symbolic value for Ecostore products was evident in the fact that participants were prepared to offer beyond what they would have for standard products. David was willing to pay more because he recognises a contribution of the product beyond its utility. However, David did not place Ecostore products over other products that are branded a similar environmentally focused manner. His perception of contributing was derived from the belief he was using an alternative, environmentally friendly product. His price parity for a purchase was directly linked to the perceived environmental impact of the product in question:

[I'd pay more for kitchen spray] because I think it's probably a closer, has, the effect it has on the environment for a dishwashing powder liquid has [is] not quite so harsh. Or for washing powder. (d211)

Lauren differed in that she did place Ecostore products as making more of a difference than other environmentally friendly branded products. She felt she was contributing to a greater degree when using Ecostore. Conversely, she felt guilt in not using Ecostore products, as she perceived others to be not as environmentally friendly (l583). Only in using Ecostore did Lauren feel she was making the most difference.

Several participants felt that their consumption choices did impact on the capacity to make a difference in respect to the environment. To David and Karen, buying Ecostore enabled them to make a difference to the environment:

Always looking to try and help the environment a little bit. (k56)

[I would try Ecostore] because I try and do little bits and pieces that I guess help [the] environment or have the less detriment or effect possible. All small

steps...definitely we should do as much as we possibly can, to be careful with the environment and this is, I guess this is a small step towards that. (d93, d14)

Participants often indicated that they did not place certainty over the value of the contribution they were making in purchasing Ecostore products. There was evidently confusion over how purchasing Ecostore could be making a difference:

Like that sustainable stuff I never really thought of the other ones not being really sustainable. Like, I mean like how do you make something like dishwashing liquid sustainability? I don't know. Like do you cut down a tree and put it into the ground? (b290)

The perceived contribution of using Ecostore products was generally seen as being marginal. However, it is evident from the sentiments above that participants still saw value in the contribution they made. Jennifer sees a small contribution being made in her purchase of Ecostore products, but it becomes more substantial when aggregated with the efforts of others:

I guess you sort of read things and look at things on TV and it's just horrifying and you sort of think if you can do some small things and help what's going on, you can do your little bit and your part, and if everyone did that then hopefully it might make a difference. (j242)

Participants generally agreed that the personal investment required in using Ecostore products over others was not substantial whilst still making some level of difference. This difference may have been purely symbolic. For Karen, the ritual action of purchase was seen as having a small contribution to the environment. Buying Ecostore products was one means of making a difference and show that she was starting to make the changes that she could in her lifestyle:

Any way, little way you can help, I think is good like even down to trying to not use too much Gladwrap and those kind of things. Recycle your rubbish bins and everything. I mean, I'm not completely eco, but if I lived on a farm or something I would be, but that's quite hard in urban [society], [laughs] to be able to do that. (k156)

There was evidence of participants using the products in a manner that maximised the contribution that they made. This helped participants to build the image that they were committed to environmental issues. For example, David follows a set procedure in his divestment ritual of disposal:

[With] recycling, for instance, I make sure I, although sometimes you want to be lazy, you just wanna chuck your tin of baked beans in the bin. I make sure that I make the effort to wash it out and put it into the recycling... also I like cleaning the stuff before it goes into recycling so it doesn't have all the horrors in it that can kinda leech into places. (d492, d372)

In the act of rinsing the packaging for another product, David ensures his actions have value. The time and effort he invested in rinsing maximises the difference he feels he makes to the environment. For the Ecostore product, David also followed the same procedure of finishing the product before rinsing and recycling. This indicates that his investment in disposal was formed from his own self-image as opposed to being a response to an Ecostore product's attribute or symbolic meaning.

In making a difference, participants built a self-image that they were contributing members of society. Part of this contribution was fulfilling a responsibility that they had as individuals. Consumption actions are purposeful, and participants suggested that they felt they were fulfilling their responsibility as an individual in making environmentally friendly choices. The choice of Ecostore made participants feel they met their responsibilities. Lauren's responsibility of looking after the environment was consciously chosen. She decided that her household should be committed to using more environmentally friendly alternatives. This was a result of her direct influence as she was responsible for the shopping. In the current stage of her life, she reflects on Ecostore products as acting in accordance with the mental commitment she had made:

If I think back to when I did go to a supermarket regularly before we had Robert yeah I can imagine myself standing there and trying to choose between a Down to Earth liquid [and Ecostore], I mean I will always choose an eco friendly product, is that true? Let me just think. No, it is. (l17)

She recognises the choice to use Ecostore products entails more effort. In Lauren's grooming actions with Ecostore, she needs to act differently in order to use the product for its intended function:

It's not just the decision just to use an eco product; you've also got to make a commitment to put more time and effort into your daily chores. That's why those chemicals came into use, because people couldn't stand boiling their washing and throwing in blue stuff to make it look whiter. (l111)

In having to complete extra actions and exert more effort, Lauren further transfers the symbolic meaning that she is being committed to the environment. Lauren makes the shopping decisions and completes the cleaning duties for the household. As such, she is creating a self-image for her household. This is important to her, as she wants to encourage similar habits in her husband and son. She also builds the self-image that she is being a responsible decision maker, as her choice to use Ecostore is on behalf of her wider household.

Participants had, or desired values that they saw in the symbolic meanings attached to Ecostore products. The closeness of these values to the symbolic meaning was an important influence on their decision to purchase them. This forms the next theme.

4.3 Values

Participants indicated that the values they saw in Ecostore products were important to them in their decision to purchase. They desired products that reflected their personal values, because they recognised that their choices would help build their self-image. Consumption actions were used to reinforce participants' sense of who they were. In other cases, the decision to use Ecostore products helped to draw out previously dormant values. The consumption action was sometimes seen in a group context so consumption actions were used to build an image for a collective. These functions are detailed and discussed below.

4.3.1 Personal Values

The decision to choose Ecostore was influenced by the fit of the values of the product to the personal values of the participant. Participants desired products with symbolic meanings that fit with the existing self-image they felt they held. The preference of Ecostore over other brands was borne from the personal values of participants. For example, Tanya describes herself as having a green personality and holding strong values on respecting the environment:

I definitely think I have a green focus. And I really care about nature and I care about keeping, having respect for the place that we live and keeping it beautiful.
(t96)

She believes that the Ecostore product carried symbolic meanings pertaining to ethics, naturalness and caring for the environment. These align with her personal values. She identifies the symbolic meanings of Ecostore and their alignment to her own in the excerpt below:

I picked it because I believe in the values that I think Ecostore has. I think they have similar values to my personal ones... I believe that they are ethical in that they don't do animal testing. Their products are derived from plants. And they don't use chemicals, so they believe in putting natural goodness into your body, and not exposing your body to harmful substances or chemicals. I also think they, it seems like they care about the environment. (t14, t22)

When Tanya buys Ecostore products she reinforces the existence of her own personal values. The products' symbolic meaning of environmentalism aligns to her personal value of caring for the environment. She uses the consumption of the product to justify her self-image that she is an individual who cares greatly about the environment.

A second aspect of this theme is that participants used the symbolic meanings of Ecostore to develop new or previously dormant personal values. These values were present in the childhood of participants, as well as being influenced by other people around them. The decision to use Ecostore in the present reinforces participants' belief that those values are still there. For example, in his schooling, David received a Steiner education, where values of environmentalism were encouraged:

I come from a school [Steiner] where environmentalism was a key part of things and so anything that was unnatural you always looked for an alternative, if possible. (d33)

His education and childhood was identified as being an important influence on the personal values he holds today. Participants also identified that their values of environmentalism are shared amongst their families and wider social groups:

I think it has always been a part of my family's values. And also my school's and peers' values as well. (d476)

Our family, our whole family, has those same values in terms of the environment and caring for the Earth and caring for other people. (t76)

David identifies Ecostore as carrying symbolic meanings of environmentalism as he considers them to be an environmentally friendly alternative. In progressing through adulthood he reflects that he is being exposed to a greater number of opportunities to enact behaviours that agreed with the values he developed from his childhood. When David purchases Ecostore products he fulfils the values that he developed in his youth. His choice to use Ecostore products over others is part of his fulfilment of his values that were developed through his schooling and childhood.

Tanya described that her previous living arrangements meant others had always established the choice of products. She felt she was constrained in being able to select products with symbolic meanings that would align with her self-image. When she moved into her new flat, she was enabled to buy products that did align with her personal values of environmentalism. She discussed the change she experiences in now being able to express her personal values in her consumption choices more freely:

It's just an age thing, I've never, I've [always] lived in flats, with like randoms, as they get older or not we're not going to do that any more. The next step will be buying my own home, so I will be the decision maker. And it just comes with age,

you discover, well I have discovered what is important to me and that is crucial, to who I am now. (t869)

The ritual action of purchasing Ecostore drew out her personal value that was dormant. These values were dormant on the basis that she did not have opportunities to act in accordance with them. Tanya's value of being "green" had always been held, but not immediately apparent:

I felt it [being green] is integral to who I am. It's always been there. (t865)

Her purchase of Ecostore products reinforced her belief that she was now committing to her values of environmentalism. Other participants did not identify environmentalism as a personal value they had always held. Sylvia is a longstanding Ecostore customer and readily trials new products, identified that her decision to purchase Ecostore stemmed from being against products that are animal tested. The decision to purchase Ecostore instilled new values that she did not originally intend. She recognises the new values from the use of the Ecostore product:

[I felt] fine [using chemical products], but when something, but when something that came along and took all that away, in the beginning there wasn't an Ecostore. Like when I was younger, no one cared. It is relatively new, the whole, the being eco. (s206)

It was only retrospectively that she did recognise that Ecostore did carry symbolic meaning of environmentalism. She felt that it was a new personal value she adopted as the result of committing to the product on the basis of her other values. Sylvia was cynical of caring about the environment, but still agreed that it was a natural fit with her other personal values:

I was like about thirteen when I decided to become a vegetarian and then from there it just progressed and then moved into those sort of areas. Sort of a natural flow really, once you make those choices in your life you can end up going down the road [laughs] you try to, you know, encourage free-range and organic and not tested on animals. (s194)

Her identification of a metaphorical path suggests that her longstanding personal values lead to the adoption of new values around environmentalism. Sylvia's commitment for Ecostore products stems from her commitment to use non-animal tested products. She is uncompromising on other factors such as price because she is absolutely committed to her personal values. She feels that using other products would compromise them and is actually something she has never done or considered:

The chemical stuff is really reasonable. You see it at the supermarket and you go god, that's a lot cheaper. The price doesn't even come into it, I wouldn't even, it wouldn't stop me buying it. I think it probably is a bit more expensive. That's what Kelly [colleague] said when we mentioned it to her. She goes you know, that's really expensive and I was, like really? (s599)

Sylvia sees Ecostore products as being representative of her non-animal testing values. When she purchases Ecostore products she transfers the belief that she is committing to these values. She retrospectively recognises a price premium, and in paying this, sees herself as maintaining and asserting her personal values even more. She adopts the new personal values because of the other symbolic meanings she sees in Ecostore products.

The consumption actions of Ecostore products facilitated the merging and evolution of participants' personal values. In adopting other values, participants were consciously developing their self-image and potentially moulding their behaviours and actions to fit a desired image. This concept of self-image creation is the second aspect of the theme of values.

4.3.2 Creation of Self-Image

Participants saw Ecostore products as carrying symbolic meanings that they aspired or desired as part of their self-image. Sylvia saw Ecostore products as being about environmentalism, and she identified this as aligning with her self-image of being a vegetarian (s194). It was a natural process for her to adopt such values as part of the image she perceives. In her purchase of Ecostore products, Sylvia felt she was building her self-image.

Karen, who only recently adopted the use of Ecostore products, saw the purchase of the product contributing to a new, wider 'eco' image. She describes initially becoming aware of being eco in a recent conversation:

A friend of ours was telling us about how it's good for the environment. Because it doesn't, something about fish? That we will, it doesn't affect the fish in the water and we figured, we might as well give it a go. Always looking to try and help the environment a little bit. And that's how we kind of got onto it... not the product itself, just the idea of doing eco products. (k54, k61)

She describes her subsequent decision to commit to being an eco individual. The eco individual was a concept that she visualised and later consciously made a decision to aspire to. The purchase action of Ecostore products fits with the self-image she wanted to achieve:

I thought that if I can be as eco as possible I would go down that track. Yeah and it was really interesting just to see what they had. And how many different things can be eco [laughs] but you kinda don't think that can [be]. (k150)

Through purchasing products that carried symbolic meanings of eco, Karen was able to create a self-image that she cared about the environment. The actions of purchasing Ecostore products transferred the symbolic meaning that she was becoming an eco person. Purchasing Ecostore was important in establishing this self-image, as Karen felt constrained in other changes she could make to her current lifestyle:

As green as I can be [laughs]. I don't know if I'm completely green, I still kinda have the odd, the recycling and everything like that. Like as I said, if I had a farm or something I would definitely do as much as I could please myself, but in urban society, I don't think I can be as green as I want to be. But ideally, I would like to be. (k497)

Ecostore products were seen as one means of becoming a more overall eco person. In her purchase action of on Ecostore product, Karen reinforced her belief that she was becoming a more eco individual. She also suggested that buying Ecostore lead to her reflecting on how she could adjust other aspects of her purchasing behaviour.

For Lauren, using Ecostore products resulted in a display action of her consumption. She felt that the results of the products were noticeable to her friends:

And because I've made a more eco friendly choice I struggle to keep my nappies as white, my bibs as white, and to eliminate odours and stains as easily and their toilet cleaner doesn't clean, that's the thing, I really struggle with trying to get other people on board as well because eco friendly products do not do the same job as hard out chemical ones do, as quickly. (1103)

This display action of the product's results transferred the symbolic meaning of being eco-friendly from the product to Lauren. She saw symbolic meanings of caring for the environment in Ecostore products. The self-image that Lauren desired was important to her as she asserts that she is an individual committed to the environment. Her social defiance of displaying less clean clothes reinforced the existence of her self-image that she was more concerned about the environment than matters she deemed cosmetic. This also gave her the opportunity to educate and encourage her friends if this became a topic of discussion.

Lauren stated that she had established a self-image of being an environmentally conscious consumer amongst her social group. This image was created through the display of products, discussion, gifting and recommendation of the product. All these actions involved Lauren drawing out symbolic meanings from the product to herself. For example, through the action of discussion with her friends she demonstrated her passion for the values of the product, and defended the choice to use them:

I'm quite pushy and I can be quite opinionated and once I get really excited about something I do tend to want to share it with people whether its wanted to be shared or not. And that really could be aggravating for other people so I've learned over the past few years people do not like being pushed into being green. (1301)

The action of discussing the product and encouraging others helped Lauren to build the self-image that she was committed to the environment. She is aware that her actions do create an image of herself amongst her social group. The commitment to

her values of environmentalism can run in conflict with her social relationships, as she identifies people do not always like been pushed into change. Instead, Lauren encourages her friends to be greener through small changes and more implicitly, the exchange rituals of recommendation and gifting:

The one thing that I always recommend is the [Ecostore] Baby Sleepy Time Bath. We always use their baby products quite extensively. I swear by it... I have given that away as a present, as a gift for baby shower stuff. (l209, l214)

When Lauren gifted her friends Ecostore products she transferred symbolic meanings from the product to herself. The symbolic meanings she saw in the product was helping the environment and caring for the health of the family. Her actions of recommending and gifting helped Lauren to build the self-image that she was an individual who cared about others. She also saw the adoption of Ecostore baby products as building the self-image that she was a good friend, because she demonstrated her care for her friends' children's' health.

For other aspects of participants' self-image, the symbolic meaning was not inherent in the Ecostore product, but instead in the action. That is, the particular consumption behaviour of Ecostore was not dissimilar to the behaviour taken with another product. For example, all participants recycled as part of their divestment action for Ecostore and other products. The recycling action was an important habit to maintain as it contributed to a part of participants' self-image:

I recycle like a maniac anyway. (b131)

Fastidious recycler... I always recycle, everything. Everything recyclable, pretty much. (d362, d366)

Although the action of recycling Ecostore products did not differ from what the participants would have done with other products, the ritual action of recycling continues to transfer symbolic meaning that is used to build self-image. Through the process of recycling, participants establish themselves as committed to being against waste. Being against waste is part of the self-image that participants support the environment through their actions. Participants saw the act of recycling as convenient

and thus, required little cognitive effort to choose to do so throughout the course of their lives. The action of recycling as divestment has symbolic meaning embedded in a manner not dissimilar to how individual products obtain their symbolic meanings from the cultural world.

Recycling, and other actions taken with products were often seen by participants as being on behalf of a collective. Participants could also use the symbolic meanings from Ecostore products to build an image of their collective. The collective may have been their family or their household. The concept of collective values forms the next aspect of this theme.

4.3.3 Collective Values

Participants used the symbolic meanings of Ecostore products to build an image for their collective. As a collective they may have held different values due to the individuals that were a part of it. Symbolic meanings of the products may have also pertained to some of participants' personal relationships within the collective. The symbolic meaning of people was also seen in Ecostore products. This was because participants recalled that the product held some connection with others. For some, the product was previously used in their family or recommended by a parent or sibling. In other cases, the decision to purchase or use Ecostore products was seen as being collective.

Two participants purchased or used the product after the recommendation of another person. Brian decided to trial the product after becoming aware of it and discussing it with his flatmate. Karen tried the product as her partner had already used it:

*I was living with a flatmate, who used to buy it and bought some [for myself].
(b88)*

We moved onto the eco one because my boyfriend likes using that stuff and I started using it too... And he was using that, he likes using the loofah and the body wash and so that side of things, which I've never done. (k5, k29)

Karen saw the sharing of grooming products as indicative of her and her boyfriend becoming more of a collective through greater use of shared products. She saw the shared choice of buying and using the product contributing to a sense of a collective for her and her boyfriend. This was because she started factoring in his preferences and needs in the purchase decision:

[I do find the body wash expensive]. But it's kinda worth it. One, cause I know it good for his skin. And we might as well use the same one instead of having a soap.
(k83)

She used the symbolic meaning of the Ecostore product to build not only her self-image of being eco, but a collective image as well. Sylvia noted that she and her partner share the same personal values, and this translates to the household products they purchase. She sees Ecostore products as being aligned with these values. Sylvia sees the agreement on choice of products as being reflective of her and her partner being compatible for each other:

We [my partner and I], probably had the same ideals from the beginning... I guess we just developed along the way, and you know, some, or something when you're with a person you have to have those similar values as it probably won't work [laughs] so it kind of just, it just became the same values, same ideals. (s1034, s1038)

In other cases, the collective identity may have arisen out of participant's living arrangements. Tanya describes her flat as being a collective identity:

Yeah definitely, it [the imagery and symbols of her home] represents a collective. That's exactly right and that's exactly what our flat is. We're totally collective, we're a mini collective society and that's the way we treat it. You know, democratic kind of thing. (t397)

She purchased Ecostore products as part of her wider flat's shared groceries. The purchase of Ecostore products was identified as an important norm for the flat. Tanya identifies that the value of environmentalism as being necessary for participation in the collective:

We [as a flat] are very focused on buying products, which are good for the environment... [The new flat mate] kind of has to fit in with the household, I guess, values as well. (t7,t233)

Tanya entered the household as the newest flatmate and purchasing the brand was seen as a necessary step for her to be established as part of the flat:

I adapt to whatever environment I'm in, as I said before, whether I'm at work [or elsewhere] I observe to see what is appropriate behaviour and I'd say that my environment that surrounds me at the moment is very much natural. (t855)

She saw Ecostore products as carrying symbolic meanings pertaining to the values of the household. In buying the product she felt she was buying into the values of the household. Because she did believe in the values of the wider collective, she readily adopted this change to her purchasing behaviour. She felt that this also demonstrated to others that she was fitting in to the values of the flat, the collective. The flat's actual norm of purchasing Ecostore was implicit and not something she was ever communicated to directly:

[Buying Ecostore for the flat] just goes without saying... it's like the unspoken rule... we didn't speak, we've never spoken about the brand... it would just simply be that the notion to buy an organic brand, but wouldn't need to be written down as well. It's the given. (t261, t279, t658)

Tanya simply observed the flat's behaviour and identified that the symbolic meaning of the product fit with the image of the flat. Buying the product reflected her socialisation in the household. Conversely, Lauren is influential in setting the values of her household as a collective. As the main supermarket shopper, she exerts control over what products are purchased. In the action of purchasing Ecostore, she feels she is instilling green values in her family:

We're quite committed as a household to a greener choice for my laundry liquids. I would usually flick between Ecostore and B_E_E (pauses) but usually I will go for Ecostore. (l20)

Lauren sees Ecostore and B_E_E products as carrying symbolic meanings of caring for the environment. The purchase choice helps build the self-image that Lauren is a green individual, and the image that the household and her family also hold values of environmentalism. Lauren's purchase of Ecostore establishes a precedent for her household to follow. Through being the designated shopper, Lauren sees her actions as being on behalf of her family as a collective. Rather than only transferring symbolic meaning to her self-image, the meaning is also transferred to image of the collective as a whole.

Lauren's decision to purchase Ecostore for the family and recommend it to others stemmed from her belief that the product carried symbolic meanings pertaining to health. The symbolic meaning of health is the next theme that will be discussed.

4.4 Health

Participants perceived Ecostore products to be good for health. This may have been literal in referring to their own health, or the health of others, or metaphorical in the health of the environment and lived experiences. The symbolic meaning of health was used to build a self-image that participants were concerned about the wellbeing of people and the things that were important to them. The aspects of this theme will now be discussed.

4.4.1 *Personal Health*

Two participants, Karen and Jennifer, described one of the reasons they purchased Ecostore products was due to their allergies. Jennifer identifies allergies as a main reason for purchasing the product:

I like the fact that, they're obviously like non-toxic and you know, as far as cleaning products and stuff like that goes. I actually suffer from allergies so something like that is really good. That is sort of one of the main reasons why we use their stuff. (j64)

Karen also reflects on previous experiences where other products did react with her skin:

It [products with synthetic ingredients] can react with my skin a little bit. I don't have a real sensitive skin but I can get sensitive, especially on my face, I don't use it on my face, but I'd rather not risk it if I can. (k325)

Karen's use of Ecostore products in her grooming did differ slightly from other products. Previously, she had been using soap but switched to Ecostore body wash. Because she felt the product was more natural and milder, she was not concerned about contact with her face. With other products, she was more conscious because of the greater perceived risk to her skin. The symbolic meaning of natural and milder in Ecostore products was used to build participants' self-image that they looked after their own health. When Sylvia uses Ecostore products in her grooming, she feels that she is maintaining her good health and mitigating the risk of poor health:

I'm just a bit worried about, you hear all the bad press about it and you go, maybe they do cause cancer, maybe it is what we've done wrong... what we've done to ourselves living with the chemicals we bathe ourselves on a daily basis. So you go, well if it's something you can take out of your life, then why not?... I'm not worried about saving the planet so much as I am about not using chemicals myself, so I guess at a selfish level to try and protect myself from what potentially could be dangerous I suppose, and more to protect myself really, and the animals. (s508, s501)

Ecostore products present an opportunity for Sylvia to mitigate risks to her health. She values using Ecostore as it is not something perceived as requiring much effort but carries the insurance that she is working towards protecting herself. She uses the symbolic meaning of the product to build the self-image that she is an individual who values her health.

Other participants also mirrored the belief that Ecostore products would mitigate some health risk. As David identifies, other products were seen as potentially exposing some risk to peoples' health:

There's a lot of research that, I don't think is particularly conclusive saying that these things are safe. But there's a lot of, I guess not hugely scientific findings but reasonably, substantial findings that say chemicals are bad for you. So if you can have a product that does the same job, that doesn't use them, I definitely think is good. (d21)

Ecostore were seen as carrying symbolic meanings of safety and protecting one's health. Participants felt good using Ecostore products as they felt they were not exposing themselves to any health risks. This was because Ecostore products were seen as safe and good for health. Using the product created the self-image that they avoided the risk of health problems. This was because the Ecostore product held symbolic meanings of naturalness and health.

4.4.2 Health of Other People

Lauren established herself as an advocate for Ecostore products in her social circles. She regularly recommended the Ecostore baby products to her friends (l209). She focused on this category specifically because she felt that infants were physically vulnerable:

I've never seen anyone's baby have a skin reaction to any of the Ecostore products. I have seen pretty much, seen lots of babies react badly to Johnson's and I can't really think of any more. But you know, the really highly fragranced stuff. (l463)

Her recommendation of the products was derived from her belief that the products were better for the health of the individual who it was used on. In giving visibility and accessibility to the product, she felt she could influence the health of her friends' children:

I know its so interfering but I can't help it... often what can happen when people are new parents and when babies get a rash they go to the doctor. And probably the doctor will prescribe them some sort of an ointment and then you get a whole stream of intervention. It's like it seems like such a silly thing but a rash from a

product that is highly chemical can be the beginning for an intervention in that child's medical life. That will set habits for a lifetime. (l470)

Lauren saw the advent of having a child as being an opportunity to encourage others to adopt more environmentally friendly modes of behaviour. In this action of exchange she transferred the symbolic meanings of health and prevention from the product to her self-image. She saw herself as being a person who cared about the health of others, and recommending and gifting the product helped her to build this image. The exchange also gave Lauren personal satisfaction, as she felt positive in protecting the health of those she cares about. She was also able to transfer some of the symbolic meanings from the product to her friends, as many continued to use the Ecostore products on an ongoing basis.

Sylvia also saw Ecostore products as being a safe option, through reducing her exposure to chemicals. She recommended her mother to also use the products. She cared about the health of her mother, and saw encouraging the products as a means of helping to protect her mother's health. The recommendation action was relatively straightforward, based on the strength of their relationship:

I just told her, I said you should start using this and stop using the chemicals... it was instant. She just chucked everything out. (s722)(s745)

In the action of recommendation she transferred symbolic meaning of health and safety from the product to herself. She build the self-image that she was a good daughter in protecting the health of her mother. Her mother readily made the change to Ecostore and also started to examine other aspects of her lifestyle.

[My mother was] not very green at all. But mum is now, mum is very aware, she's really careful to try and be healthy. (s726)

As well, in her occupational capacity she ordered Ecostore products for her workplace, as she sought to protect her colleagues' health as well. She hoped that her supply of Ecostore products would serve as passive, indirect encouragement for others to trial and use:

[I chose Ecostore for my workplace] Because I wanted to buy eco stuff. Because I wanted to buy natural products to try and help my work friends. (s849)

She saw buying Ecostore product for her workplace as helping her colleagues. In this action she built the self-image that she was a caring individual. The product carried symbolic meanings pertaining to caring for one's health. For other participants, the concept of health also extended to non-humans, such as the environment.

4.4.3 Health of the Environment

Participants identified that the environment was something that was worth protecting. Some felt they had a responsibility to protect the environment and its health. Ecostore products were seen as enabling participants to make changes in their lives to support the health of the environment. Participants visualised concerns of the environment in specific issues that pertained to them. These issues also indicated where participants might have felt they could have contributed. Brian for example, focused on the impact of waterways, whereas David considered landfills:

Good to know that you're doing the right thing from a personal perspective, but also good to know that I'm not, again going back to recycling because it's a good example, good to know that I'm not putting plastic in a landfill that will be there for hundreds of years and will definitely impact on society further down the track. (d510)

Participants all visualised the health of the environment differently and this pertains to how the environment was connected to them in their everyday lives. This is evident in Lauren's dismissal of the global environmental issues of carbon warming and support of more local and visible aspects of the environmental world in her own life:

I care a great deal about this planet. I think we've gone way beyond our point, I mean global warming, is irrelevant. It's important, but irrelevant on a day-to-day basis. It doesn't make any difference to what we're doing. Litter does. Litters unpleasant. You walk outside to your front door and you will see litter everywhere. So you know, that's the kinda thing that I think. Small changes. Every time I leave the house I pick up three pieces of litter. I don't try to pick it all up,

but if everyone, that's the sorta change I try and bring on to my friends, you don't have to change your whole life. But if you could just use this liquid then that's great...We have more to think about now. And it will, what we do now will influence how things are in ten to fifteen years. It's not about global warming its pollution. It's about keeping our waterways clean. (l346)

Participants saw a connotation of the environment as being a living organism and considered the value of their actions as contributing to the health of this organism. Using Ecostore products would support the life of the ecosystem. Participants used the symbolic meanings of the product to build the self-image that they cared about the health of the environment.

Part of supporting the health of the environment, was in the hope that it would support experiences that it provided. Lauren saw the purchase of Ecostore products as ensuring that her child would experience nature as she did as a child:

I need to know that he will be able to take, it's not about whether he gets to go fishing or not, because he probably will, fishing is kind of my [metaphor]... well when I was a kid, we used to fish off Princes Wharf down in the city...We'd go down there and my dad sits there. We used to catch crabs and fish like little Kahawai and stuff off Princes Wharf that was only like thirty-five years ago, I doubt very much that you'd catch anything down there now. A couple sailors maybe. But, so that's like him there. But there are other places I can take Robert [son] to go fishing but in thirty-five years it's up to me to work out whether he can take his children to that place. And that place that we take him is many miles out of town already. (l365, l370, l375)

Lauren sees symbolic meanings of supporting the health and sustainability of experiences in Ecostore products. When she purchases the product, she transfers these symbolic meanings to herself as an individual. She builds a self-image that she is being a good mother through contributing to the possibility that her son can enjoy experiences of nature. She sees these experiences as valuable, and desires for her son to have them as well.

Lauren and other participants' belief that Ecostore was a good thing and that it made a genuine contribution to wider issues was supported by the belief that the brand was trustworthy. The theme of trust is important as it underlies the previously identified symbolic meanings of Ecostore products.

4.5 Trust

Participants described Ecostore to be more trustworthy than other brands in its claims. The symbolic meaning of trust in products validated the belief that a valuable contribution was being made. Participants placed trust in the brand in that they thought Ecostore was a genuine, environmentally conscious brand and organisation and that supporting them was the right thing to do. Sylvia elaborates on their trust of the brand over others, including other eco-brands.

[I] think a lot of people have got on the bandwagon of it for sure, a lot of people are you know, throw around the word eco around willy nilly, and you can actually see things that sorta claim to be eco, you know just like how they throw organic around, lots of products you see these days say they're organic and natural and they're healthy and then you actually read the ingredients and they're not at all. Which is really disappointing that it's been able to be used so freely, so I guess that's another reason not to shop around because, in Ecostore we trust [laughs]. (s924)

Tanya also clearly demonstrates her belief and trust of the Ecostore brand:

I believe that they are ethical, I believe that they have integrity as a brand, I believe that they care about the environment and animals and people and the wellbeing of all of those three things. I believe that they're holding themselves accountable to their personal values. Because when they did this, when they brought this stuff out, this whole green movement wasn't in fashion. It was a long time ago, like I don't believe they've done it commercially to make money. I think they've done it because they had a vision. (t777)

This finding of trust is key, as the trust that these participants demonstrated in the Ecostore brand caused them to prefer them to other eco brands. Furthermore, the

trust of the brand made the participants feel that any contribution they were making was more substantial. There was high evidence of general scepticism against other brands and products:

I don't know actually whether it is actually a better product or whether it is greener but it tells me it is... I'm a sceptic [laughs]. I have a personal, I have a very deep inquiring mind and I never take anything as read. (l130, l401)

As always with these things, unless you actually go through every single product and check you know chemical by chemical what's in them, you don't know how hundred percent green they are. But I think from the claims made on the packaging, its pretty obvious that they are better than some of the synthetic chemical-based materials. (d397)

These excerpts illustrate that these participants were at least sceptical of some of the brands and products within the category. The brand of Ecostore provided a symbolic meaning of trust. This mediated the participant's opinion of the contribution they could make in using the product because they trusted the claims of the brand. Also, the symbolic meaning of trust was used to build participants' self-image that they were trustworthy. As illustrated earlier, Lauren and Sylvia recommended products to others (l209)(s722). Trust in the product was important because these actions of exchange were reflections of themselves. There was evidence that Sylvia used her trust to influence her mother:

I believe you and I trust you [mother to Sylvia], and I was like, good. (s754)

Sylvia was comfortable recommending the Ecostore product because she trusted the claims made by the product. The symbolic meanings of trust also links to the other themes that have been identified in this chapter. Firstly, trust links to the theme of virtue (Section 4.2) because participants had some belief that the product was a better option for the environment and that it did make a difference. Secondly, the symbolic meaning of trust underlies the theme of values (Section 4.3) as participants held some certainty over the values that the product had. Thirdly, trust links to the theme of health (Section 4.4) as it supports participants' belief that it was better for their own

health and others. As illustrated, the symbolic meaning of trust is an important foundation for participants to build their self-image in many respects.

The finding of trust illustrates the strength of the Ecostore brand. The trust was held in what the range represented, as opposed to individual products. The brand itself was drawn from a number of beliefs, as the following excerpt will illustrate:

I support everything New Zealand. It's very important, it makes everything better. It makes it better if it's made here, it gives people jobs. (s590)

Sylvia trusted the Ecostore brand as she saw it as a small, New Zealand company that was competing with large, uncaring corporations. She sees symbolic meanings of New Zealand in the product. This allows her to build her self-image of nationalism through choosing products that are made locally. Other participants also mirrored degrees of this belief as well. Jennifer sees her choice of Ecostore as supporting a worthy organisation:

I kinda think I'd rather cut out the middleman and not give Foodtown my money. I'd rather give it straight to those guys... I have a feeling that these guys are quite genuine about what they do. (j28, j319)

The trust placed in the brand allows Jennifer to build the self-image that she is contributing to a worthy cause. Her reference to Ecostore as people stems from the interpersonal experiences she has had through visiting the store. Her ritual action of refilling and stocking up products transfers the symbolic meaning. Jennifer believes her action of purchasing from the retail store demonstrates her support of Ecostore's philosophy and beliefs. Similarly, Sylvia places trusts in the brand and is happy to support them. She demonstrates passion and empathy for the brand in the following interview excerpts:

[I'm happy to pay the higher price of Ecostore] because it's a small market and it's a premium product and you're paying because it is on such a smaller scale than the other brands and anything you're buying in the supermarket is being made in the zillions, isn't it? You have to pay premium for all that. So it's fine. (s612)

A lot has changed in the years, so it's good that they didn't think that they could just make what they did ten years ago and keep making it. They've got to keep changing the formula and keep up with the market, otherwise someone else will just come in, won't they? (s395)

In her purchase of the product, she builds the self-image that she is an individual who is committed to helping the underdog. The symbolic meaning of trust grounds her belief that they are a genuine organisation with company values that align with the personal values of Sylvia's.

Lauren's trust in Ecostore was borne out of her explicit actions of information seeking. Describing herself as a sceptic due to her background in marketing, she decided to spend time looking into the ingredients of one of the products. She describes her results as below:

At the end of it I discovered it was a perfectly safe, really good product that had nothing in it that I felt uncomfortable about putting on my child and that actually gave me a lot of confidence in the rest of the range... generally speaking I think that says that they have the same level of integrity across their whole range. That might be naïve, but they've done their job by convincing me of that. (l282, l287)

I hope, I really hope, that they are doing it for the right reasons. I believe of what I've read of their company philosophy and the information on their website that what they do really are for genuine reasons. (l402)

The results of Lauren's research enabled her to see symbolic meanings of trust in the Ecostore brand. As reflected in her sentiment above, she also felt she can trust the other products that she did not look up. Similarly, Sylvia does not feel the need to look into products because she has trust in them:

Probably not so much [research] on Ecostore because I think they're at that point where they're not going to slip some chemicals in there because it would be so detrimental for the business it wouldn't be worth it. But for any other product I

buy, I read everything, I read all the ingredients. It's when you realise that something that says organic doesn't mean anything [laughs]. (s942).

Lauren and Sylvia both note they did not engage in extensive or regular research. Despite this, they have still recommended the products to others (l301, s754). This is because they trust the products themselves. The symbolic trust is used to build the self-image that they are also trustworthy individuals, because they have recommended products that they truly believe in.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the findings of this study. Several themes of symbolic meanings emerged from the in-depth interviews. The themes pertained to the areas of virtue, personal and collective values, health and trust. Symbolic meanings in these themes were used to build the desired self-image of participants. The particular actions that participants took with the Ecostore-branded products reflected the symbolic meaning they saw in them. Excerpts from the transcripts support the themes of symbolic meaning. The following chapter will discuss the importance and value of these findings.

5 Discussion & Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary and discussion of the findings of this study. It seeks to place the findings in current knowledge by illustrating the extent of similarities and differences. To achieve this, the chapter draws relevant knowledge from related studies in the field. The importance of the findings is highlighted with academic and managerial implications. The potential limitations of the study are discussed. Lastly, directions for research are outlined, with a conclusion made.

5.2 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

This research commenced by indicating there was a gap in knowledge around the symbolic value of sustainable products in consumption. It has illustrated a logical progression of literature that supports the belief that products carry symbolic meanings that are used by consumers in consumption rituals to create their self-image. Brands are a means for products to acquire symbolic meaning. The model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) illustrates the process of symbolic meaning transfer that is examined and as such, has served as a lens of interpretation for the study.

Attempts to address the growing concerns in sustainability have moved to understanding the culture of consumption. This study intended to support the formation of a cultural shift in consumer values through identifying the symbolic meanings of a brand of sustainable products. It is hoped that identifying these symbolic meanings will contribute to recognition of the symbolic function of consuming sustainable products. By exploring the experiences of existing consumers of Ecostore products, insights to drive greater levels of the consumption of sustainable products could emerge. This belief guided the study's research objective, being:

What symbolic meanings did consumers take from sustainable products to build their self-image?

The following section will outline how the research objective was fulfilled in this study. It will do this through discussion of the specific findings that relate to and answer this research objective.

Participants recognised the symbolic meaning in the brand of sustainable products and used their consumption rituals as means of building their self-image. The findings of this study suggest that the choice to buy and use Ecostore-branded products carries a greater cost than non-sustainable products. This cost may have been in the sense of financial, temporal, product performance or exertion. Participants were willing to choose a sustainable product with a greater cost because they desired the symbolic meanings of the products in their own self-image. The findings of the study align with the beliefs illustrated in Chapter 2 about the symbolic value of products and the identity function of consumption. The specific findings that were identified will now be discussed.

5.2.1 Self-Image of Being Virtuous

The findings contained in Section 4.2.1 illustrated that participants saw symbolic meanings of virtue in Ecostore-branded products. Participants saw these products as “good” and the decision to use them as the “right thing to do”. This symbolic meaning was developed through participants’ beliefs about the products’ attributes and the brand of Ecostore. Participants used this symbolic meaning to build the self-image that they were virtuous individuals. They achieved this through their ritual consumption of the Ecostore product.

Participants made the decision to purchase Ecostore products because they saw value in creating a virtuous self-image. Participants saw the decision to purchase Ecostore products as having moral dimensions, because the product represented symbolic meanings of virtue. Making virtuous choices in the past helped to build the self-image those participants would continue to make virtuous choices in the future.

Participants gained satisfaction from making a choice based on the virtue of a product and the creation of a virtuous self-image. As such, a virtuous self-image was desirable to participants. They could use the symbolic meaning of Ecostore to create this self-

image. Participants were motivated to select Ecostore products for this reason. Ecostore products enabled participants to fulfil the desired utilitarian function and also further contribute to the creation of the self-image of being virtuous.

The symbolic meaning of virtue existed without participants being entirely cognisant of how the products were specifically good or better for the environment. However this did not matter, as participants were still able to use the symbolic meanings in building their self-image, simply because they believed that the virtue was real. This mirrors the findings of Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008) who found that participants felt good about buying brands that were less damaging to the environment, despite possessing limited knowledge of the product's actual impact. The implication of this finding is that sustainable products can have symbolic meanings of virtue without necessarily having attributes that imply it to be. Per the model of symbolic meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986) explained in Section 2.5.1, instruments of advertising and fashion can imbue products with symbolic meanings. If marketing communications can accentuate the symbolic meanings of virtue seen in sustainable products, the consumption of these products may increase.

The self-image of being virtuous is important to encouraging the consumption of sustainable products. Previous research sees the consumption of sustainable products as being a socially conscious form of consumer behaviour (Moisander, 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). If sustainable products have symbolic meaning that enables consumers to build the self-image of being virtuous, their consumption may rise simply out of the individual's satisfaction that is gained through acting in virtuous ways (Ritov & Kahneman, 1997). The satisfaction from acting in virtuous ways reflects the consumer's willingness to contribute to the public good (Kahneman & Knetsch, 1992). Ensuring that sustainable products carry symbolic meaning of virtue will serve to encourage sustainable consumption behaviour, because it is desirable for consumers to be seen as virtuous.

Being a virtuous individual links to the image of being a responsible individual. Through acting in virtuous and moral ways, participants could demonstrate they accepted responsibility for the things they felt were important to them.

5.2.2 Self-Image of Being Responsible

In their consumption of Ecostore products, participants created a self-image that they were being responsible and that they recognised they had responsibilities. Participants saw symbolic meanings of caring for the environment in Ecostore products. By using a product that they felt helped the environment, they were able to fulfil their commitment to this responsibility. The findings suggest that consumers consider the consequences of their consumption. Through this recognition, and acting on it, participants could build the self-image that they were acting in a responsible manner. Other research has suggested that consumers do take into account the consequences of their consumption (Moisander, 2007). The findings of this study add to this by suggesting that the act of accounting for the consequences of consumption enables consumers to build a self-image of being responsible.

The notion that consumers express their feelings of responsibility in their purchase behaviour has been noted in other research (de Pelsmacker, et al., 2005). The findings of this study further extend this notion by demonstrating that the feelings of responsibility are also expressed in consumption behaviours beyond the purchase action. For example, participants ensured they recycled the packaging of the Ecostore product to maintain the self-image of being a responsible member of society. Participants used all actions taken with sustainable products to build the self-image that they were responsible, rather than only the purchase decision. This is because products have symbolic meanings that are present in every action participants take, and not simply during the purchase action.

Participants differed in what exactly they felt responsible for. Previous research in sustainable consumption sees concern as occurring in three categories. These concerns align with the self-image of responsibility. The three categories of concern are concern for the environment (biospheric), concern for others (social-altruistic) and concern with self (egoistic) (see Axelrod, 1994; Merchant, 1992; Schultz, 2000; Stern & Dietz, 1994; Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993). Examples of these types of concern were evident in the findings of this study.

Firstly, Tanya and David felt that in buying Ecostore, they act on their concern and responsibility of the environment. Secondly, Lauren gifts Ecostore products to her friends out of the concern that other products would compromise the health of her

friends' children. Thirdly, Sylvia uses Ecostore products out of the concern that other products can have negative impacts on her health. Because participants are acting on the different types of concerns they have, they are able to build the self-image that they are responsible individuals. They can demonstrate they care about the wellbeing of things, others and themselves in their consumption actions. This can result in a personal sense of satisfaction because satisfaction is largely dependant on what happens to the things individuals care about (De Young, 2000; Wallach & Wallach, 1983). The three types of concern reflect what participants care about in their lives.

The self-image of being responsible is important to sustainable consumption. It has been previously suggested that sustainable consumption is a process that leads individuals to feel both responsible for and empowered in addressing the risks to both themselves and the wider environment (Connolly & Prothero, 2003). This means that symbolic meanings that enable the self-image of responsibility are necessary for consumers to engage in sustainable consumption. Consumers need to have concern or responsibility towards an issue for them to be motivated to change their behaviour. This is because sustainable consumption does not deliver an instant personal gain as the benefit is for society is and is very much future-orientated (McCarty & Shrum, 1993). The participants chose to purchase Ecostore products over others purposefully. They recognised that buying Ecostore was symbolically demonstrating their commitment to the things they felt responsible for.

The importance of the self-image of responsibility is that when consumers perceive themselves as having a responsibility, having a subsequent sense of contribution becomes a necessity (De Young, 1993). The image of being responsible reflects the consumer's beliefs about what is worthwhile protecting. Making contributions based on the consumers' sense of responsibility forms the next self-image identified from this study.

5.2.3 Self-Image of Being a Contributing Member of Society

The findings in Section 4.2.2 have shown that participants see Ecostore products as carrying symbolic meanings of making a difference. The fact the products may have had a marginal environmental value in practice was not significant because it was the symbolic meaning that participants were contributing that was important. By using

products that they felt made a difference, participants built the self-image that they were contributing members of society. The contribution they made was not necessarily related to any observable improvements in environmental quality. Instead, the contribution they made is symbolic and as such, has emotional benefits that are based on the symbolic meaning of the products (Hartmann & Ibáñez, 2006).

It remains to be discussed what exactly participants felt they were contributing to. Their area of contribution follows the three categories of concern that were described in Section 5.2.2. Participants saw themselves as contributing to concerns of the environment, the wellbeing of others, and also to the wellbeing of themselves. These different concerns allow for the creation of differentiated self-image. Contributing to the environment helped participants to create the self-image of being an environmentalist. Contributing to the wellbeing of others allowed participants to create the self-image of being a good mother, daughter, son, friend or colleague. In looking after themselves, participants could create a self-image that they were looking after themselves and cared about their wellbeing. This is evident in the findings of this study as one participant did describe herself as feeling selfish in her selection of Ecostore products. She felt others could have interpreted her caring for her own wellbeing as a selfish action, because she was not contributing to another person or area.

The self-image of being a contributing member of society has importance for the area of sustainability. According to Axelrod (1994) some individuals will seek satisfaction from knowing they have contributed to resolving important societal and global concerns. This satisfaction can motivate people to make decisions that they feel contributes to their different concerns. This means that if sustainable products have symbolic meanings that pertain to making a contribution, the consumer will be motivated by the satisfaction that can be achieved through consuming them. Furthermore, it has been suggested that consumers of sustainable products need to have felt that their actions have made a contribution (Autio, Heiskanen, & Heinonen, 2009; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). The findings of this study indicate that consumers of Ecostore products did feel that they made a difference, at least symbolically, which is why those chose to consume them over non-sustainable products.

Participants symbolically contributed to the areas of concern they felt responsible in part because they were risk adverse. They wanted to help avoid a negative consequence in the wellbeing of something that was important to them. The self-image of being risk-adverse will now be discussed.

5.2.4 Self-Image of Being Risk Adverse

As outlined in Section 4.4, Ecostore products carried symbolic meanings pertaining to protecting the health of the individual, the health of others and the health of the environment. Participants used the symbolic meaning of health to build the self-image that they were risk-adverse. This is because using Ecostore-branded products made participants feel they were mitigating risks to their health, the health of others, and the health of the environment. Ecostore products were seen as natural and better for the individual than non-sustainable products. In actuality, the health value of the products could be debatable. However, this does not matter because as long as consumers saw the product as being good for health and safe, they would still use the symbolic meaning of the product to create the self-image that they were being risk-adverse.

The concept of risk in sustainable consumption has received attention in previous research (Halkier, 2001, 2004; Tulloch & Lupton, 2002). The motivation to purchase sustainable products is related to the desire to avoid risks that may pertain to the self, others or the environment. Once again, the three types of concern explained in 5.2.2 are pertinent. Participants reduced the risk of environmental issues, the risks to the health of their friends' children, and the risks towards their own health. The self-image of being risk-adverse means mitigating the concerns that consumers have about the wellbeing of the things that they care about in their lives. Clearly, there is interconnectedness to the self-image of being virtuous, the self-image of being responsible and the self-image of being a contributing member of society. This is because sustainable products carry many symbolic meanings that pertain to all these different self-image, as outlined in the contents of this chapter.

The self-image of being risk-adverse has importance for encouraging the consumption of sustainable products. It has been previously suggested that the desire to protect one's health and the health of others is a strong motivator of sustainable consumption (Gan, Wee, Ozanne, & Kao, 2008; Harper & Makatouni, 2002; Miller, 1995; Padel &

Foster, 2005). Two participants in this study were mothers and it was evident in their discussions that this was a major influence on their decision to use Ecostore. Lauren identified that she wanted to protect the health of her son, as well as the environment-based experiences that he could have. The self-image of being risk-adverse is related to the self-image that these participants were being good mothers. Similarly, in Sylvia's recommendation of a product she deemed safe to her mother, she built a self-image that she was a good and caring daughter through her symbolic mitigation of risk.

Participants clearly differed in their background and experiences, and this led to them holding different personal values. While they all held different values, all participants were still able to use their consumption actions of Ecostore products to express their own values as part of their self-image.

5.2.5 Expression of Personal Values in Self-Image

As illustrated in Section 4.3, participants saw symbolic meanings in Ecostore products that aligned to the personal values they held or desired. Although the individual personal values differed between participants, the Ecostore product and its consumption were still seen as a means of obtaining, developing or expressing the personal value in their self-image. For example, Tanya considers herself as having a green focus and this motivates her to purchase products and brands that she sees as environmentally friendly. She demonstrates this personal value through her consumption of Ecostore, thereby creating the self-image that she cares about the environment. The findings of this study follows other research in indicating that the purchase and consumption of products is related to attempts to achieve and maintain ideals that are conceived by the self or others (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1998).

The symbolic meaning of Ecostore products may have reflected some desired personal value. Participants may have had an ideal-self concept, such as being an environmentally responsible individual, but the actual self-concept may have been far from this. In order to bridge this gap, participants transferred the symbolic meaning through their routine consumption of Ecostore products. Consumers used their consumption of products imbued with symbolic meaning to compensate for the inadequacies and inconsistencies between the actual and desired-self-image (Elliott,

1997). The symbolic meaning of a product provides a means for the consumer to portray an image to others (Belk, 1988; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Grubb & Hupp, 1968; Solomon, 1983). For example, Karen sees Ecostore products as being representative of being environmentally conscious and sees using it as a step to becoming an environmentally conscious individual, at least symbolically. The significance of this finding is that consumers are influenced by the image they have of themselves (Zinkham & Hong, 1991).

Some participants had dormant personal values. These were previously developed through earlier experiences. For David, values of environmentalism were instilled at an early age through his education built on Steiner philosophy. The Ecostore product carried symbolic meanings of environmentalism. Thus, he saw the symbolic meanings pertained to his dormant values and that he could realise these through consuming the product.

As well as a self-image, participants also used the symbolic meanings of Ecostore products to create an image for a collective. This was because one aspect of the consumption was done in the context of a collective. For example, Lauren spoke about wanting to create a sustainability-focused household. She saw Ecostore as being good for the environment. In her action of purchasing Ecostore, she was establishing and confirming that her household and self were being sustainability-conscious. The collective has potential for influencing consumption behaviour. Tanya moved into a flat where there were strong values of environmentalism. She identified that behaving in accordance with the values of the collective was necessary for participation. The implication for sustainable consumption is that the image of a collective can be a strong influence over an individual's behaviour. As all consumption can be understood as occurring in some collective context, such as being a New Zealander, collective values have considerable potential for increasing the consumption of sustainable products against a large population. This will only occur where the values of the collective are in congruence with the symbolic meanings that are seen in sustainable products.

The implications of the findings of the study on the area of sustainable consumption will now be outlined.

5.2.6 Beyond Sustainability

The findings of this study suggest that participants used the symbolic meanings of Ecostore-branded products to develop aspects of their self-image. The products contained symbolic meanings that participants desired and this led to them choosing Ecostore over non-sustainable products. However, participants were not always consistent on their purchases of sustainable products. Although the ritual served important symbolic function, participants did not feel they needed to use sustainable products in every occasion.

Participants may have used neutralisation techniques (Chatzidakis, Hibbert, & Smith, 2007) to justify selfish goals over the purchase of sustainable products. For example, some participants reflected on their non-consumption of Ecostore products as being due to the additional cost they saw in its use. Lauren saw using Ecostore products as requiring more time and effort. As she felt she was no longer able to invest this extra time and effort, she felt she had to use another product. She does recognise the loss of the symbolic meanings in creating her self-image. As outlined in Section 4.2.1, Lauren feels she needs to exert cognitive effort in allowing herself to accept a product that did not contribute as much to her self-image. This relates to other research which suggests that there is a greater relative cognitive effort in acting on one's values over utility (Biel & Dahlstrand, 2005). Thus, the decision to use Ecostore is harder for consumers to make because the value is symbolic and not utilitarian.

It has previously been noted that consumers fail to understand the connection between the buying decision and environmental consequences without information such as labels, to remind them (Rokka & Uusitalo, 2008). Sustainability as a concept was not well understood by participants, who generally focused on general environmental aspects. The lack of sustainability language is important. This is because cultural change occurs not when people argue, but when they start speaking differently (Rorty, 1979). Previous work by Macnaghten and Jacobs (1997) noted that an individual's own sense of agency in relation to sustainability has been weak. As such, there exists a sense of powerlessness for consumers, in spite of accepting there was an individual responsibility. This suggests that in order for consumers to act on their self-image, information provision must be in place. This will support the idea of sustainability entering the dialogue of consumers.

Sustainable consumption has been identified as being a socially constructed concept (Autio, et al., 2009). This is both in terms of what counts as being sustainable and what responsibilities are assigned to consumers. Consumer culture has continuously moulded into a multi-layered construction (Belk, 2004; McCracken, 1988a). Based on the findings of this study, it may be that this aspect of consumer culture has hindered how participants have come to (or not) conceptualise sustainability. A culture emphasising sustainability could actually come from consumers themselves. The findings of this study have shown that many aspects of sustainability are already present in the self-image of consumers of sustainable products. The self-image of consumers of sustainable products could be used to construct a consensus of what it means to be a consumer of sustainable products.

Previous literature has been criticised for assuming that environmental awareness is a pre-condition for sustainable consumption (Meyer, 2001). The findings of this study agree that consumers who did engage the purchase of sustainable products did not necessarily have any awareness or specific intention to help the environment. At face value, Ecostore products were needed to fulfil utilitarian functions. But as the findings of this study have shown, the symbolic meanings of the product allowed participants to build their self-image. Developing an understanding of this process and allowing consumers to see the value of their own actions will only serve to increase consumer consciousness and subsequently, the levels of consumption towards sustainable products. The contribution of this study to the academic field will now be outlined.

5.3 Academic Contribution

This study explored for the first time, the symbolic meanings in a brand of sustainable products through their respective consumption actions. By focusing on a specific brand of household cleaning and body care products, this study has been able to provide an account for the symbolic meanings. It has provided a basis for understanding that consumers recognise and use the symbolic meanings of sustainable products to build their self-image. This process has been illustrated fully in the contents and findings of this research.

Few studies in sustainable consumption have ever examined the product situations beyond the intention to buy (Rokka & Uusitalo, 2008). As this is an area not

extensively explored, this study contributes greatly to this body of knowledge. Existing consumer research has tended to focus on the area of purchase decision-making to the neglect of understanding the thinking behind choices and actions of sustainable consumption. The findings of this study highlight the importance of looking beyond the purchase. Consumers take purposeful actions throughout the life of a product, because products possess symbolic meaning at every stage, even at disposal. The actions are highly valuable to consumers as they not only allow the product to serve a function, but also allow symbolic meaning to be taken from the product and into their self-image.

Exploring beyond the functional to the symbolic and identity functions served by products is important for the goal of consumer research. The findings illustrate that consumers recognise the symbolic meanings in sustainable products and that the desire to choose these are based on its value in building their self-image. This research contributes to academic knowledge as it has helped to identify the meanings of sustainable products in relation to the lives of its consumers, a general objective of consumer research (Levy, 1981). Fulfilling this understanding for the category of sustainable products is of particular importance given its implications for the wellbeing of society and the environment. This study has provided an important academic contribution in furthering knowledge around the symbolic meanings of sustainable consumer products. This will lead to further research that will help to develop the cultural shift in consumption values that could be used to address sustainability issues.

Another contribution of this study is the finding that while consumers wished to imbue their self-image with sustainable products, they did not always purchase sustainable products. Some barriers to the purchase of sustainable products were costs, social contexts and norms. Some facilitators to the purchase of sustainable products were health, social context and norms, and feelings of social responsibility. There is evidently potential to increase the consumption of sustainable products among people who are already doing so at some level. The findings of this study suggest that consumers themselves could develop stronger cultures of consumption through their own understanding of their behaviour. This study has provided a strong foundation to further understanding the true and full value in acts of consumption.

The findings of this study also have important managerial implications and these will now be outlined.

5.4 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have managerial implications for marketers in new product development, marketing management and advertising communications.

This study has provided an analysis into the symbolic meanings of a brand of sustainable products. Recognising these symbolic meanings and reflecting them in brand and product attributes would be a potential means of motivating consumer responses. From a product development perspective, this could mean attempting to incorporate these symbolic meanings in the products or the products' functionality. As it has been noted that people drive to consume products is in part because of what they represent, reflecting the symbolic meanings could mean more people choose to consume sustainable products over non-sustainable products. For example, an advertising campaign could show that the product means caring for the family and that using the product shows being a good mother.

An important finding of this study is that the meanings of sustainability were not well noted or understood in the dialogue of participants. Instead, more generalised notions of environmentalism and virtue were emergent in the study. This suggests that sustainability is not always a key motivator of purchasing these products. Instead, a multitude of other symbolic meanings compel people to choose sustainable products. An implication of this study is that consumer education of greater information provision around sustainability is necessary if this is intended to be a motivator of a cultural shift in values of consumption. Knowledge may also be useful for consumers who are already engaging in sustainable consumer products as the findings of this study suggest there is potential to grow their consumption of sustainable products. Education could be achieved through social marketing that utilises the identified symbolic meanings to encourage consumption of sustainable products.

In order for communications to be effective, meanings must be shared by members of the culture at some basic level (Blumer, 1969; McCracken, 1986). Marketers need to have a more thorough understanding of consumers and the meaning of products in

order to improve their strategic decisions, such as target market and product positioning (Keller, 1993). Current research suggests that marketing communications for sustainable products are not being exploited to its potential (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008). Using the symbolic meanings identified in this study in new advertising communications would help consumers identify the products, which can help them create their self-image. After all, effective advertising is those that reflect consumer perceptions and expectations faithfully (Domzal & Kernan, 1992). As illustrated in the findings, consumers can gain a sense of satisfaction through acquiring self-images of being virtuous, responsible, and contributing members of society. Communicating this in advertising communication or social marketing could encourage greater consumption levels of sustainable products.

5.5 Limitations

While this study has contributed to knowledge around sustainable products and their symbolic meanings, it is necessary to address some potential limitations of the approach taken.

This study used McCracken's (1986) model of symbolic meaning transfer as a framework for investigating the symbolic meaning of a brand of sustainable products. The focus of the research laid in the process of meaning transfer between product and consumer as illustrated in Section 3.2. It could be interpreted that the full use of the model may have helped to develop a fuller understanding of the symbolic meaning transfer process. The scope of this study was limited due to temporal limitations.

A potential limitation of the research approach was the focus on a single brand of sustainable consumer product. A possibility is that this focus may have influenced participants by implying that Ecostore was the "optimal" choice. To address the possibility of this limitation, the interviewer ensured that participants were advised that the focus on Ecostore was only to guide the questioning of the interview. The interviewer was clear to assert that Ecostore was not seen as necessarily being a better choice, nor that any brand was any worse.

The selection of the Ecostore brand may have influenced participant's discourse, as they considered Ecostore in multiple senses of brand, company, manufacturer and

retailer. As there were multiple interpretations of who exactly Ecostore was, the intended focus on the products in sustainable consumption could possibly have been compromised. However, this study contends that considerations of Ecostore in multiple senses are only complementary to the findings of the study. In using the model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) as a lens of interpretation, analysis was grounded on the interaction between product and consumer. These actions would inevitably focus on Ecostore as a product. Questions in the in-depth interview related to the products only. The products themselves were used as props in the in-depth interviews to invoke participants' memories. Thoughts on Ecostore as a store or company would only add to the findings or future research by highlighting where symbolic meaning may have been sourced. This also gives clear grounds for future research to explore.

A potential methodological limitation is due to the interview technique used. This was the first occurrence of the researcher conducting interviews and with a greater level of experience a more focused probing or questioning may have emerged. There were some instances in which participants may not have elaborated on their experiences fully. However, it was felt that the interviews were completed to a sufficient standard. The quality of the interview was supported through the use of indicative questions as part of the interview guide. As outlined in Section 3.6.2 and Section 3.6.3 the interviews were developed with the research supervisor and pre-tested before taking place. Furthermore, the full transcripts are provided for review in Appendix 7.7.

In some cases, participants were unable to recall some of their earlier consumption experiences in the interviews. Some experiences occurred years ago and may not have been salient in the mind of the consumer. This has been defined as memory recall bias (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Use of a visual aid, the product packaging, did help participants to recall more recent experiences and the researcher did provide allowance for participants to consider their thoughts before responding. In addressing this potential limitation, the study focused mainly on statements and sentiments in which the participant spoke with certainty. Based on the research objective and research approach it was felt that accounts provided were of sufficient accuracy. In any case, it was not expected that participants would provide extensive, data-rich accounts of their consumption experiences. Furthermore, in holding a constructivist perspective

this is not seen as an issue, as all knowledge is created through the interaction between researcher and participant.

The participants in this study were selected based on their past usage of Ecostore products. As explained in Section 3.6.4, this was necessary as the model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) sees symbolic meanings as understandable only in the process of transfer, which is achieved through actual consumption. As such, the scope of this study cannot identify anything that happens with an Ecostore-consumer from a non-Ecostore consumer, because the latter is excluded from data collection. Instead, the value of the research lies in understanding the product and act of consumption, rather than the type of consumer. The findings of this study have illustrated what any consumer may gain symbolically from using sustainable products, rather than only certain types of consumers. As explained in Section 2.2.2, this study avoided a focus on consumers, as ultimately, it would have been likely that any findings would be contradicted by future studies.

5.6 Directions for Future Research

This study has provided a starting point for extending consumer behaviour research into the area of sustainable consumption. Due to the scope of this study there remain a multitude of areas that future research could examine.

This study used the model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) as a lens of interpretation for investigating the symbolic meanings of a brand of sustainable products. As noted in Section 3.2, the focus has been on the rituals of the consumer as an instrument of meaning transfer from consumer product to the individual's self-image. As discussed in Section 2.3.2 the branding of products is an important source of symbolic meaning. However, it was outside the scope of this research to explore the process of branding and other instruments of meaning transfer from cultural world to product. The presence of these instruments is evident in the findings of the study. The process of products acquiring symbolic meaning is an equally important consideration of the wider symbolic meaning transfer process. This is an area that merits attention as it has potential for providing brands and marketers better management and utilisation of the symbolic meanings seen in their products. This may result in increased consumption of sustainable products.

Other instruments such as packaging, sponsorship and advertising also instil symbolic meanings unto brands and their products¹⁶. Future research could examine the full process of how the symbolic meanings identified in this study have come to be acquired by products. For example, research exploring sustainability labelling (e.g. de Boer, 2003) has yet to account for the symbolic value of sustainable products. This suggests that producer-generated instruments of meaning transfer are an area that still remains unexplored in sustainable consumption. The findings of this study suggest there is potentially much value in exploring the packaging and semiotics of sustainable products. There were multiple references to the packaging and product design throughout all participants' transcripts. This suggests that these were potentially influences on the symbolic meaning that participants saw in Ecostore products. Furthermore, some participants claimed some of their purchase decision behaviour was guided by the packaging of the product.

Future research could attempt to replicate the approach of this study into other industries and product categories. Under the typology of Fournier (1991, p739), the household cleaning and body care products investigated in this study are categorised as "objects of utility". The significance of such objects is tied to its characteristic attributes and benefits and the inherent need it provides (Fournier, 1991, p736). The FMCG category could be considered low-involvement and low-investment compared to the category of a motor vehicle. Previous studies have indicated that high involvement purchases have more value placed on environmental performance over frequently purchased products (Sriram & Forman, 1993). For products, where the price parity is greater, such as for a hybrid car, there may be other symbolic meanings in a consumer's decision to purchase. Previous research in sustainable consumption has identified that the same consumer will not use the same information sources or decision-making criteria across different product sectors (McDonald, et al., 2009). As the lifetime of these products is greater than that of products in the FMCG category, the ritual actions may also differ in their significance. Comparing these with the symbolic meanings found in this particular study may be illuminating to the wider process of symbolic meaning transfer and the symbolic meanings of sustainable products as a whole.

¹⁶ See Tharp and Scott (1990) for an overview of the role of marketing processes in creating symbolic meaning.

A direction for future research that would concretely extend the notion of symbolic value from this study is in examining the practice of purely symbolic consumption. One example that pertains to sustainability is the practice of airline carbon offsetting. Consumers voluntarily purchase carbon credits for their flights, seeing no instantaneous or tangible benefit. As this consumption has no utility, the entirety of its value would lie in its symbolic meanings and symbolic function. This makes this type of consumption extremely valuable to explore because the function of facilitating self-image is the only immediately visible motivator of such voluntary behaviour. Findings from this practice could certainly further accentuate the belief that the symbolic meanings and image construction function of sustainable products are key influencers in the decision to consume them over non-sustainable products.

Another direction for future research is adopting another framework and applying it to the area of symbolic meaning for sustainable products. One possibility is the model of Kozinets' (2001) that was referred to in Section 2.5.3. His model is based on the firm belief that passionate fans of a certain phenomena are capable of becoming meaning creators. Using a more focussed sample of participants, such as only those who frequented the retail store or are involved in environmental groups may deliver valuable findings. It may emerge that regular purchasers are more participative in creating the symbolic meanings from the products they consume. The groups they belong to may have collective values that emphasise these symbolic meanings. As discussed in Section 5.2.5 these collective values may be influential on the consumption behaviour of individuals.

5.7 Concluding Statement

This study is the first to explore the symbolic meaning behind sustainable products. It addresses a gap in current knowledge towards sustainable consumption. Previous research has focused on the purchase decision without recognising the symbolic qualities of sustainable consumption practices. Sustainable products have important symbolic meanings that have not yet been considered. Consumers see symbolic meanings that they desire in the creation of their self-image. This study has used the model of symbolic meaning transfer (1986) to help identify the symbolic meanings in a brand of sustainable products through its consumption rituals.

This study has achieved its research objectives of exploring the symbolic meanings of sustainable products and movement of this meaning to the consumer's self-image. The findings of this study suggest that individuals see a number of symbolic meanings in Ecostore-branded products. These meanings pertain to the areas of virtue, personal and collective values, health and trust. These symbolic meanings are important to consumers. They seek these symbolic meanings to build a self-image that reflects that they are virtuous, responsible and contributing individuals. They gain satisfaction from the creation of this self-image. Consumption rituals enable this movement from product's symbolic meaning to consumer's self image. Consumers also use sustainable products to express their personal and collective values. The findings of this study have important implications for sustainability. Providing an understanding of the symbolic value in consumption informs attempts to initiate a cultural shift in consumer values towards practices of consumption.

Despite the noted limitations of the study, the nature of this research was exploratory and builds on the growing knowledge in this field. As outlined in Section 5.7, the study could be extended in future research to give a fuller understanding of how symbolic meanings may come to be acquired by products. It is hoped that such understanding will lead to solutions that ultimately address the sustainability and environmental issues that society faces today.

6 Reference List

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7 Appendices

7.1 Ecostore Products

List of Ecostore-branded products

Kitchen	Spray Cleaner
	Auto Dishwash Powder
	Dishwasher Tablets
	Dishwash Liquid
	Rinse Aid
Laundry	Laundry Powder
	Laundry Liquid
	Wool & Delicates Wash
	Fabric Softener
	Oxygen Whitener
Bathroom	Handwash
	Soap
	Bodywash
	Shampoo
	Conditioner
	Bubble bath
Cleaning	Cream Cleanser
	Shower Cleaner
	Toilet Cleaner
	Glass Cleaner
Baby	Baby Soap
	Baby Nappy Balm
	Baby Body Wash
	Baby Shampoo
	Baby Sleepytime Bath
	Baby Moisturiser
	Baby Powder
Other	Insect Repellent

7.2 Ecostore Background

our story so far

Health and wellbeing are at the forefront of product development. We love hearing from people whose eczema or allergy symptoms have improved or disappeared all together just by switching to ecostore. And we never compromise on performance either; our plant and mineral based cleaning products are independently tested to work alongside leading conventional brands. Our body and baby care ranges are gentle on your skin, are beautiful to use and they smell great too!

We are a leading New Zealand manufacturer wholesale distributor and retailer of sustainable household and body care products. We promote the use of safer, healthier plant and mineral based products with no unnecessary chemicals. Our comprehensive range currently consists of more than 100 products, almost all of which are manufactured in New Zealand to the latest environmental and sustainability standards in our own ISO14001, Diamond Enviromark Factory.

A different approach to business

ecostore was founded in 1993 by Malcolm and Melanie Rands from their home in an eco village in New Zealand. Their dream was ambitious - to create a healthier more sustainable world. One of the ways they found to do this was to set up a business providing everyday household products that could help people be healthier and 'green up' at home. The second way was by setting up the Fairground Foundation. Fairground is a charitable organisation that is funded by ecostore profits to promote sustainability through 'on-the-ground' action.

Small beginnings

ecostore started out as a mail order business selling eco friendly products to a small group of dedicated greenies and organic gardeners - many of whom have remained loyal customers to this day. Within four years they had earned a reputation for our genuine, eco friendly and high quality products within a wider community. ecostore

quickly outgrew its location in the Rands' basement and was moved to Auckland where most of their customers lived.

Where we are at now

Eighteen years on our products are made in our own ISO14001, Diamond Enviromark accredited manufacturing plant. In 2003 we launched our cleaning range into supermarkets throughout New Zealand and we are exporting to Australia, United States, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea.

Safer ingredients

- * We use plant and mineral based ingredients to create safer, healthier products that do the job just as effectively as the petrochemical based ones.

- * We practise the precautionary approach - if there is any doubt about the safety of an ingredient for the environment or for people's health we will look for a safer alternative.

Outstanding performance

- * We evaluate whether each product meets our performance criteria - to be comparable, if not better than the market leading conventional brand.

- * All ecostore products are tested by 3rd party laboratories.

Value for money

- * Our plant and mineral based ingredients are more expensive than petrochemical ones but we manage to keep our prices down by economically concentrating our formulations.

- * Each of the ingredients we use is functional; we don't add fillers to give the perception of better value.

- * Cost per use is significantly less than many other supermarket brands.

Source: www.ecostore.co.nz

7.3 Interview Guide

Pre-Session

- Set up appropriate seating
- Set up recorder, test and check that tapes are labelled
- Test recorder is functional
- Bring along range of products in case participant does not bring
- Set up refreshments
- Set out participant information sheets and consent forms

Session Intro Phase

- Introduce, verbalise information on participant information sheet and consent forms
- Allow opportunity for participant(s) to review and ask any questions
- Ask participant(s) to review and sign consent forms
- Explain structure of the session
- My research explores the cultural meaning of sustainable consumer goods and how this goes through a process of transfer from manufacturer to consumer. Today you've brought in an Ecostore product that you use and the questions I will ask today will relate to how you use it in your everyday life. I would like to know what you think of the product, and the brand.

Session Body Phase: Indicative semi-structured in-depth interview guideline

Introductory

Just to start, could you tell me a little about yourself- such as your set-up at home, background and what you like to do in your spare time

What is your view on sustainability?

What do you think is meant by it?

What "greening" have you done at home?

Brand

Do you recall your first instance with an Ecostore brand?

So when you think of the Ecostore brand, and its products, what kinds of things come to mind?

How do other brands or products differ? (e.g. Price and quality)

Can you recall your last instance of Ecostore, whether it be an advertisement, website, supermarket or other? (opinion of this)

Could you tell me which types of Ecostore products you typically use and the reasoning behind this?

Did you make a switch from other brand? (reasons)

Product Possession

Could you please walk me through a typical time when you purchase the product you've brought with you today?

Was this instead of another product?

What were the reasons for the purchase?

What did you hope to gain from using the products?

What frequency do you buy it?

Could you just go over a typical time when you take the product home?

Product Usage

Could you describe the last time you used the product, if you can recall?

Was there any specific difference in how you might of used it, compared to your normal products?

How often do you use it?

Did it meet your expectations of its product performance? Did you notice any difference between this and the other brands you previously used?

What did (will) you do when you ran (run) out of product?

Did you recall what you did with the empty packet?

Did you repurchase the product?

Product Re-supply

And what did you do when you ran out of the product?

Do you recall what you did with the product? Does this differ from what you might do with another brand?

Comparison

How does the Ecostore brand and products compare with the others in the marketplace?
What would you say are the competing products or brands for Ecostore?

Exchange

Do you recommend Ecostore to any of your family or friends?
Are these people you would normally consider to be “greenies”?
Have you ever gifted or shared the product with others?
Has green products in general, ever came up in conversation at home or at work?

Session Close Phase

- Announce end of session
- Opportunity for further questions on research
- Ask if they would like a copy of findings (obtain contact)
- Reiterate that they may still withdraw, supply contact details

Thank them for their time

Session end

7.4 Participant Information Sheet



Date Produced:

24 August 2010

Project Title

The movement of cultural meanings in sustainable consumer goods

An Invitation

My name is Samuel Soo. I am a student at Auckland University of Technology enrolled for a Master of Business in the Faculty of Business and Law.

I invite you to participate in my research and I would appreciate any assistance you can offer me. As part of my research dissertation I am conducting research examining the meanings that are associated with sustainable consumer goods. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research will examine how cultural meanings are created and moved at different stages of purchase and use. It will do this by examining consumer experiences with sustainable consumer goods. The resulting dissertation will go towards partial completion of my Master of Business degree. There may be further publications resulting from the findings in the form of a book, conference presentation or journal article.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You were identified as you were seen shopping at the Ecostore. You are being invited to participate in this research as it is particularly looking to people who are current and active users of Ecostore's products as I wish to explore the personal experiences and thoughts of this group on the products.

What will happen in this research?

You are being asked to attend an interview that will be approximately one hour in length. I would ask if you could please bring an Ecostore product you use (of your choosing), as the questions asked relate to your views and use of a particular Ecostore product (the product will be used only to guide the conversation). It will be informal and conducted in a public venue of your choice. It will be recorded by audiotape, but this will only happen with your consent.

What are the benefits?

The research will benefit knowledge in this field by furthering understanding of consumption practices and how products carry cultural meanings. In specifically exploring sustainable products, it may lead to identification of the cultural meanings necessary to encourage shifts towards more sustainable consumption patterns. I wish to understand what we can do to encourage the use of sustainable products.

What are the risks?

The risks are envisaged to be low. Some questions will relate to your personal use of Ecostore products and this you may find uncomfortable in disclosing personal habits. To alleviate this risk, you always have the option to pass a question. I will remind you of this during the interview as well.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your name will not be used in any of the documentation or in the research paper. The original recordings will be kept in a secure location and destroyed after a time period of six years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

This research should take up no more than 1 hour of your time

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

I would appreciate if you could reply to this letter within 1 week of receiving so that I am able to organise necessary travel arrangements to conduct the interview. Please be aware that you are in no way obligated to participate and can withdraw from the research at any time until 1 month after the interview by getting in contact with me.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research please contact me and I will be in touch to coordinate an appropriate time to conduct the interview. You will need to complete a consent form, which is also attached. I will collect this form from you at the interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings and implications of the study I would be happy to send this when it is completed. You may request this by ticking the box on the consent form or alternatively, contacting me at the details below, at any stage of the research.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Ann-Marie Kennedy*, ann-marie.kennedy@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 5825.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Samuel Soo

Ggb5051@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Ann-Marie Kennedy

Ann-marie.kennedy@aut.ac.nz

09 921 9999 ext 5825

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30 August 2010, AUTECH Reference number 10/173

7.5 Consent Form



*Project title: **The movement of cultural meaning in sustainable consumer goods***

*Project Supervisor: **Dr Ann-Marie Kennedy***

*Researcher: **Samuel Soo***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 24 August 2010.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research: Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 30 August 2010 AUTEK Reference number 10/173

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

7.6 Ecostore Rituals

Summary of rituals identified:

Ritual Type	Ritual Action	Example
Possession	Purchase	Buying the product at a supermarket
	Display	Making the product visible in the laundry
	Storage	Putting away the product in cupboards
	Personalisation	Storing the product in another container
	Reflection	Thinking about the product
	Discussion	Talking about the product with friends
	Comparison	Comparing products at the supermarket
Grooming	Usage	Washing laundry
	Maintenance	Refilling product in container
Exchange	Gifting	Giving the product to a friend
	Recommendation	Telling a friend to trial the product
Divestment	Cleaning	Rinsing out the container before disposal
	Disposal	Recycling the packaging

7.7 In-depth Interview Transcripts

Interview: Brian	139
Interview: Lauren	154
Interview: Karen	175
Interview: David	190
Interview: Sylvia	206
Interview: Tanya	241
Interview: Jennifer	266

1 ***Interview: Brian***

2 I: So if you could you walk me through a typical time purchase an Ecostore product?

3

4 P: Um

5

6 I: So like at a supermarket

7

8 P: I'm not a constant user of their product

9

10 I: So, is there a particular time that you first bought it?

11

12 P: I think I bought it for woollens, do they have a woollens wash?

13

14 I: I'm not too sure of that

15

16 P: Sounds familiar. But yeah it just looked all right, compared to the alternatives

17

18 I: How was it different to the alternatives, in your opinion?

19

20 P: It's a New Zealand brand, I guess. The connotations that I had it would seem to be a lot
21 more mild anyway, so I thought oh yeah

22

23 I: Why did it seem a bit more mild?

24

25 P: Presumably, because the product is being natural

26

27 I: So you definitely saw a natural fit for the...

28

29 P: Yeah, yeah it was just one of the things that pushed me towards it, I mean, I like didn't buy
30 it specifically, because I don't go out of my way to buy it

31

32 I: So did you actually need it?

33

34 P: I did need it then. I had actually gone down to buy a woollen wash. I had something that
35 said must be hand washed with woollen thing and I go and its supposed to be mild yeah, and
36 putting it through the washing machine and wash it so I was like yeah and it sorted like
37 added up to like, the price was alright

38

39 I: So do you remember what you did at the supermarket? Like how did you approach the...

40

41 P: Well listen, this is how I, I think this is how I approached it. I sorted like wandered there, I
42 didn't have any knowledge of what ones there were in the first place so I sorta looked at all
43 the alternatives and then chose that one

44

45 I: So what kind of things did you look at?

46

47 P: Price was one of them, I don't know apart from that, looking at the packaging

48

49 I: Was it a bit more expensive that the other ones?

50

51 P: Can't remember

52

53 I: So when you went home, do you remember how you stored it and then how you went
54 about using it?

55

56 P: Well, I had to use it immediately, which is why I bought it, I just used it and rinsed it and
57 the put it back with the rest of the clothes I was cleaning

58

59 I: So do you remember how you used it? Did you take it out of the box and...

60

61 P: I looked at the instructions, and yeah followed the instructions and used it. I have actually
62 bought the washing powders as well. I mean I just used it as like the other ones. I mean I
63 read the instructions as I hadn't used the product before and I just wondered, being an
64 Ecostore product would I have to use this differently? How much am I supposed to use
65 compared to [others]?

66

67 I: Did you end up using it differently?

68

69 P: Nah, just scoop it out of the thing and put it into the washing machine and turn on the
70 washing machine

71

72 I: And how well did it do against how well you would think it would do?

73

74 P: Well, it, well my clothes were clean and they didn't have smell coming out, for that it did
75 an all right job. It didn't do a bad job.

76

77 I: So have you used up all the product?

78

79 P: Ah yeah, I've used up all the product.

80

81 I: And did you buy it again?

82

83 P: Well, I've changed where I've lived since then, and I don't buy this stuff anymore

84

85 I: Oh, how would that, where you live, impact on what you bought?

86

87 P: Well, where I was, I was living with a flatmate, who used to buy it and bought some and I
88 was buying for myself and now I'm not really the main purchaser and they sort of, and when
89 I've gone to do shopping for them because there regular like you get the other stuff, I sorta
90 got the other stuff for them.

91

92 I: So you were saying you had a friend who purchased Ecostore products? Do you remember
93 what kind of reasons they had for purchasing it?

94

95 P: He bought it because he had skin allergies or something, he had sensitive skin and he had
96 been like to dermatologists, and his mum was like a nurse and all this kinda stuff. And I
97 think she told him that this would be better off for him than other products

98

99 I: And it was when he used it?

100

101 P: Yeah, he kept using it, for like two years, so presumably it was yeah

102

103 I: I guess that was something you may never talk about or...

104

105 P: Oh, well the first time he bought, it I was like, he would have passed a conversation
106 because he talked about it

107

108 I: Do you remember what he kinda said?

109

110 P: Well, it comes up with those motivations came up and yeah.

111

112 I: Like how you asked him why the product and he said its because of my sensitive skin?

113

114 P: Yeah. So I think previously I just bought all the product so like whatever Fab or Surf or
115 whatever. So I always had Surf there. He must of, either his mum must of bought it for him,
116 or he bought it but then he came back one day and it was like up there and you know, what's
117 up with that? And that's when it comes out

118

119 I: So it seems he definitely took the advice of his mum and...

120

121 P: Yeah, and his dermatologist. He was, had problems and it wasn't just like, you know that
122 doesn't feel nice on my skin, because he reacts and he like...

123

124 I: So when you ran out, so you've finished the product now?

125

126 P: Yeah it all got used up

127

128 I: And did you remember what you did with the packaging or...

129

130 P: Oh, I recycle like a maniac anyway

131

132 I: So was just like one more thing to recycle?

133

134 P: Yeah, I didn't recycle in [a] particular way. I just chucked it into the blue bin

135

136 I: Yup. So what other Ecostore products do you use?

137

138 P: I have used the dishwasher liquid as well

139

140 I: And do you see much difference? Or similarities between Ecostore products against...

141

142 P: I mean's it's certainly a thicker, sort of richer type of liquid compared to some of the other
143 ones, the cheaper ones. So you can use less, and yeah

144

145 I: So in terms of, do you keep buying them, or do you just try a couple?

146

147 P: I try whatever's on sale or whatever happens to be cheap. If it's on sale I'll give it a crack.
148 See if it can do good things

149

150 I: How do you try different Ecostore products?

151

152 P: I haven't tried many of the other ones. Just the cleaning type ones.

153

154 I: Any particular reason for that?

155

156 P: I mean I'm not, I mean I don't really see them like feel a great drive to use them over other
157 ones cause I don't really think about after I've used it, I mean if its going down the drain and
158 being friendlier you know, to the waste water centre

159

160 I: Do you feel that they are better than other ones?

161

162 P: I presume they are [laughs] I haven't done any research. But I certainly feel that they are

163

164 I: In terms of environmental

165

166 P: Yeah. Being plant-based, or whatever. I definitely have the image that they are

167

168 I: So you said the dishwasher one was a bit thicker. So did you use it any differently?

169

170 P: Compared to some of the other ones, the one with a dolphin on it. That's really thin. I need
171 to use tonnes of that. Spray it everywhere. But, I sort of used the same as I would a thicker
172 one

173

174 I: So you didn't think it made a difference?

175

176 P: I don't think so. No not really

177

178 I: So you've also used the laundry powder. What's your take on that?

179

180 P: It seemed effective. Like I mean, I dunno, it seemed alright. There's definitely, I dunno it
181 wasn't fragranced or anything?

182

183 I: I think kinda of, looks similar to others. Possibly just packaged differently?

184

185 P: Yeah, I mean it was alright yeah. I find the bag quite annoying, having to open and close
186 that. To be honest, I mean, that's one thing I remember about, because I have to open it up
187 and then take this thing off it and then put my hand there. And then if your hands wet it gets
188 stuck on and then that was. I remember that was [clicks finger] for me

189

190 I: But it wasn't the tipping [point] that you wouldn't [buy it]

191

192 P: No, no. It was just annoying. I mean, you know

193

194 I: Could you appreciate that you couldn't spill it or?

195

196 P: Well, I mean my laundry environment isn't really

197

198 I: So have you ever seen Ecostore ads or

199

200 P: Um, I think I have. I've been to their website

201

202 I: Or even of their packaging. What do you make of it?

203

204 P: It's pretty simple. Cause they're trying to be...

205

206 I: So what would you say they are trying to say? What is the particular way of packaging they
207 have?

208

209 P: Well its simple. There's not a lot of excess in the labelling. Its clean white packet, it's not
210 fancy like the other ones. Not like a bright green liquid like the other ones
211

212 I: Bright green means?
213

214 P: It's not really a natural colour is it [laughs]. It's like the colour of radioactive waste. Oh
215 yeah, its certainly one of the logo and pictures of kids, caring about your kids and caring
216 about the environment. Plain cardboard packaging. Not glossy
217

218 I: So do you kind of take in the stuff they have on the packaging?
219

220 P: Yeah, well I don't really have much else to judge it by, to be honest
221

222 I: So did you look or take more notice of it when you were buying it?
223

224 P: Oh yeah, definitely take it in; take notice. I sort of have to read things better because like I
225 definitely read the instructions a lot more than I would have with the others and stuff
226 because I go like 'aww', you know its supposedly different, so I better make sure
227

228 I: Like how it's a bit more natural?
229

230 P: Yeah. Pretty much. It seems like a different product than the other ones. I better check to
231 out just to make sure it works properly
232

233 I: So do you find out that it pretty much ends the same or...
234

235 P: In terms of the outcomes, it still does its job well. Like I haven't found it wanting or
236 putting it on like it sucks it doesn't actually clean anything
237

238 I: So an okay or a good job?
239

240 P: It does a good job. It does everything I ask it to do. I haven't really read any of the
241 sustainable on there
242

243 I: So I guess that wasn't one of the reasons you brought...

244

245 P: Um it was, I mean it's a good thing. I definitely value that sort of thing. Big recycler and try
246 not to be wasteful. And generally, but it would be one of the things that add up to the
247 purchase. I mean I wouldn't be like, I'm gonna get that, because its gonna take a lot more
248 than that.

249

250 I: So you consider yourself quite green?

251

252 P: Fairly. I mean certainly greener than the average. Do the whole compost thing and I
253 [have] pots for recycling and that sort stuff

254

255 I: So other stuff, in terms of what you buy and use. Would you consider yourself quite green
256 in that way?

257

258 P: [laughs] Probably not that much to be honest. I mean it's definitely a consideration. But I
259 don't like, go out there to buy something

260

261 I: But you do things that are...

262

263 P: Yeah, and its definitely part of my equation when it comes to looking at stuff.

264

265 I: But not the determining factor?

266

267 P: If two things being equal, it would be the determining factor. But I mean, I'm not going to
268 buy that over something else if the price is a lot better.

269

270 I: Cool. So have you ever gifted or shared an Ecostore product to anyone else?

271

272 P: I haven't, haven't. I have considered it. I dunno. To someone who might value that sort of
273 thing

274

275 I: Or have you recommended it?

276

277 P: I haven't recommended it.

278

279 I: Is that kinda because you can't think of anyone in particular or...

280

281 P: I don't recommend a lot of things to be honest. I mean, yeah like that sustainable stuff I
282 never really thought of the other ones not being really sustainable. Like, I mean like how do
283 you make something like dishwashing liquid sustainability? I don't know. Like do you cut
284 down a tree and put it into the ground?

285

286 I: So, if someone like shouted to you sustainability, what kind of things would you think?

287

288 P: Yeah, I dunno. If I was thinking about detergents, I know some detergents and stuff are
289 made out of oil and petrochemical stuff so I don't think that's very sustainable. Sustainable
290 things, the word is quite definitive, like plants like being replanted and stuff out of water and
291 like good for the environment

292

293 I: So do you also think of things we buy? How does that factor into sustainability?

294

295 P: Um, plastic stuff is obviously not very good. Uh, I mean, I look at packaging that is
296 recyclable and quite important

297

298 I: So do you shy away from things that are made of plastic or...

299

300 P: If possible, if like. I never take plastic bags or stuff. If I can avoid it, I'll definitely avoid it.
301 And um like, I don't like products that have tonnes of plastic that can't be recycled. Cause lots
302 of packaging stuff can't be recycled.

303

304 I: That's something you think about when you're deciding which one to buy?

305

306 P: Yeah, sometimes it is yeah. If I have a choice.

307

308 I: Do you have a particular kind of example? Any example, of just when something may have
309 had too much packaging?

310

311 P: Oh, well sometimes I order stuff from overseas. And then it comes with tonnes of
312 polystyrene. You can't recycle polystyrene at all really. You just go oh, that's pretty bad.

313

314 I: But if wouldn't put you off ordering?

315

316 P: It certainly concerns me at the time. And I still think about it. I still think about all the stuff
317 that comes in a big as box with a whole lot of polystyrene. I feel bad; I do feel bad about that.
318 Don't know if they can make some kind of plant-based polystyrene.

319

320 I: So do you end up just throwing that into the garbage?

321

322 P: I mean, how do you recycle polystyrene? It's really expensive to recycle. You gotta take it
323 to a special place.

324

325 I: And you don't really wanna pay for that do you?

326

327 P: Nah nah, and I don't even know where that place is. Because one of my mates, he's got a
328 store and he was trying to get rid of a lot of polystyrene and stuff and he was like this place
329 is going to cost tonnes

330

331 I: Did he end up doing it?

332

333 P: No he didn't. For like a business he just can't afford to recycle it as he has a lot of cold
334 store stuff and then to get rid of it, he just can't afford to do it. So he was pretty gutted about
335 that. But yeah, I mean packaging is a concern like certainly stuff, which has got a lot of
336 packaging, I think poorly of it. Depends what it was if I had alternatives, yeah, I would
337 definitely choose those. But you know, sometimes if I want something bad enough, I go
338 [sighs] I feel bad.

339

340 I: So did you think Ecostore has less packaging?

341

342 P: Yeah, I'd say that. I mean I don't know how much packaging you can really save on that,
343 on a box like that or that. But they've got convenient shapes that are pretty clean and they
344 are recyclable

345

346 I: So there aren't any Ecostore products that you always use? You're just occasional?

347

348 P: Uh, yeah just occasional

349

350 I: So that's only when...

351

352 P: When I have to buy stuff usually I don't do the shopping and when I do, I really just get the
353 refills for like the dishwashing liquid. Like once you've already got the package you don't
354 want to be wasteful you don't want to buy another bottle. You buy the little baby refill things
355 as well

356

357 I: So like going into a phase of using the refill ones?

358

359 P: Yeah, yeah I've been using them like any other product you usually buy and you keep
360 buying that and why are you gonna change?

361

362 I: So usually when it does change its because of changes in your own life or?

363

364 P: or if the bottle is becoming crappy [laughs] that you gotta get a new one. Yeah, but even so
365 those are all recyclable. Those are sort of pushing the recyclable value by saying buy this bag
366 to save you buying another bottle. Ah, I feel bad I should be buying it now [laughs]. I saw
367 their store in Freeman's Bay you know

368

369 I: Oh, have you ever been in there?

370

371 P: I used to walk past it, I'd look in and everything

372

373 I: So like look in the store or look into the store?

374

375 P: Uuh, I looked into the store. And I've been into their website just to look at their products
376 and stuff

377

378 I: Oh, so what was your reason for looking into their website, were you interested or?

379

380 P: Um yeah, I was interested yeah. I've seen the brand and I've walked past the store a lot. So
381 I wondered what they were about. I think at the time I had certain things; I can't remember
382 what they were now that I was interested in

383

384 I: So what kind of impression did you get from their website?

385

386 P: Oh it was alright yeah. It was just really for information and see what they are. Uh, I didn't
387 look into the sustainability side of things

388

389 I: So you don't remember what the information you were looking for was?

390

391 P: Nah, it was about two years ago. I wasn't for looking anything specific at all. I think I was
392 looking at some products in particular. No, I didn't go there to find out about a product

393

394 I: Oh so you looked at something like two years ago?

395

396 P: Yeah, it was probably something like that

397

398 I: Uh, so has your impression of Ecostore changed at all?

399

400 P: Nah, it didn't change

401

402 I: Or maybe looking at before you used it and after you used it?

403

404 P: Well, after I used it I sorta knew that it would perform the task, I mean like I sometimes
405 you think that oh, because something is eco-friendly it might not have as much clout as
406 something that is less natural, purely effective

407

408 I: So that was your pre-perception and then when you used it?

409

410 P: Yeah, yeah. That's fair to say, I mean I wasn't sure. I mean like anything, you're not sure
411 how something's going to perform until you use it. But I found it to meet my expectations

412

413 I: So what do you make of green products in general?

414

415 P: I am for them [laughs]. I mean in general. I mean like, yeah. It's not always enough to
416 make me buy them. It depends on what the product is. I guess to some extent if it were a
417 cosmetic or soap I would prefer a natural one

418

- 419 I: Yup, and what are kinda the reasons for that product?
420
- 421 P: I just don't know that you wanna be rubbing all kinds of unnatural stuff all over your skin
422
- 423 I: So just thinking about cleaning products, do you see those as being in close contact with
424 the skin
425
- 426 P: Yeah, yeah.
427
- 428 I: So would like green household products be that important for that category?
429
- 430 P: I probably wouldn't buy it specifically because it was green. I don't really... I'm not really
431 the cleaning purchaser but I buy natural shampoos and stuff like, boxes of shampoo because
432 I prefer those. I don't really know why
433
- 434 I: Something like fewer chemicals on yourself?
435
- 436 P: I like the idea of it. I still use other shampoos and stuff
437
- 438 I: Ah, so you see green as being like natural and like?
439
- 440 P: Pretty much
441
- 442 I: But maybe not like less on the environment maybe?
443
- 444 P: I hadn't really put too much thought into where they're coming from like I mean, oh yeah
445 that's right that other ones do say they, you know they aren't going to hurt the environment
446 and go down the drain. They say they are I can't remember what it is. They're biodegradable
447
- 448 I: And its one of the factors that you...
449
- 450 P: Yeah. I don't know where it comes from but I know where it's going. I don't want to be
451 putting poisonous things down the drain. Yeah, yeah, yeah I care about the ocean and stuff
452
- 453 I: Yeah, so in terms of the green things that you do, planning to change anything?

454

455 P: Well I catch a bus and stuff. I don't like driving too much. And I prefer a smaller car which
456 doesn't chew petrol or... I mean like I'm not really like an outwardly, sort of, but if I can
457 incorporate it easily into my routine without too much damage to my what I'm going about
458 then I'm, will do it. I can't throw bottles into the rubbish bin. I can't throw recycled paper in
459 rubbish bins. I have to carry it round until I find a recycle bin. That's kind of the point. I don't
460 know, in terms of buying things I don't really think about it that much to be honest [laughs].

461

462 I: [laughs] so is this something that you're going to think about more?

463

464 P: Like, I guess within, thinking about sustainable stuff I don't really think the amount of
465 product I'm using is that massive, I don't think it will make much of a difference

466

467 I: Like a small fish in a large ocean?

468

469 P: Yeah like that, it's only just like a squirt or whatnot. I think landfill stuff, like I see how
470 much stuff I'm throwing away in the rubbish bin, I find that more concerning than like
471 where stuff comes from but don't know

472

473 I: Yeah, so like more what you're putting out then what you're pulling in?

474

475 P: Yeah, yeah. So that's probably a fair assessment

476

477 I: So what would be your impression of what you are putting out at the moment?

478

479 P: I definitely buy too much packaged crap and I think that's definitely - and I buy lots of
480 stuff online and overseas so that

481

482 I: Uh, so do you feel a little guilty when you do that?

483

484 P: Oh yeah, I do, especially when they come in polystyrene. No there's nothing really to
485 specify another options but if they could somehow have biodegradable polystyrene made
486 out of tree and fibres whatever

487

488 I: Oh, that's not really a bad idea actually

489

490 P: I thought about trying to make it. Oh you know, try to develop it. 'Cause yeah, I wanna do
491 that. Tough world

Interview: Lauren

I: So, if you'd just like to start by perhaps walking me through a typical time that you purchase an Ecostore product.

P: Okay. How do you mean, like a typical time, how would I...

I: So just like a typical time that you would, like perhaps take it off the shelf.

P: Describe a typical time that I would. Well usually I would be flat out, have my? Well actually to be honest, we very seldom go to the supermarket, I'm usually an online shopper so from that point of view I usually shop from an existing list and because I've made the choice to use Ecostore products in the past, whenever I do my shopping it uses products that I've selected before so I don't normally go in and make a choice based on what I can see in front of me, because I've made that Ecostore choice in the past it doesn't change because my choice isn't challenged by seeing other products very often. If I think back to when I did go to a supermarket regularly before we had Robert [son], yeah I can imagine myself standing there and trying to choose between a Down to Earth liquid, I mean I will always choose an eco friendly product, is that true? Let me just think. No, it is. We're quite committed as a household to a greener choice for my laundry liquids I would usually flick between Ecostore and B_E_E, [pauses] but usually I will go for Ecostore. What else would you like to know?

I: That's great. So maybe if you tell me about the first time you made the Ecostore choice?

P: First time. Well actually I can. It based on, well I've got a particularly stylish friend, Sarah and she pretty much purchases everything on how fashionable they are, how well presented they are, and I remember standing there and talking to her about how nice the bottles are and how nice the colours are and how much Phillip [husband] would like them being in graphic design

I: So you definitely saw it as more than just a product?

33 P: Oh, I mean they're beautiful, look at their labels. They're all, I mean everything they that's
34 not your typical dishwashing liquid is it. Its all pretty and image and they're very, very image
35 focused aren't they?

36

37 I: Yes they are

38

39 P: Seriously. Its interesting as well, because one of the things I've really like about their
40 products is because the packs are basic white, once you peel the label off you can reuse it
41 without having any branding, they are actually really nice for reusing

42

43 I: So you reuse the packaging? Quite often?

44

45 P: Oh yeah, the whitener, the Napi-San equivalent. I use that for storing play dough that I
46 make at home. It's a bottle with a handle, it's the dishwasher powder [container] I use that
47 for paint. The dishwashing powder comes in a little plastic bottle with a little handle; it's a
48 one litre. It's really good, I mean I make, being quite green overall I tend to make a lot of my
49 own paints and things, and play dough and stuff like that, for our little boy

50

51 I: So you definitely try to use up the. You don 't ever throw it away, you always...

52

53 P: Um, no. I do recycle, I do try not to but you go through, like I've been to the Ecostore store
54 in Ponsonby and sort of looked at things like buying the bulk packs of laundry liquid to try to
55 reduce the amount of packaging I'm using. But I found it frustrating that they don't reduce
56 their price. So the bigger pack doesn't mean a lesser amount per litre. They just charge five
57 times as much. So that was a bit of a...

58

59 I: So did that stop you from buying it?

60

61 P: Yeah, yeah cause at the end of the day, if I buy bulk I expect a discount. And Ecostore
62 products are not cheap. I can do...

63

64 I: So, do you usually, where do you buy them usually?

65

66 P: Online, online through Foodtown. I try to stay away from the supermarkets because we
67 do have a two year old and usually its just hell and so that makes it nice and easy. Um, the
68 Ecostore shop was an interesting thing

69

70 I: So was that a one off or?

71

72 P: Well, I went to have a bit of a nosey, I've bought stuff from their website as well but to
73 make a special trip, even I'd say ridiculous isn't it, special trip to their website is too much of
74 a hassle for me and I didn't find that there was any particular benefit. I mean I get their
75 emails, their regular newsletter, I don't find that there's any particular benefit in that either,
76 I don't, nothing that they send out prompts me to action

77

78 I: So you just buy their products?

79

80 P: I buy their products because they're pretty. I don't, how I, if I'm honest there are some
81 products that I have gone to and then gone away from. I always buy their hand wash, I like
82 that

83

84 I: So what were kind of the reasons that you went away from it?

85

86 P: Well, the reasons that I went away from their products was, its kind of a tricky one. As
87 well as the job that I do at the moment, I work as a post-natal home helper. So I go into other
88 peoples houses and do anything from helping with their baby to cleaning or ironing or
89 whatever, so I'm often in other peoples houses using the products that they use in their
90 homes and very few people apparently, are as green as me. I really thought that it was a, I
91 thought we had hit a really major cultural change and that really most of the people in my
92 peer group were making a greener choice. This is not true. There is no end of nasty, caustic
93 chemicals available out there and I found, that when I went into other people's houses and
94 used the products, the hard out chemicals stuff that they used, I can clean a bathroom in half
95 the time that it takes me to clean the bathroom to the same degree with eco friendly
96 products. I found, I use reusable cloth nappies and there's a certain amount of staining,
97 certain amount of odour, that goes with using cloth nappies and there's the traditional way
98 of dealing with that and that is using lots and lots of bleach. Lots of whiteners. Lots of full on
99 fragrances. Yummy washing powders and stuff. And because I've made a more eco friendly
100 choice I struggle to keep my nappies as white, my bibs as white, and to eliminate odours and

101 stains as easily and their toilet cleaner doesn't clean, that's the thing, I really struggle with
102 trying to get other people on board as well because eco friendly products do not do the same
103 job as hard out chemicals ones do, as quickly or...

104

105 I: And this is based on your experience?

106

107 P: Yeah, so really, it's not just the decision just to use an eco product; you've also got to make
108 a commitment to put more time and effort into your daily chores. That's why those
109 chemicals came into use, because people couldn't stand boiling their washing and throwing
110 in blue stuff to make it look whiter.

111

112 I: So you found that you had to work a bit harder to use [them]?

113

114 P: Yeah. And I didn't realise how much harder I was working until I started working at
115 others people's houses and used the products that I would not choose to use. So, since I've
116 started doing that I've actually steered away from a few green products because I'm working
117 and I have a toddler and as much as I would like to make those choices...

118

119 I: So it was really a decision of this is how much time that id like to...

120

121 P: Yeah and I really feel terrible about that. But I still use a couple of products. Well actually,
122 I've changed to Down to Earth for my laundry liquid because it does a better job

123

124 I: Well that one's reasonably eco-friendly, I think?

125

126 P: Well. That's the thing. I don't know. This one [Ecostore] tells me because its Ecostore and
127 I don't know actually whether it is actually a better product or whether it is greener but it
128 tells me it is.

129

130 I: And we believe them?

131

132 P: And we believe them because they use nice black and white photos. And soft lemon and
133 pale blue, and yeah, it feels right. They market very well to my demographic

134

135 I: When you first tried it, when you were interested in the packaging so you had a go at using
136 it, do you remember if you used it in a particularly different way to your normal product?
137 Maybe take your first experience

138

139 P: Yup, it was the washing liquid. Because it was that whole conversation about which one
140 bottle, because B_E_E has also, but not to direct at that, B_E_E was the main competitor in
141 my mind because its quite similarly marketed, so and Sarah was saying I liked this one and
142 just anyway...

143

144 I: So she liked it and she recommended it to you?

145

146 P: She didn't recommend it, it's funny, we were just talking about which one would look
147 better in our laundry because our laundry at that time it was quite sort of on display and we
148 were sharing a house at the time. So I think, I dunno. I definitely know we decided not to.
149 Because B_E_E was, it might even just have been a nuisance to her because she liked the
150 B_E_E liquid as well. Anyway, we made a choice not go with the B_E_E one; we made a choice
151 to go with Ecostore. I found it frustrating that you don't get laundry liquid that comes in a
152 similar bottle like this [holds up washing liquid] you can't tell how much you used, its really
153 hard you don't know and it says, we don't have one here, use this much but what do I do, do
154 I get a measuring cup or do I? So I started with the B_E_E one and with the Ecostore one I
155 started putting this, what's this, 500mls so I would put marks on it with like a felt pen onto
156 the side of the bottle so I knew if I squeezed out that it would come to that much

157

158 I: So you wanted to control how much you were using?

159

160 P: Absolutely. Because there's a, um. What is the point, if you're trying to be green and
161 reduce your impact on the environment and you can't tell whether, I might be using twice as
162 much as I need to so...

163

164 I: So you felt you had to keep it up?

165

166 P: Yeah um so, I'm not answering your question. I know I'm not answering your question.
167 Am I?

168

169 I: Yeah

170

171 P: Yeah, I found it a pleasant product to use. It smells nice, looks nice, it mostly does what it
172 says. But I don't think it does as good a job

173

174 I: As the other ones?

175

176 P: Yeah, I guess that's the thing. You have to make a choice. Whether you really, I quite often
177 find myself standing there with my friends with their circle white bibs and thinking, look at
178 my baby's bib. It is filthy-looking but it works just as well

179

180 I: Have they ever pointed it out?

181

182 P: Oh yeah. They say to me, you know you can get that out with Napisan. Well, yeah do you
183 know that Napisan is destroying the planet; do you know that you're no better off for using
184 cloth nappies and Napisan than you are using disposable nappies? I really am committed to
185 the whole thing and I...

186

187 I: So how do you respond to them? Do you say Napisan destroys the environment?

188

189 P: [laughs] Well yeah, basically I, I understand that there's a trade-off and I'm not prepared
190 to, I would rather have a bib with a few stains on it than put more caustic chemicals into the
191 waterways. How about you? You're quite happy with that I think. Do you want your child to
192 be able to go fishing when he's a big boy? 'Cause there might not be any fish left.

193

194 I: Oh and do they take your advice?

195

196 P: Oh, no they get annoyed with me. Everyone thinks I'm just a complete big pain in the ass.
197 Because I make them challenge themselves. I make them question what they are doing. And
198 people don't like to be questioned on what they are doing because very often because
199 there's enough internal battles that's going on without adding to the mix.

200

201 I: So you recommended it or?

202

203 P: I recommend the, I love the, love the hand wash. Am totally committed to that. The one
204 thing that I always recommend is the baby sleepy time bath. We always use their baby

205 products quite extensively. I swear by it, sorta like a nice smelling, relaxing liquid that you
206 put into the bath water. So it's not like baby wash and yeah, I have really, really positive
207 associations with the smell of that. It smells like a new baby. And I, every person I know that
208 I've recommended it to have tried it. I have given that away as a present, as a gift for baby
209 shower stuff.

210

211 I: Um. So what was your thinking behind giving that as a gift?

212

213 P: I have seen so many babies develop rashes and skin irritations and nappy rash and all
214 sorts of stuff from people overusing, the baby does not get dirty, really. They don't get dirty.
215 They don't roll around, they don't walk around, they don't do anything except lie in their,
216 they get a bit pooey and stuff but you clean that up and they don't need to be washed and yet
217 I see these mums with their Johnson's highly fragranced hand washes and baby washes and
218 powders and creams and ointments and everything is so, so harsh really for a tiny baby's
219 skin. So my thinking is that if I can establish, is that by giving someone something that is
220 going to be better I can establish their habit of purchasing or using that product, before they
221 make their own decisions. So I can put it in their hands and make them use it by giving it as a
222 gift and that hopefully they will like it and keep using it instead of bathing their child in
223 chemicals. So yeah, the sleepy time bath is a big one for us and the baby wash. We still use
224 that, the soap we use that a bit, we really, we have used almost all of the Ecostore products,
225 shampoos, everything

226

227 I: So what was your thinking, that you like one of their products, you'll go for the rest?

228

229 P: Yeah. And plus they all look nice together

230

231 I: Oh, so you keep the bottles?

232

233 P: Oh, its interesting, its funny because the hand wash pump I actually put the Ecostore hand
234 wash in other brand's pumps, because although one of the things I like about the bottles is
235 that they are solid white and that the branding is easily removed and I can reuse them, I
236 found the hand wash pump to be much, too much like a brick it doesn't look that nice in a
237 bathroom

238

239 I: Not aesthetically pleasing?

240

241 P: No, its not. I mean it is nice enough and the labels nice, but I prefer to use a clear
242 container, I don't know why. Its just, its just a thing, its just looks too much like...

243

244 I: I'm the same. I like to know how much is coming out

245

246 P: Yeah, I just, it looks too much, that pump to me looks like something you'd find in a
247 garage. It's really bad, it's probably not so much the solid white it's probably; I don't know it
248 something about it I don't know

249

250 I: It's probably the shape

251

252 P: Yeah. Its tall, taller, something. So, it's really sad if people come into my bathroom and use
253 my hand wash, mmm, that smells nice, that lovely orange you know, orange and patchouli
254 smell but then they'll look at the container and go oh, that's some other brand and go out
255 and buy another brand. Trying to, they like what I got but end up buying the wrong thing,
256 thinking that's what it is

257

258 I: And you don't want them to think

259

260 P: Oh, I don't care. I don't really care. Its like just you know, its not a very good sales point
261 for them, I suppose. I have actually gone to the trouble once, of checking, like actually going
262 through ingredients on the baby time, sleepy time bath. And looking up every single
263 ingredient on it

264

265 I: Oh, great

266

267 P: Oh to see what it was. Oh great, obsessive

268

269 I: Is it because you didn't trust them or?

270

271 P: Any marketing, I don't trust any labelling. I worked for Coca-Cola for quite a long time. I
272 learned a lot about omission [laughs], misdirection, and omission on labelling which, and
273 inference rather than say, I learned how, I learned a lot about how consumers are
274 hoodwinked by being led to believe that something without the appropriate knowledge, I'm

275 pretty funny about labels generally. I will check and check and read. I have to say, it took me
276 a really long time to check, a really really long time and at the end of it I discovered it was a
277 perfectly, safe really good product that had nothing in it that I felt uncomfortable about
278 putting on my child and that actually gave me a lot of confidence in the rest of the range. I
279 figure, yeah if you can actually go and check every thing on their label and its all true on one
280 product, odds are, given baby products tend to be more, I think people who make baby
281 products are more careful, but generally speaking I think that says that they have the same
282 level of integrity across their whole range. That might be naïve, but they've done their job by
283 convincing me of that

284

285 I: So with that uh, dreamtime baby bath, you gave that to someone?

286

287 P: I have, many times

288

289 I: So what are the kinds of people that you've given it to. New mums?

290

291 P: I love it. New mums, always. Always

292

293 I: Were they kind of green people?

294

295 P: No, I probably, none of my friends are green really. Hardly any, a couple. But only because
296 I shame them into it, really

297

298 I: But you thought that, you wanted them, you wanted them to have the idea that they didn't
299 have to

300

301 P: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I figure that I, you know, you just can't, I have tried really hard to, I'm
302 quite pushy and I can be quite opinionated and once I get really excited about something I
303 do tend to want to share it with people whether it's wanted to be shared or not. And that
304 really could be aggravating for other people so I've learned over the past few years people
305 do not like being pushed into being green, because as soon as they start looking into one
306 area of their life, they tend to look at their whole life and go, oh my god, I can't have my big
307 car if I'm green and I can't have my whatever so I'm just going to push it all out and have it,
308 and if I don't do it all, so I've taken the approach now of just trying to help them make small
309 changes in isolated areas of their lives and hopefully my influence ultimately will rub off,

310 and you know I've got people composting, and I've got a couple people using, not Napisan,
311 maybe not an Ecostore product but a more [environmentally friendly one].

312

313 I: Uh, so did you sell it in as an eco product?

314

315 P: No

316

317 I: Or one that was more safer?

318

319 P: Yeah

320

321 I: Because you didn't think the green angle would work?

322

323 P: No, yeah. But I mean, people know. I try to encourage people to do things, like I say, if you
324 soak clothes in this, you can pour the water out into your garden and all that sorta stuff. You
325 don't have to pour it down the drain, you can water your plants with [it]

326

327 I: Grey water?

328

329 P: yeah, its just kind of, it's a real, really difficult thing. To encourage people to do that. I
330 really, I really thought we were much further along.

331

332 I: And you were a bit disappointed that...

333

334 P: I'm just amazed.

335

336 I: Is that kind of your thinking? That I'm sharing with other people that you wanted them to
337 come aboard?

338

339 P: Yeah, yeah well I care a great deal about this planet. I think we've gone way beyond our
340 point, I mean global warming, is irrelevant. It's important, but irrelevant on a day-to-day
341 basis. It doesn't make any difference to what we're doing. Litter does. Litters unpleasant.
342 You walk outside to your front door and you will see litter everywhere. So you know, that's
343 the kinda thing that I think. Small changes. Every time I leave the house I pick up three
344 pieces of litter. I don't try to pick it all up, but if everyone, that's the sorta change I try and

345 bring on to my friends, you don't have to change your whole life. But if you could just use
346 this liquid than that's great. I care a lot; probably having a child has made the biggest
347 difference to me. And probably, I think once my friends start having children, it'll become
348 easier to influence them as they have a vested interest in the future. Before that all we were
349 doing was going out clubbing, I even met Phillip [husband] at a dance party. That's all we
350 did, went out every weekend until Monday. But all that's changed. We have more to think
351 about now. And it will, what we do now will influence how things are in ten to fifteen years.
352 It's not about global warming, its pollution. It's about keeping our waterways clean. You
353 know, we all [sighs]...

354

355 I: So having a child, because you're not thinking about yourself, you're thinking about
356 someone else now?

357

358 P: Yeah, I need to know that he will be able to take, its not about whether he gets to go
359 fishing or not, because he probably will, fishing is kind of my...

360

361 I: Metaphor for?

362

363 P: Yeah, for me it is. It's because it's such a, it's such a, well when I was a kid we used to fish
364 off Princes Wharf down in the city.

365

366 I: Oh, really?

367

368 P: Yeah. We'd go down there and my dad sits there. We used to catch crabs and fish like little
369 Kahawai and stuff off Princes wharf that was only like thirty-five years ago, I doubt very
370 much that you'd catch anything down there now. A couple sailors maybe. But, so that's like
371 him there. But there are other places I can take Robert to go fishing but in thirty-five years
372 its up to me to work out whether he can take his children to that place. And that place that
373 we take him is many miles out of town already.

374

375 I: Like a fear of missing out?

376

377 P: Yeah, basically. [inaudible] like being able to share experiences. And something as basic as
378 being able to go out without being a farmer or anything else and, go out and procure food for
379 yourself from the environment. It should be a basic right as a human being or as any living

380 thing. You should be able to, without going to the shop, be able to get safe food to eat from
381 somewhere. Or without stealing from someone else. And I'm not sure that that will be
382 available for him to do with his children. 'Cause its not just about him, its about the
383 American Indians, the native Americans, you should always consider in everything you do,
384 you should always consider how that is going to impact on the next seven generations. It's
385 not just about your kids and their kids, seven generations isn't long, its like 200 years. But
386 we don't do that. We're lucky if we consider what's going on next week and honestly, if the
387 Ecostore people, I don't know, I don't know how much of this is about the environment and
388 how of this is about making money off a current trend. If it wasn't popular, would the
389 Ecostore company owners be doing this or would they be doing something else, if it made
390 them more money?

391
392 I: So what's your take on this? What do you think?

393
394 P: I'm, I'm, I'm a sceptic [laughs]. I have a personal, I have a very deep inquiring mind and I
395 never take anything as read, and I like to yeah, and I really like to. I hope, I really hope, that
396 they are doing it for the right reasons. I believe of what I've read of their company
397 philosophy and the information on their website that what they do really are for genuine
398 reasons.

399
400 I: So, that is something you have checked out?

401
402 P: Oh yeah

403
404 I: Because you wanted to know, and be an informed consumer?

405
406 P: Yeah, yeah I. Yeah, its because it's a big call saying we are eco friendly 'cause there's a
407 whole lot of companies saying we are eco friendly and they're not. They're just not. Its not,
408 its just all, its all by degrees as well. You just never know, so I have gone to great trouble to
409 really look at it and I had to go, that's why I went to their store as I had to see what the store
410 was like, and see what the store had to offer. I bought nappies at the store. I thought it was
411 interesting that at the Ecostore store they had other non-Ecostore products available that
412 had also supported the green ethos. Nappies and crystals and socks. So that was good. It
413 frustrates me enormously that you can't get their bulk packs in the supermarket .

415 I: Yeah but that's not a reason to go the store? It's also pricier.

416

417 P: Yeah, but I thought you might be interested to know. The supermarket stuff, the stuff they
418 have at the supermarket seems to me quite a limited range compared to what they have
419 available at the store. Or online. But as I said, I've worked for Coke and know how
420 supermarkets can be in terms of their buying and what they'll agree to stock and put onto
421 the shelves. That's not necessarily the Ecostore's first choice I'm sure.

422

423 I: So of the friends who tried the baby bed time, or just another Ecostore product, how did
424 they find that?

425

426 P: I have had quite a lot of feedback from other people on washing powders and things not
427 doing the job.

428

429 I: Is that the general consensus?

430

431 P: yup. I think the Ecostore's getting a bit of a reputation, I think

432

433 I: Amongst your social group?

434

435 P: Yeah just for quite not doing the job. Not, but the thing is, that when we come back to is
436 that it's not going to do the job because it doesn't have the chemicals in it that you have
437 normally been using. And you have to make a choice. So you know, we've had a lot of
438 extended, philosophical arguments, how what is more important. Some of them, you know
439 some of them use some products and not others like my friend Francine will use the hand
440 wash and all the mums I know use the sleepy time bath and the baby wash.

441

442 I: Oh and they still use it?

443

444 P: Oh, as the kids have grown older they'd be dropping off the sleeptime bath about when
445 bubs is about nine months to a year old but after that you wouldn't see it in the bathroom
446 again.

447

448 I: So what did they move onto? Another Ecostore product?

449

450 P: The baby wash, if they've used the sleepy time bath they'll move onto the baby wash. The
451 Ecostore baby wash

452

453 I: Oh, okay. So that's because they want to kind of keep it up?

454

455 P: Yup. Because it doesn't, I've never seen anyone's baby have a skin reaction to any of the
456 Ecostore products. I have seen pretty much, seen lots of babies react badly to Johnson's and
457 I cant really think of any more. But you know, the really highly fragranced stuff.

458

459 I: So part of your recommending was so that they could keep the children safe?

460

461 P: Ah, I know it's so interfering but I can't help it. Yeah it is; that's my main reason. It's that it,
462 it's really, often what can happen when people are new parents and when babies get a rash,
463 they go to the doctor. And probably the doctor will prescribe them some sort of an ointment
464 and then you get a whole stream of intervention. It's like it seems like such a silly thing but a
465 rash from a product that is highly chemical can be the beginning for an intervention in that
466 child's medical life. That will set habits for a lifetime. Oh, my child has I have, have to worry
467 about my baby because it gets rashes. Must be something it's eating or must be something so
468 they start prescribing all sorts of stuff and it's not necessary.

469

470 I: So it's like one step for the rest of their life?

471

472 P: Yeah. So yeah, I think I do a good thing, I hope I do a good thing. I've got one friend that I
473 recommended the stuff to, the Ecostore range of baby products and she went and bought
474 four bottles of sleepy time and five bottles of baby wash and four bars of soap everything
475 and I swear to god she is probably still using them. They do last, a long time. So that's one
476 thing I liked about it.

477

478 I: So she bought all that after your recommendation?

479

480 P: Six months before the baby was born she had rows of Ecostore products stacked up on
481 the changing table ready.

482

483 I: So you obviously sold her in on that?

484

485 P: Yeah. I'm, I' a major advocate for, I am probably the most passionate. I think about the
486 Ecostore baby products are the best ones you can get in a supermarket. There might be a
487 little competition from another brand, I think they are called Mahu, they have prettier
488 bottles as well.

489

490 I: Is that on the eco-angle as well?

491

492 P: Yeah, yeah, yeah, green. Actually one of their [main points of] emphasis is on a gentler
493 product. For baby skin, but they do have a green philosophy too, yeah. But they're definitely
494 prettier bottles for whatever that means. It goes, I actually have to be honest; I actually have
495 that product in my bathroom right now because it goes with my shower curtain.

496

497 I: Because you wanted everything to match?

498

499 P: Um, yeah

500

501 I: Was that for your sake or?

502

503 P: Phillip and I have a pretty strong aesthetic appreciation. So yeah, yeah. it matches my
504 shower curtain

505

506 I: Or did you want other people to see that? Do you worry about other people or?

507

508 P: No, I need it for myself. I don't think other, other people would even notice whether my
509 baby wash matches my shower curtain. But it is deeply important to me

510

511 I: Because it makes you feel?

512

513 P: It makes me feel in order. I feel, normal. I quite like, yeah anything in our house, we've
514 sold our house a little while ago and have a shitty little rental that we're living in until we
515 buy another house. And even in our shitty little rental every cushion, you know there's a
516 picture on the wall with a bit of red on it that refers to a cushion or chair over there, its just
517 like. I can't, I can't I need that. I do need that

518

519 I: Cool, you've covered a lot already, that I was going to say. So when you use the product,
520 did you treat them just like the other ones?

521

522 P: Probably the biggest difference is, because they are a little more expensive in my mind, I
523 don't know if they are, I'm not actually, I'm not the kind of person who will stand there and
524 look at all the prices. Once I've made my choice on a product, I'll keep buying it. But I would
525 be more careful about how much of it I use, the Ecostore hand wash I dilute it by half,
526 always. So as soon as I empty half of this container into another container I will fill it to the
527 top with water and I will probably top up the pump as well because I can get twice as much
528 out of that and it works just as well so why would I bother, as I said I would probably be a
529 bit less diligent about measuring out a cheap laundry liquid, but with that one, I marked on
530 the bottle the increments so that when I use it I can hold it, it's a pain in the ass but because,
531 its not a clear bottle but I can hold it up the light and kind of know how much I'm getting,
532 'cause that's what it's getting down to, how many washes do I get for this \$10, is it 10
533 washes or is it twenty because if I buy this product, 20 washes, out of the same amount of
534 money. And when you've got a little kid, and a husband, that's a, there's a lot to wash. You
535 now, there's a, I do three loads of washing a day, for three people, which is something wrong
536 there. That's a lot of washing. Lets say two loads of washing a day for a household of three
537 people. And its full loads, so I'm doing, what's that, fourteen loads, I need, need a bottle of
538 laundry liquid to last me a week I need it to go from one supermarket, shop to the next. So I
539 am a little more vigilant about, about how much I use because it does cost a bit more

540

541 I: So are you still using Ecostore for laundry?

542

543 P: Well no, uh, it kinda depends on what sort of state my conscience is in. I think I have
544 committed to changing to down to earth laundry liquid, yeah. And it has, do you know what,
545 it's actually been something that I've really, like I've really had a bit of a, crisis of conscience
546 about it. Like I really, really...

547

548 I: You were quite attached?

549

550 P: Yeah, I've had to really think about whether, I guess, the biggest thing that I have, I've
551 actually sat down and thought do I really accept and believe the message of a green product
552 and from Down to Earth in the same way that I have for Ecostore and I have made the
553 decision that I do accept their word. I guess, its not that I've actually gone, yeah, I've actually

554 consciously, I've actually decided whether I believe these people as much as I believe these
555 people
556

557 I: So what was that based on? Was that packaging, design?
558

559 P: Well yeah. Actually do you know what it was? It was actually a justification in my own
560 mind that allowed me to buy a product that I'm not, that I have checked these products, that
561 I have checked these labels gone to the Internet, checked the ingredients. On one product
562 and that's enough for the range. I did not do that with Down to Earth but I needed to make a
563 change to a different product because I needed the job done better. So I just have had just a
564 little internal argument about whether I can believe them or not and convinced myself I can
565 without actually checking, because I'm not sure I would have the same results if I checked
566 the label but I need, need the job done.
567

568 I: Could you, potentially just convince yourself because you wanted to?
569

570 P: Yeah, totally. I need to believe, I needed to change products because Ecostore was not
571 delivering. So I have convinced myself that there is another product that is just as green, but
572 somewhere in the back of my mind there's a little voice that says, don't, you know very well
573 Lauren that if it is doing a better job, it's is not likely to be as kind to the environment
574

575 I: So there is kind of a trade off between eco or its good [effectiveness]?
576

577 P: Yeah. That's, that's what I'm getting to now. I am, having to been forced into a situation
578 where I was using eco friendly products and totally not eco friendly products side by side in
579 my daily life and you know, different people's houses but you know, it really gave me a
580 major wake up call as to, can I just say, one of the problems that have come up, with
581 Ecostore products is that they don't have good child safety caps on some of their products.
582 Some of them have changed, but their toilet cleaner, which traditionally toilet cleaner is left
583 in the bathroom, usually at ground level, doesn't have a safety lock on it. Having said that,
584 the smell of it is so awful, I hate the product so much, and I will never buy it again
585

586 I: The Ecostore toilet cleaner?
587

588 P: Yeah, and my child would take one whiff of it and oh my god, I'm not going to drink that if
589 he managed to get it open. Yeah, but oh yeah that comment has come back from more than
590 one of my friends. That I, I think there was one, the dishwasher powder didn't have a child
591 proof cap on it but then it changed at some point, but yeah, there definitely has been,
592 historically, a lack of child safety caps on their products. Yeah, and I think that's important
593 because the people I know who have, as I say that is one thing that goes along with having
594 children is that change to eco friendly products. So yeah, a good portion of your market is
595 going to need child safety caps.

596

597 I: Do you think that's because parents want to look after kids, more than themselves?

598

599 P: I think, as you get older, different people are pitching their products to you. I don't know
600 that we make that many decisions, ourselves based on what we believe or actually want. I
601 think most of our decisions, are made based on information that's fed, almost everyone
602 making their nutritional decisions based on ads on the TV and I'm astounded by some of the
603 things I see on TV and how much that people don't understand that this is not scientific
604 research you're getting. This is a blurb that was written by someone who probably has a
605 marketing degree and has been given a sales target that we need to shift this many units,
606 what can we tell our market to do that

607

608 I: Yup, so you're um quite critical of that?

609

610 P: It's quite weird, don't you think given my husband's job [graphic designer at promotional
611 marketing agency]. I think as we grow older, you start to, I don't know, you start to have kids
612 you start reading different magazines, instead of picking up a Cleo, Cosmo, Vogue, whatever
613 and being confronted with all these pages and pages of ads for lipsticks and fragrances and
614 [inaudible] whatever, you pick up a Little Treasures magazine and you're getting ads for
615 breast pumps and Ecostore washing liquid and whatever, you just, you just move into a
616 different demographic and suddenly your focus has just been shifted onto a whole new
617 range of products and whoever is standing at the front with the best look, is the one that
618 going to get my money. Well, maybe not my money, but some, but then again here I am, I'm
619 still trying new products

620

621 I: So you've gone through a few eco store products? Have you gone back to any?

622

- 623 P: Have I gone off and back to any? We, I use the shampoo a couple of years ago and I didn't
624 like it, but then Phillip started using it. So I went off it but then he started using it because he
625 doesn't care, he's got short hair. I used the shampoo and conditioner and found that, that it
626 didn't really do the same as some of my nicer ones. I'm not sure if nicer is right, but you
627 know, you put that next to something that's from Redken, or I don't know it doesn't make
628 my hair shiny in the same way [laughs] it doesn't make it smell beautiful in the same way.
629 But maybe I will try it again, who knows? I mean it's in the house. Citrus fusion. It's a great
630 name. I don't understand why there's a picture of a pinecone on the front of citrus fusion
631
- 632 I: Uh, I don't know either
633
- 634 P: Maybe we're missing something. They are quite abstract. I mean, that's a poppy, on the
635 patchouli
636
- 637 I: Abstract and then somewhat irrelevant
638
- 639 P: But yeah that's not uncommon. For the people, the marketing people are not necessarily
640 talking to the product people and yeah, so it's a nice image. So yeah, the shampoo I didn't
641 like that Phillip is now using, the dishwashing liquid comes and goes a bit. That's the other
642 thing; I will always make a greener choice, Phillip will not necessarily. So if he does the
643 shopping you get quite a different shop to what I would get
644
- 645 I: But you don't influence?
646
- 647 P: Oh yeah, I mean I do. That'll be why he bought the Ecostore shampoo, but then he'll stand
648 there in front of the dishwashing liquid and then go, are you kidding me, I can get 500mls or
649 two litres for the same price and he'll come home with the two litres. Unless I specifically
650 say to him if you go to the shops, you buy this, you must buy blah blah blah. Yeah, I have a
651 real problem, just going back to the measuring, one of the things that I really struggle with is
652 that there's no measurements of the, actually do they have?
653
- 654 I: Oh they have a cup
655
- 656 P: Oh yeah, they do? Okay, so they do in that, but nothing in that, in and in their dishwashing
657 powder as well there's no measure in the dishwashing, so I started using a formula, a scoop

658 from a formula container to scoop, to like measure how I use dishwashing powder. Its quite
659 a big difference between what I feel like, give it a shake and the dishwasher powder
660 container and the machine, and go, that looks right and actually if you measure it out, I
661 would probably put in, I don't know, one and half to twice as much if I free pour, so...

662

663 I: So would you have an issue if other companies didn't have measurements? Or is it just
664 because it's Ecostore?

665

666 P: Uh, no, it doesn't. It does bother me generally, because I feel that companies do that
667 deliberately so you will overuse and restock more regularly. It particularly bothers me with
668 Ecostore stuff because if I use twice as much I actually, I feel that I am negating effort that
669 I'm putting in by using an eco friendly product because using twice as much is almost as bad
670 as using a less eco friendly product

671

672 I: So when you use Ecostore products you always make sure?

673

674 P: I try. But you know, who, has enough time, really, in their day to spend that much time
675 thinking about something like that. When I go to use something, I just wanna go, done. I
676 don't really wanna stand there measuring it out with little cups and things

677

678 I: Do you end up doing that for Ecostore products?

679

680 P: I do. I do. But not this shampoo and stuff, it something where they go, you should get this
681 many washes. I should be able to work out how many washes I get out of a dishwasher
682 powder or a laundry powder where you're using a specific amount. A specific amount
683 should do the job. I quite often, one of the reasons I steer away from the clothes washing
684 stuff is, well, because I felt it wasn't doing its job, I was using more and more of it

685

686 I: Negating the...

687

688 P: Yeah and still the not getting quite the job I wanted out of it anyway, so that is kind of why
689 I started to look at the change. 'Cause if I'm using twice as much and it's still not doing the
690 job, then it's just not doing the job. If it was just me, and I was single, and I was just washing
691 work shirts or blouses, or you know just things that I was sitting in an office wearing I would
692 happily use their products, but I can't get chocolate and mud [out], and I know it sounds so

693 cliché, you know, it's a Persil ad, isn't it, in the making? But you can't get that stuff out, in a
694 wash. Without soaking in an Ecostore product but I can get it out with other products. If I
695 went for something like Persil, it would be gone. Even something like Down to Earth is not
696 as effective as that but you gotta draw the line somewhere otherwise you won't end up
697 green. And I find my green line is getting fuzzier as I get busier and I don't like that.

Interview: Karen

I: So if you'd just like to start, by telling me about your first experience of an Ecostore product?

P: First experience would have been the body wash. And I've think we've done some, yes we've done the liquid washing liquid one and we moved onto the eco one because my boyfriend likes using that stuff and I started using it too.

I: So the body wash one was the first one? Do you remember how you went about buying it?

P: I think we [normally] buy another product and then we saw that one on the shelf, 'cause there's only two, three body wash products on the shelf at supermarkets and I saw that one and I'd thought I'd try it. Plus I like the flavours [laughs]. I think it was vanilla, vanilla and something is my favourite now, but this one smells good too.

I: So did you smell it at the supermarket?

P: Yup.

I: Do you do that with all your shampoos?

P: I buy all my shampoos from the hairdresser, so no. But normally if I did like sprays and stuff like that I would.

I: So you said your boyfriend liked the product?

P: Yup, 'cause he's got like quite sensitive skin, I'm not sure what the other one he was buying. QV or something, I think it was QV? And he was using that, he likes using the loofah and the body wash and so that side of things, which I've never done.

I: And that was because he had sensitive skin?

P: Yup, yup.

35 I: So what did you think of the Ecostore one?

36

37 P: Much nicer, its got a nice silky feel to it. And your skin feels nice and moisturised at the
38 end of it. It feels like its actually doing some work and it always soaks up, like normal soap
39 you always have to rub on quite a bit, I know it doesn't make sense to say soap up, but it
40 feels right to say soap up [laughs].

41

42 I: So that was for the body wash? You're still using it?

43

44 P: Yes

45

46 I: So is that the only body wash you still use?

47

48 P: That's the only Ecostore product we still use. We were using the dishwashing liquid for a
49 while, but I think that was the one we found wasn't actually washing that well.

50

51 I: Oh okay. What attracted you to buy it in the first place?

52

53 P: A friend of ours was telling us about how it's good for the environment. Because it
54 doesn't, something about fish? That we will, it doesn't affect the fish in the water and we
55 figured, we might as well give it a go. Always looking to try and help the environment a little
56 bit. And that's how we kind of got onto it.

57

58 I: So your friend, they sold you into the product?

59

60 P: Not the product itself, just the idea of doing eco products.

61

62 I: Were you using the body wash at that stage?

63

64 P: No. I probably only

65

66 I: So the dishwashing liquid was your first?

67

68 P: I can't remember which came first though. I tried another dishwashing liquid, which was
69 an eco one; I think the body wash may have come from the first, eco store products line.

70

71 I: So you didn't like the dishwashing liquid?

72

73 P: No, we didn't quite like it and it was quite expensive so we stopped using it.

74

75 I: So was it price?

76

77 P: Yup, definitely for that one. I'd keep going if it weren't so expensive.

78

79 I: So do you find the body wash expensive?

80

81 P: Uh, yes. But it's kinda worth it. One, cause I know it good for his skin. And we might as
82 well use the same one instead of having a soap, and liquid soap there. And you can usually
83 find it on special so it's not too bad. Its quite expensive, but it's quite worth it.

84

85 I: Have you tried any other eco body washes? Not sure if there are any others in the market.

86

87 P: Uh I think, I don't think I did. Oh look; I do go to the Ecostore down in Ponsonby, um by
88 Newmarket...

89

90 I: Freeman's Noy?

91

92 P: Yup that one. Had a look in there, there was heaps of stuff in there that I would have
93 brought but I just didn't have the money, and knew I was going to Australia [move
94 permanently to] anyway so I thought what's the use in buying it? 'Cause those ones were in
95 big lots, those ones.

96

97 I: So what was your motivation for going into the store?

98

99 P: Because I saw the Ecostore [retail store] and really wanted to, cause I don't really like, the
100 only thing I don't like about the product is the bottle it comes in. I don't know if you were
101 going along that side of things. But, we always pour this product into a bottle with a pump
102 on it. Because I, opening this stuff all the time, to put on my loofah is so annoying. So that
103 was the only thing I didn't like about the product. So I was going into the Ecostore to look to

104 see if there was any bigger ones, so I was like I'm buying a little one, why don't I buy a one
105 litre and hope that's got a pump on it or something. That was my main gripe.

106

107 I: That's quite a lot of effort, for a body wash

108

109 P: It was actually. Well, I didn't know the store was there until I went past it for work. And I
110 saw it, and thought I'd stop in. so, it wasn't like I specifically went into there to do that. But I
111 was thinking about trying to find something that had a pump, yeah.

112

113 I: Oh that's interesting. So what did you make of the store?

114

115 P: The store's really good. It had heaps of stuff in it that I didn't realise that they made or
116 that they included in their things, not just stuff for the bathroom but kitchen, and gardening
117 stuff everything, so, but I didn't really have a look at the prices but know they would be
118 more expensive, and plus it's in like Freeman's Bay so you kinda can guess it's gonna be a
119 little bit more. But, I think, can you get them online?

120

121 I: Yeah you can get them online.

122

123 P: Yeah, can get them online. Ah yes, I have actually looked online too.

124

125 I: Okay, um, any particular reason?

126

127 P: To look online?

128

129 I: Yup

130

131 P: I just thought it could maybe get cheaper. Or get bulk.

132

133 I: So um, you definitely wanted to buy the product, but the price was?

134

135 P: Yup

136

137 I: Was that for the body wash or just anything?

138

139 P: I was looking mainly at the body wash, but then that was when I realised how many other
140 things they actually have, that supermarkets don't have. But, yeah I didn't buy anything.
141 There wasn't anything we needed at that stage.

142

143 I: So why were you interested in the other products? Did you like the body wash and
144 thought the others ones would be...

145

146 P: Well yeah, I thought that if I can be as eco as possible I would go down that track. Yeah
147 and it was really interesting just to see what they had. And how many different things can be
148 eco [laughs] but you kinda don't think that can.

149

150 I: So you've thought about eco lately?

151

152 P: So umm, you kinda try to, 'cause you know how much stuff is out there. Any way, little
153 way you can help I think is good like even down to trying to not use too much Gladwrap and
154 those kind of things. Recycle your rubbish bins and everything. I mean, I'm not completely
155 eco, but if I lived on a farm or something I would be, but that's quite hard in urban [society],
156 [laughs] to be able to do that so...

157

158 I: But you would keep trying to?

159

160 P: Yup, I definitely would

161

162 I: So you would be trying to change other aspects of your life, that you would be trying to be
163 greener?

164

165 P: Yup, yup. I mean if I had a worm farm, I would definitely, I mean if I could have a worm
166 farm should I say I would definitely have it?

167

168 I: But you can't because of where you are living, and things like that?

169

170 P: Yup, and time [laughs].

171

172 I: Just going back to the body wash, you always buy it?

173

174 P: Yup.

175

176 P: So do you wait for it to be on special or?

177

178 P: No, if we run out of it I just go and buy it. But if it's on special, I will like buy four or five
179 bottles at the same time.

180

181 I: So you stock up?

182

183 P: Yup.

184

185 I: So is that like mainly because you know you will want the product?

186

187 P: Yup, we will run out of it, because there's two of us that use it. We use it up quite quickly.

188

189 I: So you haven't tried the shampoo?

190

191 P: No, because I get my stuff from the hairdressers.

192

193 I: Any particular reason?

194

195 P: Because the kind of hair that I have, because they recommend, because I've got curly hair
196 and I straighten it, I get the stuff that's quite good for my hair. I never looked at the eco stuff.

197

198 I: Have you tried normal shampoos?

199

200 P: Uh yeah, I have but I'd rather... I just don't like them. Like you can buy the cheapest one
201 on the rack and that's probably the worst one for you in terms of shampoo in terms of
202 straightening and stuff. So I would try and go for the other, boutique stuff, not that I like
203 spending too much money on that either.

204

205 I: Oh, so that's quite funny, like how when it comes to body wash you're okay with buying,
206 cheap, relatively cheap one?

207

208 P: Uh no, because I, uh, okay before we went onto this? Probably because I've always used
209 cake soap so I just stayed with that. I never liked, never thought I would like the idea of
210 having liquid soap. And then I, 'cause I used to just use it without a loofah. And now that I
211 use a loofah, I just think oh, this is so much better. And I use maybe four to five squirts of it
212 whereas with normal soap I use heaps kind of thing

213

214 I: So was Ecostore the first one that you used?

215

216 P: Body soap, no, because we used QV at first. And then we moved on.

217

218 I: And that was because of his sensitive skin?

219

220 P: Yeah, yeah and QV I think from the chemist, I think only from the chemist. And this one
221 you can get from the supermarket, and I think that's pretty much any supermarket, so you
222 know.

223

224 [Intermission]

225

226 I: So what happens when you get home with the product, do you put it

227

228 P: If our pump bottles empty I will clear it.

229

230 I: Oh, sorry just before that, like do you take in a bag or plastic bag, or do you bring your own
231 bags?

232

233 P: Oh, at the supermarket? I usually have, cause I usually go to Pak n Save and they don't do,
234 you have to pay for plastic bags. So I usually have the green ones, I don't take it into the
235 store, I just take the trolley to my car and then pack my green bags. Saves me ten cents, well
236 forty, fifty cents sometimes. It all adds up

237

238 I: And that's the main reason behind it?

239

240 P: Um, yeah, and it's also, those green bags, are easy, like the eco bags are easy to carry and
241 stuff and they fill, you can fill quite up a bit with them. But sometimes I do, if I go to a store

242 that provide the bags for free, I will get the supermarket bags 'cause then I will use them as
243 rubbish bin liners.

244

245 I: Yeah, 'cause then you can still reuse it?

246

247 P: Yeah.

248

249 I: So when you take the product home, is there any particular place you store it?

250

251 P: Just in the bathroom.

252

253 I: Would you just treat it like any other body wash, would you use a bit more or...

254

255 P: No I just treat it like any normal body wash. I mean I try not to use too much at once.

256 'Cause it's quite, now that we've got a pump bottle, you can pump quite a [inaudible] at a

257 time, but I only pump once and that's enough.

258

259 I: So you put it into a pump bottle because?

260

261 P: It's just easier.

262

263 I: Could you maybe have wanted to aesthetically, or

264

265 P: 'Cause it's just sitting in our container, the thing we have in our bathroom, to have a

266 shower, it sits right in it, you can't turn it so it's like you gotta take it out, put it on your

267 loofah, and then do it, and then put it back in and then the lid gets moved around and stuff

268 like that. So I just chuck it in that straightaway.

269

270 I: So did you enjoy using the pump cause you can control the amount?

271

272 P: Yup. And it's just easy. You can put your hand and just pump on it, instead of having to

273 open that up and pour it out.

274

275 I: Cool. So the first time you used it, what were your expectations of the product?

276

277 P: Well, I didn't know what it really would be like to have a liquid one. So I think I was using
278 way too much. So over time, I've realised that you don't need so much. I quite enjoy using
279 the loofah now too because its really scrubs the skin, exfoliates, that's the word. Exfoliates
280 your skin at the same time. And it just felt nice and silky, kinda smooth feel to it and your
281 skin didn't feel dry or anything afterwards, some cakes soaps do, I was always using the
282 Protex cake soap, so I was, in that way I was really going down something a little more I
283 don't know if its eco, but it's a lot better for your skin those ones. And then using that one I
284 quite like it, and the smell is quite nice too.

285

286 I: So do you always sniff it?

287

288 P: Well the vanilla one I do. Well this one I don't. The rose and [cardamom].

289

290 I: Oh, so have you tried a couple different ones?

291

292 P: Yeah, I think there is only this one and the vanilla flavoured, well just the ones that I
293 usually find in the supermarket anyway

294

295 I: Do you stick with one now?

296

297 P: Kevin [boyfriend] would, I think he quite likes that one. I just buy a variation, whatever's
298 there, not really fussed.

299

300 I: Um, so you wouldn't go back to cake soap?

301

302 P: Nope, not now.

303

304 I: So you would, you wouldn't go to another body wash?

305

306 P: I probably would, if I wouldn't be able to get hold of it, like when we go to Aussie. Don't
307 think I will be able to get it there, so I will find something else. Yup, but if I was in New
308 Zealand I would definitely buy that stuff.

309

310 I: So in Aussie, what kind of body wash would you be looking for?

311

312 P: I would probably look for an eco one again. But if there's not one, but ones that kinda of,
313 well first thing would be price and smell, so if I don't like either then its eco then I would
314 probably look at it at some other body wash. But all those other ones seemed to be
315 perfumed and yucky, you know.

316

317 I: So you don't like perfumed?

318

319 P: No, because it can react with my skin a little bit. I don't have a real sensitive skin but I can
320 get sensitive, especially on my face, I don't use it on my face, but I'd rather not risk it if I can.

321

322 I: So that's why you look for eco?

323

324 P: Yup

325

326 I: So is that also [the case] in makeup or moisturiser?

327

328 P: Yup cause I'm using another moisturiser from another eco company called Skinfood, yup,
329 so they put no phos, what it is no petrochemicals, I think there is something else, that they
330 don't have also? I only got onto them because at my last work I did a campaign for them and
331 really liked their products anyway, and sampled a lot of stuff [laughs].

332

333 I: So, that's good. So you've tried to look for the eco options?

334

335 P: I think so, I didn't realise it for my face stuff.

336

337 I: What about maybe food or?

338

339 P: We did, the thing we really did was, free range eggs. But I don't know if you can call that
340 eco, can you? In a way?

341

342 I: Its got different dimensions. You know, even the word eco, or green or sustainable, like
343 what do you make of all those?

344

345 P: I don't think really of anything else on the food side of things. I try not to use, as I said
346 Gladwrap as much, I try to use containers more. I try to not to throw plastic bags away, try
347 to recycle everything.

348

349 I: Do you remember what you do with the empty bottles?

350

351 P: Just throw them into the recycling bin.

352

353 I: But you always recycle them?

354

355 P: Yup

356

357 I: But that maybe, you always empty it straight into the pump one?

358

359 P: Yup

360

361 I: So is there other body washes in pumps?

362

363 P: Yup, I can double check tonight for you, I'm pretty sure there are because the QV one
364 came in a pump. And I think one of those [hold up Ecostore body wash bottle] fits in one of
365 those.

366

367 I: So you put the whole thing

368

369 P: Yup

370

371 I: So when it comes to emptying, do you try to scrape up every drop?

372

373 P: Yup, I just tip it upside down into the other one and leave it there for a couple of hours
374 just to let it drip out.

375

376 I: 'Cause you wanna?

377

378 P: 'Cause you wanna... because it would be the same if you got to the end of that and use that
379 and try to tip it upside down to get as much [as you can].

380

381 I: So what do you make of the Ecostore brand, in general?

382

383 P: I think they're doing quite well actually, they're starting to get in the supermarkets quite a
384 bit more, and there's only a couple of eco products on the shelves so it seems like they are
385 infiltrating quite well. I think, I have, 'cause I know the product now, I see it all the time, I do
386 not know much

387

388 I: Is that for work or?

389

390 P: Uh no, just when I do supermarket shopping and something. Uh, I don't know how much
391 advertising or brand experiencing they're doing [laughs], but it's good that they have a store
392 open and website and stuff like that.

393

394 I: So even like the Ecostore brand, is it like green or?

395

396 P: The look and the feel for me? Yeah, I mean even like the way they've done the name quite
397 simple, they didn't really put too much unfriendly stuff in it if you know what I mean, trying
398 to talk marketing talk here, I'm not really marketing. It just seems quite natural to me, the
399 bottles are all quite, they just seem to look like quite normal bottles, they haven't seemed to
400 do something special with them and most of the fronts seem the same and things like that.
401 So still showing that they're aren't putting too much into it and trying to keep it as natural as
402 possible, I suppose.

403

404 I: So when you and your boyfriend purchased the first one, did you check out the packaging
405 much?

406

407 P: Yup, I checked on the back 'cause I didn't know anything, I used some other dishwashing
408 liquid before and that's where I read all the stuff on the back about the chemicals that they
409 don't have in it, and then when he was buying the QV, and I went to the supermarket and
410 saw this on the shelf, I just wanted to, I compared that to QV and they were both the same,
411 and I think this one was cheaper than the QV at that stage, so we tried it.

412

413 I: Sorry was that the dishwash?

414

415 P: No it was the body wash. So I've used some of their dishwashing, then he was using a
416 different type of body wash, I was just using cake soap and then he saw.

417

418 I: Have you ever gifted an Ecostore product?

419

420 P: No I haven't. I might have told family about it, I don't know.

421

422 I: Could you recall any instances, of when you may have recommend it? Or if it came up in
423 discussion?

424

425 P: Um, not really the soap. I know in our old flat we used to use the other variation of
426 dishwashing liquid? And I tried to get them all to use that but they decided it would cost too
427 much money for the flat.

428

429 I: So you wanted them to use the Ecostore one?

430

431 P: Yeah.

432

433 I: And that was because?

434

435 P: I just thought it would be better for the environment.

436

437 I: And you wanted all your flatmates to be?

438

439 P: Yup. And I did all the dishes mostly anyway so [laughs].

440

441 I: That's awful.

442

443 P: Yeah, that's why we left there.

444

445 I: But ultimately it came down to the price for them?

446

447 P: Yup. Definitely for them.

448

449 I: Oh, so you felt that the dishwashing liquid was better for the environment.

450

451 P: Yup.

452

453 I: 'Cause it wasn't

454

455 P: Because of all the chemical free agents that it had in it.

456

457 I: So I guess, for all those, the types of people that you tried to get the dishwasher on, wasn't,
458 weren't very greenies?

459

460 P: Umm, no I think they were. But I think it just came down to price for us at the flat.

461

462 I: Was it quite a big difference?

463

464 P: Yeah, 'cause you can get a thing of dishwashing liquid for like two bucks, and that costs at
465 least seven or eight, or sometimes nine. I can't be bothered keeping track of prices any more.
466 So yeah, it's quite expensive. And you get a smaller amount than what you would with a
467 regular brand, and the normal types of dishwashing liquids.

468

469 I: So um, body wash, dishwashing liquid

470

471 P: That's it.

472

473 I: Um, so you haven't tried of the laundry powders?

474

475 P: Nope, haven't tried any of that stuff.

476

477 I: Any particular reason?

478

479 P: Probably cost. That's pretty much it.

480

481 I: 'Cause if your boyfriend does have sensitive skin, like does he have problems with his
482 washing?

483

484 P: Uh no. He never really seems to actually, and I've never really thought about it, no, I don't
485 think so.
486
487 I: Okay, sweet. So just lastly, do you consider yourself a green person?
488
489 P: As green as I can be [laughs]. I don't know if I'm completely green, I still kinda have the
490 odd, the recycling and everything like that. Like as I said, if I had a farm or something I
491 would definitely do as much as I could please myself, but in urban society, I don't think I can
492 be as green as I want to be. But ideally, I would like to be.
493
494 I: So do you feel like you wish you were?
495
496 P: Yup,
497
498 I: But it comes down to?
499
500 P: Time, price and ease. Those are the three things, yeah.

Interview: David

I: So if you'd just like to start, by walking me through your first experience of an Ecostore product?

P: I think it was actually here at work. I saw it being used as dishwashing liquid, in the kitchen there, and thought that's pretty cool. Its good to see that work is kinda being green bean and using you know, eco friendly products. And then after that I saw it in a supermarket and yeah, ended up buying it.

I: So what did you like about the product?

P: I like the fact that it didn't use nasty chemicals [laughs] and that it was, I guess an environmentally friendly alternative, definitely we should do as much as we possibly can, to be careful with the environment and this is, I guess this is a small step towards that.

I: So what didn't you like about the chemicals?

P: What didn't I like about the chemicals? They, well first of all are bad for humans, there's a lot of research that, I don't think is particularly conclusive saying that these things are safe. But there's a lot of, I guess not hugely scientific findings but reasonably, substantial findings that say chemicals are bad for you. So if you can have a product that does the same job, that doesn't use them, I definitely think is good.

I: So, where did you get that impression from?

P: From the packaging which said, well so the name, you said which impression?

I: That chemicals were bad.

P: Well I guess, probably from peers, family friends, teachers. I come from a school [Steiner] where environmentalism was always a key part of things and so anything that was unnatural, you always looked for an alternative, if possible.

35 I: So you felt your school was an influence on you as a person?

36

37 P: Yup, I think so. School, parents, and yeah friends.

38

39 I: So do you know of any friends, parents or friends who use Ecostore products?

40

41 P: My parents do. I have plenty of friends from school, who do, yes. Friends from the kinda
42 other sets of peers not related from the school, not so much.

43

44 I: So how you know they used it?

45

46 P: Seeing them use it in their houses. So yeah, or seeing them actually sitting in the house.

47

48 I: Did you make any comment or just notice it?

49

50 P: Uh. Not really. Just noticed it.

51

52 I: And that was before you purchased it?

53

54 P: Probably since. Before I purchased it, this [office workplace] would have been the only
55 place I'd seen it.

56

57 I: So do you remember what you did when you went to the supermarket and bought it for
58 the first time?

59

60 P: It was certainly with a general shopping load, so I wasn't going to the supermarket to
61 specifically buy the product but I guess it was on the list of things that I was looking, you
62 know, cleaning products or washing powder or something like that, so I would definitely
63 have taken in the prices and on the shelves and look at all the different alternatives, and
64 then decided that the additional cost was worth paying to get the product. But I do believe
65 that the first time I bought it that it was on special anyway so, that would have heavily
66 influenced the first purchase.

67

68 I: So did you take a good look at the packaging at the store?

69

P: Not really. I guess just a relatively brief look. As I said I wasn't specifically looking for that product solely so you know it was part of a wider shop, so no it would have been a relatively brief look, as I said I would have read the packaging of another product, one of the products at work first, so I had a good idea of what it was about and and noticed that it was plant-based and Ecostore so that would have...

I: So you said you noticed it at work first. So when you saw it, did you have a look at it when you were at work or?

P: I did not initially, but like I saw it quite a few times obviously so. I did have a read at the packaging at one stage, yes.

I: And were quite convinced that you would try it if it were, that you'd look for it in the supermarket.

P: Uh, uh yes. I thought to myself; if it wasn't hideously expensive and not worth it, I would definitely buy it, definitely try it.

I: And why was that? That you would want to try it, even if it was a little more expensive?

P: Because I try and do little bits and pieces that I guess help the environment or have the less detriment or effect possible. All small steps.

I: So how do you feel when you use an Ecostore product?

P: Um, good I guess. Helpful, environmentally friendly, responsible, yeah.

I: So which of the Ecostore products are you using, or have used in the past?

P: Obviously I've used the dishwashing liquid, the rinse aid, I've used the dishwasher powder, have also used the washing powder, and I think I have actually used one of the kitchen sprays as well.

I: Oh wow, that's quite a lot.

105 P: So basically, when there's an option to buy if there's relative price parity between what
106 I'm buying and an Ecostore product, I'll purchase the Ecostore product every time, over a
107 conventional chemical-based one.

108

109 I: So, in terms of those products are there any that you always buy? Or do you switch
110 between different brands at times?

111

112 P: I always buy the rinse aid, I'd say I do switch between the different brands of other
113 products, the kitchen spray, or the cleaning spray in particular, there are about three or four
114 different eco varieties I guess, and I always buy one of them.

115

116 I: Do you see Ecostore as being as equally good as the other eco brands?

117

118 P: Ah, yes.

119

120 I: So when you use the other ones...

121

122 P: So, good from an environmental perspective or from a performance, product performance
123 perspective?

124

125 I: Um, both I guess.

126

127 P: From a product performance perspective, yes they all are about on par I'd say. And they
128 all work very well. From an environmental perspective I'd say, they're probably about the
129 same as well.

130

131 I: So I guess what would make you pick Ecostore over the other brands?

132

133 P: Price

134

135 I: Only?

136

137 P: Pretty much. Yup, as I said, I'll pay slightly more to buy an Ecostore product over a regular

138

139 I: Non-eco brand?

140

141 P: Yes, that's right. However, if there is another eco brand of the same product but not
142 Ecostore, but again the price is similar, if the price is lower than Ecostore that I'll buy that.
143 So price is definitely a determinant but I guess if it's within that eco brand of products, I'll
144 choose the lowest one within that.

145

146 I: So you've tried an Ecostore product in quite a lot of different categories? Is it because
147 you're looking for um, why was that?

148

149 P: Why have I tried it in a lot of different ones?

150

151 I: Uh, yeah.

152

153 P: As I said, basically if I'm buying a cleaning product or a product within a set of or a
154 category that has Ecostore products I will, if prices are reasonably equal, I'll always try to
155 buy an eco product and Ecostore has a lot of products across the lot of those different areas,
156 like it has a lot of those areas covered. And within those sets it's often the cheapest, so I will
157 therefore buy the Ecostore. Kind of, therefore that's the reason I try a lot of them and if I am
158 buying a new product and I see an Ecostore, you know, a new Ecostore range in there, and
159 again if the price isn't too bad I'll definitely buy that over a non-eco product.

160

161 I: Oh, great. Does that extend to other things, not just laundry powder like cleaning products,
162 but like other things that you buy?

163

164 P: Yup. Absolutely, I'll try and buy organic over non-organic, wherever again the price is
165 reasonable, sometimes it, organic seems to price itself out of the market, you might pay ten
166 bucks for a five hundred gram block of cheese, so in those cases I won't buy organic but if
167 there is reasonable price parity, obviously often there isn't, that it's not exact, but I'm happy
168 to pay slightly more for an organic, or I guess an eco, a greener alternative as opposed to
169 your standard store.

170

171 I: And that goes back to the feeling of that when you buy these products, they...

172

173 P: Yes, I guess the feeling is that yeah, one better for you, but two, having a smaller impact
174 on the greater good.

175

176 I: So you said you always use the rinse aid? What's the reasoning behind that?

177

178 P: Price is reasonable. And rinse aid is pretty nasty chemically. So I guess it's better than a
179 bad product [laughs].

180

181 I: So do you see some like the rinse aid against the laundry powder against the dishwasher,
182 is chemicals more important to some of those categories?

183

184 P: Uh, yes. Rinse aid I know is horribly chemically. So I'll try and buy an eco choice, pretty
185 much always for that. Laundry powder is pretty bad, so you know if the eco choice is
186 available there and it's not too much more hideously expensive I will buy it, but I guess
187 dishwashing liquid I'm not quite so fussy on, but again, if there's a reasonable price parity,
188 I'll buy an eco one. But again if, if the price difference is big, particularly with dishwashing
189 liquid for instance, I will buy a non-green product.

190

191 I: This might be a tricky question. How would you say the price parity between an eco-
192 choice and a non-eco choice, for dishwashing liquid or rinse?

193

194 P: Rinse aid? Probably a dollar. So if it's a dollar more expensive I'd buy Ecostore. If it would
195 be say two bucks more expensive on its like four or five bucks or something like that, five or
196 six bucks.

197

198 I: So would there be some products that you would be willing to pay more? If you can kind of
199 compare the different products?

200

201 P: Yes, I guess so. The rinse aid I would be willing to pay more. The kitchen spray I would be
202 willing to pay more. Dishwashing liquid, I wouldn't, wouldn't pay more.

203

204 I: And that's because?

205

206 P: Because I think it's probably a closer, has, the effect that it has on the environment for a
207 dishwashing liquid has not quite so harsh, has for rinse aid. Or for washing powder.

208

209 I: So maybe we'll just run with one product?

210

211 P: Yup

212

213 I: So maybe you could tell me what happens when you take the rinse aid home?

214

215 P: Okay, sweet. I purchase it, put it in the shopping trolley

216

217 I: Oh sorry, where do you shop?

218

219 P: Pak n Save

220

221 I: Do you bring your own bags or?

222

223 P: Um, no. [laughs]. Put it in the trolley cause you don't get given plastic bags you have to
224 purchase them, I don't purchase plastic bags but we use cardboard boxes, so we take them
225 to the car, empty it, take the stuff from the shopping trolley, and take it out to the car and
226 put all the stuff in the cardboard boxes, which we reuse for like three or four years because
227 they're pretty good cardboard boxes. And take them home, so yeah we definitely don't use
228 disposable bags. When shopping at Pak n Save and certainly try to avoid them as much as
229 possible. And when we do get a plastic bag it's always kept to be reused.

230

231 I: So your reasoning behind the cardboard boxes, is that because...

232

233 P: They're practical. They're good, sturdy cardboard boxes. No reason, the only reason is
234 that we don't like buying plastic bags every time, and can see it's detrimental so if we can
235 kind of avoid buying them and use boxes, we may as well, there's no reason for them to be
236 cardboard, if they're plastic boxes it would make no difference.

237

238 I: Detrimental in terms of economic or environmental sense?

239

240 P: Environmental sense.

241

242 I: So you do see plastic bags as being kinda a...

243

244 P: Terrible, terrible things. Yup.

245

246 I: But in other stores, where they are free do you...

247

248 P: Always when we're doing a shop we take the cardboard boxes. If we don't have boxes or
249 anything to put stuff into the car, we'll use plastic bags, but fill plastic bags up as much as
250 possible, so not to use too many.

251

252 I: So do you always make quite an effort to bring a cardboard box?

253

254 P: Um, yes, yup. And we've got reusable shopping bags in the car as a second option if we
255 don't have boxes.

256

257 I: Oh okay, sweet. Oh sorry you were telling me what happens when you take it home?

258

259 P: So chuck it in the car [laughs], drive home, unpack stuff, it will go in the cupboard, and it'll
260 basically be left there until the dishwasher requires rinse aid or we run out of the last bottle.
261 And if [the dishwasher] requires rinse aid then just put it in the dishwasher, fill it up, and
262 then return the remainder in the bottle back into the cupboard and we leave it there.

263

264 I: Are there any particular ways you might use an Ecostore product any different to a normal
265 product?

266

267 P: Uh, um, [pause] no. [pause] uh, no I don't think so. From a rinse aid perspective, definitely
268 not.

269

270 I: So before you were using Ecostore, what product were you using?

271

272 P: What have been, probably Finish rinse aid. Dishwashing liquid would have been, what's
273 the one in the little green bottles, uh sun...

274

275 I: Sunlight?

276

277 P: Sunlight, probably. Uh, no I don't think it was Sunlight, but something like that. It comes in
278 a small bottle, concentrated.

279

280 I: Sounds like you made a gradual change to Ecostore product across categories, across the
281 time?

282

283 P: Um yes, as I've said as they've become available in the supermarkets, across the... it
284 wasn't if as if everything suddenly had an Ecostore alternative. I think they rolled out into
285 Pak n Save probably relatively gradually. And obviously we don't suddenly buy every
286 cleaning product or product within that type of a time, it's when the other ones run out.
287 Yeah, replace it, so, we needed to replace it.

288

289 I: Did you keep an eye out for Ecostore products, or did you just notice it?

290

291 P: When purchasing something we definitely had a look at all the alternatives. So, you know,
292 don't solely go the single brand that I always buy, always check around to see what else is
293 there. Didn't specifically look out for Ecostore but if it was in the set that you looked at, I'd
294 definitely notice it and check the price, certainly, specials on the tags at Pak n Save, when
295 they are visible, that makes a huge difference towards noticing it and yeah, deciding it to buy
296 the product.

297

298 I: So in terms of performance, you haven't, compared to the not-chemical products, did you
299 find the Ecostore products to be?

300

301 P: Excellent. The kitchen sprays that we've used have been better than the chemical
302 products that we have used. I've been very, very impressed with them, with rinse aid I've
303 noticed no difference. You know, certainly none of the products have performed any worse
304 than their non-eco alternatives, yeah. So from a product performance base, extremely
305 pleased and no reason not to buy them again from that perspective.

306

307 I: Are they quite visible in your household?

308

309 P: Nope, they're in cupboards.

310

311 I: Have you ever had someone come in and mention it?

312

313 P: Nope they're in cupboards. I certainly don't, don't go out of my way to display my
314 Ecostore credentials to anyone. No, it's a personal decision and not something that I have
315 any desire to preach to other people or, to show off to other people.
316

317 I: Why's that?
318

319 P: [pause] I'm not egotistical [laughs] no. They've got their place and they're out of the way
320 that's where stuff goes so, I'm not going to make a specific effort to not put them [not] where
321 they goes, to show it off to other people.
322

323 I: So it's a strictly personal choice, but you feel it's not really something you would tell other
324 people to buy?
325

326 P: No, I don't have a, yeah it's my personal choice, I wouldn't make people buy anything, I'd,
327 I'd recommend them from a performance point of view because I think they're good, but I
328 wouldn't go out of my way to say that you guys should buy this stuff. Like, have a look at
329 this; it's proudly displayed on my window sill for everyone to see, or my trophy cabinet.
330

331 I: So have you ever gifted or recommended it to someone?
332

333 P: Um, no.
334

335 I: But you mentioned that your family, friends and other social groups are using it, Ecostore
336 products?
337

338 P: Yup.
339

340 I: Is that something that have ever come up in discussion or is that something you've
341 noticed?
342

343 P: Just something I've noticed that hasn't come up in a discussion.
344

345 I: Right. So could tell me what happens when you finish one of the Ecostore products?
346

347 P: Rinse the bottle, for instance, dishwashing liquid, when it's empty and you can't pour any
348 more in, you put some more water into the container, shake it around to get the residue out,
349 put that into the sink to finish off your dishwashing, then put the packet into the recycling.

350

351 I: Yup, so you always recycle the packaging?

352

353 P: Yes, fastidious recycler.

354

355 I: Sorry?

356

357 P: I always recycle. Everything. Everything recyclable, pretty much. Yup, and definitely
358 plastic.

359

360 I: So your desire to get the residue out, what's behind that?

361

362 P: Use as much of the product as possible. Get the most out of it possible. Also, I like cleaning
363 the stuff before it goes into recycling so it doesn't have all the horrors in it that can kinda
364 leech into places.

365

366 I: So you mentioned that you sometimes go off the Ecostore products. So each time you re-
367 evaluate based on the current conditions?

368

369 P: Based on cost. I'd, if there were two alternatives an Ecostore and a non-Ecostore, I always
370 buy the Ecostore product if there is a reasonable price parity. If the price is hugely over the
371 top, I'll buy an alternative. But if you know, from one time to the next, if the cost is still the
372 same I'll always buy the Ecostore product.

373

374 I: So what do you make of the Ecostore brand, in general?

375

376 P: Make of it, as in how do I feel about it?

377

378 I: Yup

379

380 P: Well, I really like it. I think they've got a cool little brand. I like the packaging, it's real nice
381 and plain. And not over the top. I think the packaging reflects the brand values of being

382 environmentally friendly and I think the name, of the brand, the brand name, reflects that
383 really nicely as well. And I have a really positive feeling towards them.

384

385 I: So you do believe, you feel that their products are quite, do you feel their products are
386 quite green.

387

388 P: I feel they are relatively green. As always with these things, unless you actually go through
389 every single product and check you know chemical by chemical what's in them, you don't
390 know how hundred percent green they are. But I think from the claims made on the
391 packaging, its pretty obvious that they are better than some of the synthetic chemical-based
392 materials. So yeah, I'm certainly a little bit sceptical of how green any of these products can
393 be. Rinse aid, for instance, there's so, there has to be something in there to make the stuff
394 clean and sparkly all the time. But I think it's, I definitely feel it's better than the synthetic
395 alternatives.

396

397 I: Yup. So you said some things on the packaging made you think it was quite good?

398

399 P: Um, yes. The fact that it said it was plant-based. Definitely stuff that comes from natural,
400 plants and stuff is, has a tick in my book, as you know, being better environmentally. Skin
401 friendly and garden friendly also as well and the fact that it says no nasty chemicals, so...

402

403 I: So you just kinda believe what they put on it, to some degree?

404

405 P: Yes. Definitely. I'm not a, not a chemist. So if I turn around and look at all the ingredients
406 from a lot of things, I don't have time to do that. And I don't have the knowledge to do that
407 and compare this with this, I have reasonable trust in the, I guess Fair Trading Act, that
408 people can't claim to be something they're not. So yeah, so I certainly think their credentials
409 are reasonable.

410

411 I: So um, have you ever noticed much of Ecostore's advertising or?

412

413 P: No, can't say I have. I may have seen a magazine ad once, but I can't really remember it

414

415 I: So are there any product categories that you do buy chemical products for?

416

417 P: Obviously, I don't solely buy Ecostore stuff, so you mean, primarily or always?

418

419 I: Just sometimes. So if you ever moved onto something like Sunlight, or Persil?

420

421 P: Certainly [for] washing powder, yes. I would often, I would often buy washing powder in
422 bulk, so if I'm not looking to go into the supermarket and purchase a small box, then yes I
423 will buy a big chemical alternative from The Warehouse or the hardware, and what you buy
424 five or ten kilograms or something to keep the cost down.

425

426 I: So that's purely to keep the cost down?

427

428 P: Yup.

429

430 I: So do you...

431

432 P: Again, if they had Ecostore washing powder, in bulk, and there was relative price parity,
433 I'd definitely buy that instead. But it is a matter of cost.

434

435 I: Have you ever taken a look at their store. They do sell bulk.

436

437 P: No, I haven't. I don't know how to find their store.

438

439 I: It's in Freeman's Bay

440

441 P: Oh. Really?

442

443 I: Or their website?

444

445 P: No, I haven't looked at their website, either. It's not particularly obvious that they have a
446 physical store or a website.

447

448 I: So what do you make of eco, environmental, or green in general in products?

449

450 P: I think it is excellent and it is a trend that will only continue and grow. I personally would
451 much prefer to use an eco product than a non-eco product. If you factor in the availability
452 and not costing too much. I think it's really a necessity.

453

454 I: Do you consider yourself quite green?

455

456 P: Certainly in some aspects yes. But I think in some aspects I know I should do better than I
457 do.

458

459 I: Such as?

460

461 P: Such as use of motor vehicle, you know pretty much

462

463 I: Have you always been quite a green person or?

464

465 P: Yes, I think it has always been a part of my family's values. And also my school's [Steiner-
466 based] and peers' values as well.

467

468 I: Yup, so could you just describe how they influenced you in terms of being a green person?
469 Or having green values?

470

471 P: I guess political, political, you know which way I point I guess, for lack of better words.
472 Political decisions, recycling, always recycle, always compost stuff when available, try and
473 avoid using plastic bags, wherever possible. Try and eat organics, kinda wherever possible
474 and grow your own food when I can.

475

476 I: So how do you feel when you're doing these green things?

477

478 P: Um good [laughs]. Certainly feel like it is the right thing to do. And a positive step towards
479 kinda improving the environmental things. I certainly understand, that I probably could do
480 more, and could be more proactive, but I think by virtue of doing something at all, is a good
481 thing, every little bit helps. Recycling for instance I make sure I, although sometimes you
482 want to be lazy, you just wanna chuck your tin of baked beans tin in the bin. I make sure that
483 I make the effort to wash it out and put it into the recycling.

484

485 I: And that's every time?

486

487 P: Yup

488

489 I: So you do put in quite a lot of work to...

490

491 P: Yup, absolutely. Keep an eye on rubbish output from home, so for instance I guess the, we
492 always have more recycling than we do have rubbish and I think that's a positive thing.

493

494 I: Yup, so you said you it made you feel good. But like good to whom? If that's not a too tricky
495 question.

496

497 P: I guess personally, first of all. Good to know that you're doing the right thing from a
498 personal perspective but also good to know that I'm not, again going back to recycling,
499 because it's a good example, good to know that I'm not putting plastic in a landfill that will
500 be in there for hundreds of years and will definitely impact on society further down the
501 track.

502

503 I: So in the future are you planning to be greener or?

504

505 P: Ah, yes definitely. I'll use more green products as financial ability allows me to, when
506 you're looking at the cost, it doesn't have so much influence on what you purchase. If ideally
507 I could eat organic, afford to eat all organic food, use only green cleaning products I would
508 do that.

509

510 I: So do you feel that cost is one of the primary, or one of the main constraints?

511

512 P: Cost is the primary constraint. Cost and availability. If its available but it's too expensive, I
513 won't buy it. If it's not available, I can't buy it. If it's available and the price is reasonable, I'll
514 always buy it.

515

516 I: So like what kind of, where is it not available, in your opinion?

517

518 P: Um not, well there's not products for every category of stuff that you need.

519

520 I: Is there a specific category you've looked at, that you wish had an eco alternative?

521

522 P: Not really, I mean thinking about things maybe oven cleaner? I don't know if there's an
523 Ecostore oven cleaner, I haven't ever seen it [laughs]. Yeah I'm trying to think what else, you
524 use to clean stuff, yeah, no, that's pretty much all.

525

526 I: Um, so you mentioned that you don't like imposing your green values on other people, but
527 is your family and friends all quite green?

528

529 P: Relatively, yes.

530

531 I: And that's based on what you see or talk about?

532

533 P: Uh, what I see, my experience, of dealing with them, living with them, staying with them.

534

535 I: But you personally never try to influence, their choices?

536

537 P: No. The only influence would be if we were specifically shopping together and we were
538 looking at a specific product and I could say, yes, I've had a good experience with this, I
539 know it works, I reckon we should buy it. Other than that, no, I don't go out and promote,
540 you guys should buy that and it's really good. Yeah, uh nope.

Interview: Sylvia

I: If you could just start by walking me through your first experience with an Ecostore product?

P: Ecostore. Oh, that would have been a long time ago. Probably first noticed the store down in Freeman's Bay, which looks quite exciting, doesn't it? So you go along and go in there and have a look, so I can't imagine how long, whenever it probably first open, it probably would have been years.

I: So how did you notice it?

P: Driving past. And it's a nice little building, it was all nicely renovated so

I: And did you go in the store? At that time?

P: Yes.

I: So your first experience was with the store?

P: Yes. Yes, definitely.

I: So, what did you make of the store when you went inside?

P: I liked it. Its got quite a nice feel to it, it feels very eco I think. With nice wooden shelves and its feels very earthy, but not in a dirty way [laughs]

I: Do you think some people can think that eco is sometimes dirty?

P: Yeah, I think so. People kinda always associate that sort of thing with some kind of, you know, dodgy backyard store with you know. It doesn't, it looks professional. It's always looked professional.

I: So how do you make of eco yourself?

35

36 P: How do I make of it?

37

38 I: What do you make of eco? What comes to mind?

39

40 P: Eco? Um, natural, healthy, not tested on animals. Chemical-free, good for the planet.

41

42 I: So did you buy anything when you first went to the Ecostore?

43

44 P: Yes

45

46 I: Do you remember what it was, per chance?

47

48 P: It would have been spray cleaner, probably, that's what I would have started with,
49 something simple to see if it works. Something useful, something you can use a lot around
50 the house.

51

52 I: And how did you feel about using the product?

53

54 P: Yeah, it was good.

55

56 I: Did you use it the same way you would of with a normal product?

57

58 P: Yeah, yes, absolutely.

59

60 I: And are you still using it now?

61

62 P: No, actually I don't use the spray cleaner any more. I use a different brand of eco product
63 [laughs], not from the Ecostore. Yeah.

64

65 I: So what was the reasoning behind that?

66

67 P: The Ecostore spray and wipe is not one of the strongest ones available on the market. So
68 it doesn't get the kitchen super clean, it's not the best for fighting oils and cleaning up. So,
69 well, originally it was just about the only product you could buy, from the Ecostore, but since

70 then a lot of different brands have come along like Greenworks, and Beauty Engineered,
71 there's so many more in the market now so you sorta have that option to test out other
72 brands that are in the same vein.

73
74 I: So how would you compare the different brands?

75
76 P: I really like Ecostore. Cause they are a little Kiwi company, and the B_E_E products are
77 also really good. But I tend to go to the Ecostore so I can buy lots of different things. Whilst
78 with B_E_E products you're really limited as they are in supermarkets and supermarkets
79 obviously have nowhere near the range

80
81 I: Do you always buy from the Ecostore of the supermarket?

82
83 P: Mostly from the supermarket.

84
85 I: Oh really. And the reasoning behind that is?

86
87 P: [laughs] 'Cause I like shopping. So you get the whole experience, and you see things,
88 you're not going to get that much at the supermarket. You know, sometimes at the
89 supermarket they've got two or three products so at Ecostore and you can see the new items
90 and chop and change and try something new.

91
92 I: So how often would you be going to the Ecostore?

93
94 P: [laughs] Probably would be at least once a month

95
96 I: Oh okay. So do you do just one shop or?

97
98 P: Yes, yup. And I get my refills.

99
100 I: Oh okay. Would you mind just walking me through a typical time when you go the
101 Ecostore and what you do?

103 P: Oh, yeah. It would usually be a Saturday afternoon. And I would take my refill bottles, and
104 go in and have them refilled. And wander around the store and look at everything, and look
105 for the new products.

106

107 I: And would you buy any new products?

108

109 P: Yeah, definitely.

110

111 I: So you mentioned that you get refilled, what are the products that you get refilled?

112

113 P: Laundry liquid, and the multi-purpose cleaner. And the floor cleaner.

114

115 I: I'm actually quite new to the refilling thing, how does it actually work?

116

117 P: Oh, so when you buy the product, you can just take the container and they'll fill it up for
118 you. They've got massive big tanks there full of the product and they'll fill it up for you. It's a
119 little bit cheaper. But more than that, its saving having to constantly buy plastic bottles isn't
120 it?

121

122 I: So what's the main reason that you like refilling it?

123

124 P: It was a bit cheaper [laughs], at the end of the day.

125

126 I: So the bottles that you actually use are like these size [pointing to 500ml bottle]?

127

128 P: No, they're bigger. I usually buy litres.

129

130 I: So how do you find actually using it, if the bottles that big?

131

132 P: It doesn't bother me. In fact, in the handwash I buy the massive one, its five litres I think. I
133 go through so much soap like you wouldn't believe it [laughs].

134

135 I: So at home, where do you put the handwash?

136

137 P: I refill it into bottles that sit in the sink. Or in the shower. But I keep the twenty-litre thing
138 in the garage. And then I go down and refill them.

139

140 I: Why's it in the garage?

141

142 P: 'Cause it's enormous. It's not very attractive; it's not designed to be up for show. I think
143 it's probably for commercial use. It's really, really big. So I'm like, hey, can you help me put
144 this into the car? [laughs]

145

146 I: So it must be quite expensive, to buy that much at a time.

147

148 P: Yeah, it's heaps. It's seventy or eighty dollars or something?

149

150 I: But you go through it

151

152 P: I go through so much. I if I had these little 500mls I would have to, I would be going
153 through two a week it would be crazy, so...

154

155 I: But the bottles that you do put in it in? Did you buy them?

156

157 P: Yeah, you know, they're just pretty ones from Living and Giving, or something.

158

159 I: So what was the reasoning behind putting in into the smaller bottles?

160

161 P: 'Cause I can't use the big one. It's just a big massive refill. Yeah, it's a big drum. Yeah, I
162 would, you know because for bathrooms and so forth you wouldn't really have them out
163 because it's plasticky and not so pretty.

164

165 I: So what are some of the main Ecostore products that you use, or have used in the past?

166

167 P: The spray cleaner, the floor cleaner, the hand soap, the body wash, laundry liquid and I
168 did use laundry powder as well, but I moved off that and I recently tried the dishwasher
169 tablets and the shampoo and conditioner and [laughs] what else? I've got the multi-purpose
170 cleaner, very good product. And I think I've had glass cleaner as well.

171

172 I: So what's the story behind why you use Ecostore products across so many different
173 things?

174

175 P: Oh, because I use products that aren't tested on animals. And so, almost everything in the
176 supermarket is animal tested. So I have to buy everything from a place like Ecostore.

177

178 I: So what's your belief on animal testing, testing on animals?

179

180 P: I don't believe in it. Anti-vivisection [laughs]. So I wouldn't buy anything that was tested
181 on animals.

182

183 I: And that extends to everything in your life?

184

185 P: Yeah. everything.

186

187 I: So how did that come about? Have you always been like that or?

188

189 P: Yeah, pretty much so.

190

191 I: So, you were like growing up in your family.

192

193 P: Uh, no. My family was, like complete opposites. They were, like my dad would have been,
194 use animals for whatever you want [laughs] but no, I was like about thirteen when I decided
195 to become a vegetarian and then from there it just progressed and then moved into those
196 sort of areas. Sort of a natural flow really, once you make those choices in your life you can
197 end up going down the road [laughs] you try to, you know, encourage free-range and
198 organic and not tested on animals.

199

200 I: So before you used Ecostore, what were you using?

201

202 P: I probably would have used something like from the chemical range.

203

204 I: And how did you feel about those products?

205

206 P: Fine, but when something, but when something that came along and took all that away, in
207 the beginning there wasn't an Ecostore. Like when I was younger, no one cared. It is
208 relatively new, the whole, the being eco.

209

210 I: So when you first went in the Ecostore, when it was relatively new, could you remember
211 what you did in the store?

212

213 P: Uh, no. It would have been a long time ago.

214

215 I: So like uh, checking out the products or?

216

217 P: Yeah, well it's exciting 'cause it would have been; it's a store full of exciting things. Like a
218 garden section, a beauty section and the household cleaning section. It sort of covers
219 everything. You can go in there and buy your make up. It's great that everything's there.

220

221 I: So how did you know what it was all about? Was that through just driving past or?

222

223 P: I think would have been quite well publicised back then. So you know, when it was
224 originally, I think maybe the couple used to sell it from home or something, or they used to
225 sell it some other way before the Ecostore turned up down by Victoria Park markets. There
226 would have been publicity around it, at the time.

227

228 I: So of the Ecostore products that you have used in the past. How many of them do you still
229 use now?

230

231 P: Most of them apart from the spray cleaner, the spray and wipe. I use everything else in the
232 house is Ecostore.

233

234 I: Um, have you tried any other ones or?

235

236 P: Other brands?

237

238 I: Other eco brands, or chemical brands?

239

240 P: Yeah yup, well I've tried the other eco brands, B_E_E and Simple Green. Not Simple Green,
241 it's that one that Synergy [Synergy Brand Experience, experiential marketing company]
242 were promoting, something green. Not Simple Green.
243
244 I: Greenworks?
245
246 P: Yeah, it was Greenworks.
247
248 I: So why did you try to try those ones?
249
250 P: Just to see if they were better, mmm.
251
252 I: And were they?
253
254 P: Yeah, the spray cleaner was from the Greenworks. Unfortunately, sorry Ecostore [laughs].
255 The spray cleaner was really good, it was just like one of the chemical ones, of course they're
256 really good, they've been built in some great scientific factory haven't they?
257
258 I: So have you tried quite a lot of alternatives, across the Ecostore ranges? Like the floor
259 cleaner, or the body wash or?
260
261 P: Yes.
262
263 I: But you haven't found those alternatives?
264
265 P: No, still go back to Ecostore. Ecostore is actually quite well priced as well.
266
267 I: And you always buy from the actual store?
268
269 P: Yup. If I was in the supermarket and I'd run out of laundry detergent I might buy one if it's
270 an emergency, but generally I am going to refill.
271
272 I: So were there any occurrences where you just happened to run out of a product?
273
274 P: No, not really.

275

276 I: So you're always quite well stocked up?

277

278 P: Yeah.

279

280 I: So you mentioned that you go on a monthly basis? And you stock up on quite a few things?

281

282 P: Yup.

283

284 I: So what are the kinda things that you typically stock up on when you go there?

285

286 P: The laundry liquid and multi-purpose cleaner. They would be the two main products.

287 Sometimes soap, if I want to buy a bar soap. Just 'cause it's nice for a change instead of

288 liquid.

289

290 I: So how do you feel when you use the Ecostore product? So maybe we'll just take the floor
291 cleaner or is there any time where you've used chemical products, ever?

292

293 P: Like spray and wipe or whatever?

294

295 I: Yeah. So how would compare the Ecostore product compared to the chemical ones?

296

297 P: They're just as good. Just as good, yeah.

298

299 I: And is that across everything or?

300

301 P: Yeah.

302

303 I: So you always feel that it gets the job done?

304

305 P: Yeah, absolutely.

306

307 I: And you'll definitely stick with it?

308

309 P: Yeah, definitely.

310

311 I: Cool. So, what happens when you go back home from the Ecostore? Just a typical time

312

313 P: Well, I put the stuff away.

314

315 I: Oh well was there any particular place you put them away. You mentioned you put the big
316 one in the garage

317

318 P: Oh yeah, the giant one.

319

320 I: Is there anything else that is stored in an unusual place?

321

322 P: No, they're just in the right cupboards, you know. If it's for the kitchen it's in the kitchen
323 cupboard. Bathroom, cleaning supplies go into the bathroom cupboard. So everything is in
324 its right room.

325

326 I: So is there anything else, what do you put into the little bottles?

327

328 P: Hand soap, and body wash.

329

330 I: And anything else you buy in bulk?

331

332 P: Nah, just refill.

333

334 I: Do you find that you keep your bottles quite clean then?

335

336 P: Yeah.

337

338 I: 'Cause it might get a little dirty over use.

339

340 P: What they quite often do is when you take it in for a refill, they have got some already
341 refilled, so they tend to, they can take yours, and you don't actually get yours back. They'll go
342 back and wash it for the next person so it's kinda like getting the gas bottle at the gas station.
343 You don't refill yours; sometimes you get a fresh one.

344

345 I: Oh, do you get a discount when you do that?

346

347 P: Yup.

348

349 I: Oh, is it kinda like a couple, or is it much [laughs]?

350

351 P: Yeah, I think it is like ten percent or something. But then again they've also got the loyalty
352 card, which is exciting.

353

354 I: And that really appeals to you?

355

356 P: Yeah. Stamp, stamp, ooh, free calico bag [laughs].

357

358 I: And you're definitely planning to continue use the Ecostore?

359

360 P: Yeah, definitely.

361

362 I: So how often would you use Ecostore products at home?

363

364 P: Every day.

365

366 I: So like, body wash and shampoo in the morning?

367

368 P: Yeah and hand wash.

369

370 I: So what were your first expectations when you used the Ecostore product?

371

372 P: Well I didn't think it was going to be too great. Because I thought it might be hard when
373 you take all the chemicals out. And you haven't got the filthy great Colgate laboratory to test
374 everything in, then maybe it wouldn't work that well. That maybe, it wouldn't be as good as
375 chemical. Its changed over the years though, like the formulas have changed and they quite
376 often say new and improved and they really are. They're obviously investing in it still as it
377 goes along. Items are not the same ingredients or the same formulas as they were ten years
378 ago.

379

380 I: And how did you notice that?

381

382 P: Quite often they would have changed the packaging and you would have noticed that the
383 packaging had changed. And it would say new improved or it would have, the laundry liquid
384 has just come out and it got like a new sticker on it that says twenty eight washes from this
385 container, it's more concentrated. And you really notice it, like when I went to use it I put far
386 too much in, I put in a normal quantity and it was bubbles everywhere and I was like, uh no.

387

388 I: And that was the first time you used it?

389

390 P: Yeah, yeah that was the new concentrated one and I was like yeah, that one is definitely
391 stronger. So yeah, it's good that they, you know a lot has changed in the years so, it's good
392 that they didn't think that they could just make what they did ten years ago and keep
393 making it. They've got to keep changing the formula and keep up with the market, otherwise
394 someone else will just come in, won't they?

395

396 I: So you're quite positive of the changes they're making?

397

398 P: Yeah, definitely.

399

400 I: And you've taken note of them?

401

402 P: Mm, yeah.

403

404 I: Do you take much notice of the packaging, generally?

405

406 P: Yup, it's pretty. It's always got nice pictures on it.

407

408 I: So for new products you buy, or even the old ones, do you ever check the back of the pack?

409

410 P: Make sure it's got a little rabbit on the back, um [laughs]?

411

412 I: Do you?

413

414 P: Probably not so much these days. I did notice with their laundry detergent because you
415 know, it's quite noticeable. It said new and improved so I, I wouldn't ordinarily look at it, I
416 would just go oh, that's what I buy.

417

418 I: Is that because you know it's the Ecostore?

419

420 P: Yeah, yup.

421

422 I: So you quite trust them as a brand?

423

424 P: Yes, definitely.

425

426 I: And that's based on your perceptions of them?

427

428 P: Yup.

429

430 I: As you looked for the rabbit and anything else?

431

432 P: Everything.

433

434 I: Like what other things?

435

436 P: Like what other things. [Pause]. If I went to Farmers to buy beauty products, or make up,
437 or anything like that, yeah.

438

439 I: Would that be a deal breaker if it didn't have it?

440

441 P: Yeah, absolutely. If it hadn't got it, I'd go and research it before I bought it.

442

443 I: Have you ever done much research on Ecostore?

444

445 P: Not really. I went on their website once and I thought maybe I should order online, but
446 then again I'm not much of an online orderer as I quite like the shopping experience.

447

448 I: So what do you feel the shopping experience gives you?

449

450 P: Yeah I just like shopping. I like being, going somewhere and talking to someone.

451

452 I: Do you often talk about being green or sustainable at the Ecostore? Just seems like a
453 natural thing to do.

454

455 P: No, I don't actually. Yeah, normally I would ask about the products or, but no, I don't talk
456 about the green. The greenery of it [laughs].

457

458 I: I don't know what the staff there are like.

459

460 P: Yeah, they're really nice.

461

462 I: Are they quite green?

463

464 P: Yeah, yeah.

465

466 I: But they're not pushy in green values?

467

468 P: No, not at all. Not at all. But they look it. They don't look like they would work at Smith
469 and Caugheys [laughs]. They look like earthy people.

470

471 I: So of the products you can't refill, what happens with the packaging when you finish it?

472

473 P: Oh, I recycle it; I put it into the recycle bin.

474

475 I: Always?

476

477 P: Yeah.

478

479 I: Do you ever have any other uses for the packaging?

480

481 P: Uh, no. In the bin [laughs] but then again, it just goes to landfill, doesn't it? [laughs]

482

483 I: So have you ever put it in the bin, or you just recycle?

484

485 P: I always recycle, my bins always full with everything else. So, I have to use the right bin.

486

487 I: Your rubbish bin?

488

489 P: Yeah [laughs].

490

491 I: So do you buy these to be sustainable or to be eco?

492

493 P: No, yeah not, I don't think to be sustainable to be honest, I don't think I'm doing it because
494 I'm worried about landfill, I'm not worried about saving the planet so much as I am about
495 not using chemicals myself, so I guess at a selfish level to try and protect myself from what
496 potentially could be dangerous I suppose, and more to protect myself really, and the
497 animals.

498

499 I: So if you feel that you're using chemical products, how does that make you feel?

500

501 P: I'm just a bit worried about, you hear all the bad press about it and you go, maybe they do
502 cause cancer, maybe it is what we've done wrong that we've, whoops, so sickly now there's a
503 race, so maybe that what we've done to ourselves living with the chemicals we bathe
504 ourselves on a daily basis. So you go, well if it's something you can take out of you life, then
505 why not?

506

507 I: As a commitment, did you make that commitment like quite a while ago?

508

509 P: Yup a long time ago.

510

511 I: And was there kind of a tipping point when you did?

512

513 P: Yeah, I think so, I think you just read just a lot in the magazines and you sorta study it and
514 then people around you get sick and you tend to research don't you and you try to work out,
515 what's happening on a global scale and then you sorta go a lot of the evidence shows
516 chemicals are really bad for us. So yeah you go that's it, no more chemicals.

517

518 I: Yup. so that's a commitment you've made to every aspect of your life?

519

520 P: Yeah.

521

522 I: Has it been quite hard?

523

524 P: Um, no not really.

525

526 I: 'Cause there's always been options available?

527

528 P: Yeah, we're pretty lucky in New Zealand, aren't we? Lots of, there's lots of things to buy,
529 that aren't chemically, yup.

530

531 I: Have you ever been overseas for a bit?

532

533 P: Mm-hmm

534

535 I: And you have had to use other chemical products?

536

537 P: Yeah you know. Uh, actually no. When I go on holiday, I take my stuff with me [laughs]. So,
538 I'll be fine. I don't even use the shower and, the soap from the hotel. I'll just take my own
539 stuff; I'll just take it from my refill bottles. Life stays the same for me.

540

541 I: So what's the reasoning behind using your own products?

542

543 P: I just don't, I don't know what they are supplying you with and it's bound to be chemically
544 in hotels, they're about whatever's cheapest.

545

546 I: So you just leave it there?

547

548 P: Yeah, I don't touch it. I don't steal it [laughs]. You know, those people who fill up their
549 suitcases. What am I going to do with it, its like nah, its just gotta, I always take everything
550 with me.

551

552 I: Cool. So have you ever done any research? You mentioned that at that time you had a look
553 around.

554

555 P: Yup.

556

557 I: So was that on the Internet?

558

559 P: Yeah, and magazines, you just read articles.

560

561 I: 'Cause you were worried about the whole chemicals thing?

562

563 P: Mm, yup.

564

565 I: So how do you see Ecostore as different to other eco brands?

566

567 P: Umm

568

569 I: So you mentioned that you use the Greenworks brand?

570

571 P: Yeah, but I don't think Greenworks are a New Zealand [company].

572

573 I: No, I think it's owned by Clorox.

574

575 P: Yeah. Though it's not as, I kind of think of it this as being quite Kiwi.

576

577 I: And you're quite keen to support local stuff?

578

579 P: Yeah, definitely.

580

581 I: Is there any particular reason why?

582

583 P: For New Zealand? I support everything New Zealand. It's very important, it makes
584 everything better. It makes it better if it's made here, it gives people jobs.

585

586 I: So you find it not too pricey?

587

588 P: Uh, no, not too bad.

589

590 I: Compared to? It's obviously a bit more expensive compared to the chemical ones.

591

592 P: Yeah definitely. The chemical stuff is really reasonable. You see it at the supermarket and
593 you go god, that's a lot cheaper. The price doesn't even come into it, I wouldn't even, it
594 wouldn't stop me buying it. I think it probably is a bit more expensive. That's what Kelly
595 [colleague] said when I mentioned it to her. She goes you know, that's really expensive and I
596 was, like really?

597

598 I: But you're happy to pay that amount?

599

600 P: Yeah definitely.

601

602 I: So even if it was like, hypothetically, like three times the price, you're happy to pay the
603 price because?

604

605 P: It's well, because it's a small market and it's a premium product and you're paying
606 because it is on such a smaller scale then the other brands and anything you're buying in the
607 supermarket is being made in the zillions, isn't it? You have to pay premium for all that. So
608 it's fine.

609

610 I: And you're happy to do so?

611

612 P: Yeah, absolutely.

613

614 I: Oh, when you do go down to the Ecostore, do you bring your own bags or?

615

616 P: No, I quite like theirs, 'cause they give you their nice brown paper bags and I really like
617 them, it's like America.

618

619 I: Oh, what do you do with them, once you've used them to take stuff home?

620

621 P: Oh, I use it for a rubbish bin and then chuck it out.

622

623 I: So you just find that it has other values and...

624

625 P: Yeah.

626

627 I: Oh, why do you like using brown paper bags?

628

629 P: I just like it. It's really, you know it's very, its quite unusual, isn't it. You know, you go the
630 supermarket and they're all stupid plastic bags. But I just like the brown paper bag, it feels
631 like you know, it's a nice little, its like a gift, getting a wrapped paper bag, its like a present.

632

633 I: Is it quite plain or does it have Ecostore on it?

634

635 P: No, it's got nothing on it. It's just plain.

636

637 I: Oh really?

638

639 P: Mmm. Just absolutely plain.

640

641 I: So do you ever take much notice of their advertising?

642

643 P: Yes. I don't think they are on TV at all.

644

645 I: No, I don't think anything lately.

646

647 P: No, haven't seen them for ages. See them in the magazines and that's probably about all,
648 that's where I've seen them mostly.

649

650 I: Do you recall any of the ads?

651

652 P: Nah, I've seen them mostly in the magazines where they put them in like giveaways. And
653 the competitions and the send in on the back of an envelope and you can get three Ecostore
654 products. I've seen a lot of that lately.

655

656 I: Does it ever make you do anything?

657

658 P: No, I don't want to do that [laughs].

659

660 I: So you're just happy going there, so you've gone there every month?

661

662 P: Yup.

663

664 I: So how long has that been going on for?

665

666 P: Forever, as long as they've been there.

667

668 I: Well that's quite a commitment.

669

670 P: I like it. I like it in there.

671

672 I: So you must be one of their regulars?

673

674 P: Yeah.

675

676 I: Do they recognise you?

677

678 P: Yeah sometimes they do. Sometimes they give me discount [laughs].

679

680 I: Oh really?

681

682 P: Yeah. They go oh hi, it's you. Uh, oh have ten percent.

683

684 I: Oh really?

685

686 P: But then I don't get my card stamped. I'll take the ten percent instead.

687

688 I: So what happens when you get the card stamped? Is it like a coffee card?

689

690 P: Hmm. Yeah, you get up to your third purchase and you get a free bag. You get up to your
691 six purchase and you get a bar of soap. And I think when you get up to your tenth, or eighth
692 purchase you get 20% off your whole next buy. Which is huge discount.

693

694 I: So have you gone through a few of those cards?

695

696 P: Yup.

697

698 I: And their loyalty programmes been on for a while?

699

700 P: Yeah, it's a good idea. People like the loyalty cards. Well, if they go into stores. I don't
701 know if they do it online.

702

703 I: Um, I'm not sure. Have you ever shown the Ecostore product to anyone else? Is it in your
704 home or?

705

706 P: Yup, I showed it to my mum, and she uses all Ecostore products now too.

707

708 I: Oh okay, so she was influenced by you?

709

710 P: Yup.

711

712 I: How did you do that?

713

714 P: I just told her, I said you should start using this and stop using the chemicals.

715

716 I: Because you said they weren't very green growing up?

717

718 P: Yeah. Not very green at all. But mum is now, mum is very aware, she's really careful to try
719 and be healthy.

720

721 I: And that was all because of your influence?

722

723 P: Yeah, I'd say so. Yeah, yeah.

724

725 I: So what was the thing that you said that [cut-off]

726

727 P: I just told her that you've got to try and avoid chemicals in your life and you've got to try,
728 but she knows that I tell her off all the time, don't buy anything that's tested on animals and
729 so, she's really aware now.
730
731 I: So when you go to her home do you point things out and...
732
733 P: No, it's all sorted now. Because I go shopping with her so...
734
735 I: So how did she go about making the change? Was it gradual or
736
737 P: No, it was instant. She just chucked everything out.
738
739 I: Really?
740
741 P: Yeah. She just went I don't know, I don't want this in my house anymore it's all poisoned.
742
743 I: That's quite a good point.
744
745 P: Yeah, yeah she was just like nuh, I believe you and I trust you, and I was like good.
746
747 I: So she actually chucked out the product or finish it first?
748
749 P: No, she fully chucked everything out, she went right, I want everything new.
750
751 I: And then she went out there and buy it all?
752
753 P: Yeah.
754
755 I: You went to the Ecostore?
756
757 P: Yeah
758
759 I: And bought everything?
760

761 P: Yeah. She was a maniac in there. She loved it in there, so it was like yeah, you just make
762 that immediate change I guess, for some people.

763

764 I: It was quite dramatic. But she's quite happy being; she hasn't noticed any differences at
765 all?

766

767 P: Nah no, she just feels great.

768

769 I: Is it something that ever comes up when you talk to her?

770

771 P: Nope not anymore. Just life, it's our lives now; we don't think anything of it.

772

773 I: But at that time, you were like on her case because she was using chemicals?

774

775 P: Yeah, Yeah, yeah. I'll still be careful, like if she was going to buy makeup I say, you be
776 careful what brand you buy.

777

778 I: Even though she's made the change?

779

780 P: Yup. Well sometimes she forgets you know. She'll be like, uh L'Oreal's okay isn't it? No!

781 [laughs]

782

783 I: Have you ever gifted an Ecostore product to someone else?

784

785 P: No, no.

786

787 I: But you have recommended it, to your mother at least.

788

789 R; Yup.

790

791 I: Anyone else?

792

793 P: No, not really. I don't know many green people to be honest.

794

795 I: So you'd only recommend it to a green person?

796

797 P: Someone who I thought would be along those lines. I'd have to have some inkling that
798 they were vaguely interested in it.

799

800 I: So I guess you weren't really for the environmental angle yourself, it was about the
801 chemicals?

802

803 P: Mmmm.

804

805 I: So were there other people kinda like that, in your life?

806

807 P: Nah, not really, no.

808

809 I: But you wouldn't just recommend it to one of your friends? Who are just a bit more
810 typical.

811

812 P: No, it just probably would never come up in a conversation.

813

814 I: So when you go other people's homes, do you ever use their hand washes?

815

816 P: I don't really go, if I went to someone else's home, I don't go other people's homes very
817 often. And I don't have people around to my house very often. And I wouldn't probably go to
818 someone else's house where I needed to wash my hands [laughs].

819

820 I: What about your place of employment? Do they supply Ecostore hand wash?

821

822 P: No, regrettably, they do not. It's very disappointing.

823

824 I: So do you wash your hands while...

825

826 P: Yup. With the bad stuff in the toilet.

827

828 I: Oh, and how does that make you feel?

829

830 P: It's yuck, isn't it? It makes your skin feel dry and horrible as well, yeah.

831

832 I: But you wouldn't, you're happy to put up with it?

833

834 P: Well, we don't actually pay for it; the landlord does, so we don't actually have any choice.

835 But when I was in charge of the ordering of the company, I did buy the Ecostore

836 dishwashing powder and the spray and wipe stuff but I don't do that anymore.

837

838 I: Oh really? So what was behind your decision to choose those products?

839

840 P: Because I wanted to buy eco stuff. Because I wanted to buy natural products to try and

841 help my work friends.

842

843 I: Do you know if your work friends took much notice of it?

844

845 P: No, don't think so.

846

847 I: Oh okay. Is it a bit weird using chemical products here and then going home and only

848 using eco?

849

850 P: Um yeah. I'm not really happy about it but then again I can't bring in my own container of

851 hand wash. It's kinda like if you're around in the weekend and you have to go to a public

852 toilet what can you do, you can't, its not transportable so

853

854 I: So you felt that the chemical one, physically made your hands a little drier?

855

856 P: Yeah, nasty.

857

858 I: Yeah, and in terms of how you feel about using the chemical ones, it doesn't, do you feel

859 that it's not as good?

860

861 P: No, I don't think it's not as good, it's probably fine. It's just; it's not natural is it. I don't

862 think about it anymore for too long, and you've got enough worries in your life.

863

864 I: Are there any other situations where you're forced to use something with chemicals in it?

865

- 866 P: Well probably only if you're out and about.
867
- 868 I: But you wouldn't avoid not being out and about just so you could...
869
- 870 P: No, no.
871
- 872 I: So just thinking, like restaurants, cafes...
873
- 874 P: Yeah, so if I'm at a restaurant or café I just use whatever's there. There's not much you can
875 really do about it. It's only occasional.
876
- 877 I: Um, so of the list of the Ecostore products you told me you were using, you use some of
878 them regularly and some of them not?
879
- 880 P: All regularly I'd say.
881
- 882 I: But you've sometimes switched off it?
883
- 884 P: Yup.
885
- 886 I: But you've always gone back to some of them?
887
- 888 P: I'll try some other brands, and if they're better, I'll swap. So say for example, spray
889 cleaner, I don't use the Ecostore one any more because the other one was really good so, you
890 still have to use what's best for the job.
891
- 892 I: So your thinking behind trying it out first was to see if it was better?
893
- 894 P: Uh no, I only tried it out because, the Greenworks one, because it was a free sample.
895
- 896 I: So you wouldn't have tried it otherwise?
897
- 898 P: No, don't think so. No, then I tried it, it was really good.
899
- 900 I: And you also felt that because it was eco, it still had the no chemicals thing?

901

902 P: Yeah yup.

903

904 I: But you wouldn't normally go out of your way to try another product?

905

906 P: No.

907

908 I: Because you're happy with the way all your Ecostore ones are working?

909

910 P: Yeah, yup. I wouldn't bother shopping around.

911

912 I: So what do you make of, in general, of the eco or green in products these days?

913

914 P: What do I make of them. They, I don't know, think a lot of people have got on the
915 bandwagon of it for sure, a lot of people are you know, throw around the word eco around
916 willy nilly, and you can actually see things that sorta claim to be eco, you know just like how
917 they throw organic around, lots of products you see these days say they're organic and
918 natural and they're healthy and then you actually read the ingredients and they're not at all.
919 Which is really disappointing that it's been able to be used so freely, so I guess that's another
920 reason not to shop around because, in Ecostore we trust [laughs].

921

922 I: So have you ever checked the ingredients or

923

924 P: Mmm. Yup

925

926 I: All the time, or?

927

928 P: On Ecostore?

929

930 I: Yeah.

931

932 P: Probably not so much on Ecostore because I think they're at that point where they're not
933 going to slip some chemicals in there because it would be so detrimental for the business it
934 wouldn't be worth it. But for any other product I buy, I read everything, I read all the

935 ingredients. It's when you realise that something that says organic doesn't mean anything
936 [laughs].

937

938 I: So when you read the ingredients, these things can be quite scientific, are there things that
939 are, not looking for?

940

941 P: Yeah, I'm looking more for the parabens and the sodium laureth sulphates. And so, I'm
942 looking for certain chemicals that shouldn't be in there, rather than what's in there, what I
943 don't want to be in there.

944

945 I: So how do you know about parabens and sodium laureth sulphates?

946

947 P: Uh I don't know, from just probably research [laughs] yeah, so.

948

949 I: So if it had just like one of those, absolutely no deal?

950

951 P: Yup. Absolutely. But they wouldn't put those in Ecostore would they? They should know
952 better.

953

954 I: So as a brand you quite trust, is there any other eco brands that you feel that way?

955

956 P: Um in the cleaning products sorta vein?

957

958 I: Umm, in the cleaning products, like is that the same with Greenworks?

959

960 P: Yup Greenworks they've got a really small range. So and that's yeah with, they're owned
961 by a supermarket so there's probably three products I think.

962

963 I: 'Cause like Clorox owns Greenworks.

964

965 P: Yeah.

966

967 I: Which is the same company, which makes some of the other ones.

968

969 P: Um, but Clorox are no animal testing. Yeah, they do make chemical products, yeah. I think
970 they make Sunlight soap and all those things, don't they? So yeah, so yup.
971

972 I: So but you still trust Greenworks as much as you do Ecostore?
973

974 P: Well, yeah, they still, well probably not as much as Ecostore because of the holding
975 company, but it still, I guess it's good that they are trying to dip their toes in the water to see
976 if the market's there, it's never going to be a huge market, not in my lifetime so...
977

978 I: So are you quite on the green bandwagon? You said some people are, are you one of them?
979

980 P: No, I don't think so. No.
981

982 I: And why's that?
983

984 P: I just don't have time for that.
985

986 I: Do you feel that some of the green options these days are too time consuming?
987

988 P: Um no, it's probably just not really my scene. It's probably not really my whole bag, that
989 scene, probably for people who have got different future plans, I'd say.
990

991 I: What kind of future plans were you meaning?
992

993 P: Well I guess people, who have got big families, and they've got kids and they're trying to
994 save the planet for future generations and so forth, and I don't have time for that.
995

996 I: So you're not trying to save it for anyone?
997

998 P: Uh no, who would I be saving it for? [laughs]
999

1000 I: So do you feel a bit selfish in trying to save it for yourself or?
1001

1002 P: Yeah, well probably the whole purpose of using it is a little selfish. Yeah, isn't it really? It is
1003 to try to hopefully, I won't be exposed to chemicals so I don't get some hideous cancer and

1004 die. So it's probably totally selfish as opposed to people who are doing, you know, trying to
1005 dump less plastic, have less landfill, less pollution.
1006
1007 I: But I guess you do recycle, but not some of the other things?
1008
1009 P: Nah. But it's good that they're not putting all their chemicals into the sea. But on the other
1010 hand you know what percentage of the population you are and you know you're not ever
1011 going to make a difference, that's the other thing isn't it?
1012
1013 I: So at home, you live with your partner?
1014
1015 P: Mmm-hmm.
1016
1017 I: So he's quite similar, is he quite on the same views as Ecostore?
1018
1019 P: Yeah exactly. The same, yup.
1020
1021 I: Oh that's great. So is that something you influenced him on or?
1022
1023 P: No we probably had the same ideals from the beginning.
1024
1025 I: Oh okay, [I'm] not sure, which came first, Ecostore or your partner?
1026
1027 P: The partner. The partner, but I guess we just developed along the way, and you know,
1028 some, or something when you're with a person you have to have those similar values or it
1029 probably won't work [laughs] so it kind of just, is just became the same values, same ideals
1030
1031 I: So he just absolutely followed your lead and agreed to everything?
1032
1033 P: Yup.
1034
1035 I: Does he ever go with you to the store?
1036
1037 P: Yeah, he goes there all the time.
1038

1039 I: And he's quite interested in the products too?

1040

1041 P: Yeah, he likes it.

1042

1043 I: Is he quite green or eco in other aspects of his life?

1044

1045 P: Yeah, definitely.

1046

1047 I: Even compared to you?

1048

1049 P: Yeah, he's pretty, he's really good. He was gutted the other day when he bought some

1050 Dove deodorant and then found out it was animal testing and Dove and he was like "I'm

1051 sorry", he was so upset about it.

1052

1053 I: Did he use it?

1054

1055 P: No, he won't use it. I'm like well; you've bought it now so you might as well use it up. It's

1056 difficult, you don't realise how bad everything is, but deodorants are a big pile of chemicals

1057 anyway. Not Ecostore.

1058

1059 I: So just had a slip up at the supermarket?

1060

1061 P: Didn't realise. Dove, it sounds very reminiscent.

1062

1063 I: Oh but if it was you, you would check all the packaging?

1064

1065 P: Uh, no, but I know all the brands.

1066

1067 I: How do you which brands are good?

1068

1069 P: Well, there are not many that are good. So your list of safe ones would be really minimal.

1070

1071 I: So like what other brands are good just for our own knowledge?

1072

1073 P: Well at the supermarket, at the supermarket almost nothing would be. I wouldn't buy
1074 Johnson and Johnson, anything made by Unilever, all of those ones, so there wouldn't be
1075 much that I would buy at the supermarket. I guess, I um, what's left. I'm thinking all the
1076 Colgate Palmolive, they're all bad. The only good ones are Beiersdorf, who make Nivea.
1077
1078 I: Oh yeah?
1079
1080 P: Yeah, they're good. They're a massive one.
1081
1082 I: I thought they were pretty big.
1083
1084 P: Yeah, European company.
1085
1086 I: So they way you shop at supermarkets, have you ever brought Ecostore products there?
1087
1088 P: Yeah, I think I bought the laundry liquid, when I ran out once.
1089
1090 I: Is it, like if you're buying the small products, is it cheaper to buy at the supermarket?
1091
1092 P: No, it's about the same.
1093
1094 I: Oh, okay. But when you go to the supermarket, you don't buy your dishwashing or
1095 toiletries or household cleaners there?
1096
1097 P: Nah.
1098
1099 I: So I guess your shopping at the supermarket is quite different to the shopping at the
1100 Ecostore?
1101
1102 P: Yeah, 'cause I go the Ecostore, it's specifically to buy probably cleaning products.
1103
1104 I: That's pretty interesting that you go on a monthly basis too.
1105
1106 P: Yeah.
1107

1108 I: Has there ever been a chance time when you've missed one out?
1109
1110 P: Nope, don't think I've ever run out.
1111
1112 I: I dunno, maybe like in a December?
1113
1114 P: Nope, nope. Go there a lot. They've always got lots of new products, so it's good to call in
1115 there as well.
1116
1117 I: Do you try their new products?
1118
1119 P: Mmm-hhmm
1120
1121 I: So, what's like a new one they have?
1122
1123 P: They have dishwashing tablets that are new.
1124
1125 I: Are you still using those?
1126
1127 P: Yeah, they're fine, yup.
1128
1129 I: So what were you using before that?
1130
1131 P: Oh, Finish or something. Because I don't think Ecostore, they didn't have dishwashing
1132 tablets until recently, they had the powder, which was kinda messy, and then everyone sorta
1133 moved into tablets, 'cause you know, its nice and neat and tidy to use in a dishwasher. So
1134 they only just have started the dishwasher tablets.
1135
1136 I: Oh okay, so when you saw that they had it, did you throw the Finish out?
1137
1138 P: No, I finished the Finish.
1139
1140 I: Finish the Finish?
1141

- 1142 P: I finished the Finish [laughs] and I then bought the Ecostore tablets, which are made
1143 somewhere exciting. They're not made here. They're made somewhere strange. In Sweden
1144 or something, kinda weird.
1145
- 1146 I: So how did you feel using the Finish one? Did you have any apprehension about that?
1147
- 1148 P: No.
1149
- 1150 I: Because isn't that quite chemically?
1151
- 1152 P: Oh yeah, but then there was no option for dishwashing, dishwasher machines. No one else
1153 makes anything. There is no Greenworks or B_E_E or any of those make any dishwasher
1154 tablets so...
1155
- 1156 I: But you didn't feel bad for using the dishwasher tablets or?
1157
- 1158 P: Uh, no.
1159
- 1160 I: Uh, but after the Ecostore one, you were like; I have to use the Ecostore one now?
1161
- 1162 P: Well, yeah, no, I tested it. You know to see if it worked, put it in, yup, it's all good, it's
1163 inside well there you go, there's an easy change.
1164
- 1165 I: and you find that you use it the same, as the Finish?
1166
- 1167 P: Yeah.
1168
- 1169 I: And gives the same results?
1170
- 1171 P: Yeah, good.
1172
- 1173 I: So just lastly, so you don't consider yourself a very green person, you are more of the less
1174 chemicals and no animal testing?
1175
- 1176 P: Yeah, yeah I suppose. What's a green person, is that a person who does tree planting or?

1177

1178 I: Well, that's quite a cloudy question.

1179

1180 P: Yeah, I know, 'cause that's why I'm going I don't know if I'm green or not. How green are
1181 green? I'm more green than a lot of people at work [laughs], but I guess there are different
1182 levels of green.

1183

1184 I: Yeah, and by level you mean?

1185

1186 P: Just in the middle level, yeah.

Interview: Tanya

I: So if you'd just like to start by walking me through a typical time when you buy an Ecostore product?

P: Okay, generally it mostly appears in my house because I live in a shared flat situation and we are very focused on buying products, which are good for the environment. I can talk about the last time I purchased Ecostore products and I went into the shop in a hurry because I didn't have any shampoo and conditioner and it was on special, for six ninety nine and I thought I would try it, yeah.

I: So why did you pick that one over the other brands?

P: I picked it because I believe in the values that I think the Ecostore has. I think they have similar values to my own personal ones. And also I quite like the design and the packaging. I think it's really simplistic and then I guess the third thing that got me was the price. So the first thing was that it was ethical values, the second thing would be its design and the third thing was its price

I: Great. So in terms of ethical values, how do you see the Ecostore as being ethical?

P: I believe that they are ethical in that they don't do animal testing. Their products are derived from plants. And they don't use chemicals, so they believe in putting natural goodness into your body, and not exposing your body to harmful substances or chemicals. I also think they, it seems like they care about the environment.

I: is that stuff that you picked up after buying it or before?

P: That's generally before. And where that came from was, I actually haven't seen any advertising so where that idea obviously comes from, my mum's really into organic things, and she's really into, just looking after the body and looking after the surroundings. And I think because she used those products I believed that they were reputable in that way.

I: So she introduced the Ecostore products to you?

35

36 P: Yes. Through my mum, she uses the toilet cleaner and the dishwashing detergents; it's
37 mostly their cleaning products. Just from using the cleaning products they seem like, I think
38 some people when they use a cream cleanser like if, can't find something that compares. I
39 believe that it does, oh; we use the spray on as well. I believe that they are just as good.

40

41 I: So what was your first experience of an Ecostore product?

42

43 P: First experience was probably the cleaning products at my mum's house. So we would
44 use, probably the first one would be the spray bottle, I think that might've even come out
45 first I'm not sure. It's like the spray and wipe, and I've noticed lately that they've been
46 putting higher levels of vinegar in it, which is interesting.

47

48 I: Oh, how did you notice that?

49

50 P: 'Cause I can really smell it. Unless my sense of smell is miraculously improved, but, yeah,
51 it was the spray bottle.

52

53 I: So when you used it as your mum's house, did she tell you about it. Do you know if a
54 conversation occurred?

55

56 P: We generally have discussions about that sort of thing with our family, I don't remember
57 it exactly but what I do remember is the branding. I think simply from the name, Ecostore,
58 and I'm pretty sure on the front of the spray bottle it actually has like block writing about
59 what it doesn't contain. So it would have been a visual thing but also a conversation.

60

61 I: And that point, what convinced you to try it?

62

63 P: To try it? Just having the belief that my mother's right in everything. So it was sort of
64 unquestionable, that I would use it.

65

66 I: So you definitely felt you take her advice on anything?

67

68 P: Yeah, yes. Absolutely, because I see her as a person of integrity, and with good morals, and
69 also, yeah I just think if she told me to jump off a bridge I probably would [laughs].

70

71 I: But you know she wouldn't do that?

72

73 P: No, she wouldn't do that. Exactly, so yeah, I just, I really, our family, our whole family, has
74 those same values in terms of the environment and caring for the Earth and caring for other
75 people.

76

77 I: Have you ever known how that came about. Have they always been like that?

78

79 P: Um, yup I think so. My mother came from a really traditional family who probably didn't
80 care that much about the environment. So when she grew up, she, her husband, who she
81 met, they were together when they were fourteen, his family was very eccentric and quite
82 really into different things. I think she was introduced to eating well through his family. And
83 also living a life that is kind to things around you, so that's how she was introduced to it and
84 I think she just wanted to be different from her parents. Yeah, and I guess both my parents
85 were, I mean I know it's not a very good word now but, hippies. It sounds a little
86 judgemental but that is kind of the best word that I can describe them.

87

88 I: So would you describe yourself as a hippie?

89

90 P: Um, you know what, I probably wouldn't. I feel like that term is really dated. I feel like a
91 hippie, the definition of that is something that was in the seventies, in the sexual revolution
92 and the whole world was changing. I don't feel that it really applies to now, but I definitely
93 think I have a green focus. And I really care about nature and I care about keeping, having
94 respect for the place that we live and keeping it beautiful.

95

96 I: Is that something that you encourage others to do?

97

98 P: Yeah. I really, I think that most people who meet me, well it's interesting it goes two
99 ways. Most people who meet me in my ordinary world would say, yeah Tanya that's what
100 she's like. But then, for the people who are really passionate about it, they would see me as
101 not that involved. So in the continuum, I would probably sit just a little more above the
102 average.

103

104 I: So you're thinking of some really radical people who...

105

106 P: Yeah, for example my sisters a bit more radical then I am. She's a vegetarian and I'm not.
107 But I would say, she would definitely look at me and say I'm don't really see her as that
108 much of a hippie

109

110 I: So it's interesting that your parents tried to revoke against their parents and...

111

112 P: I know.

113

114 I: But you carried on the same...

115

116 P: Values as them. I find that really interesting as well. I think it's quite strange that we
117 haven't gone the opposite, but I think my parents have always been very incredibly open
118 and they've just brought us up to be independent whereas I guess for my mum's experience
119 I think that she felt the environment that she grew up in was quite closed, and quite narrow
120 minded. So changed to be open minded and therefore us kids have made our own choices.

121

122 I: Would you also say that most of your other siblings are quite green?

123

124 P: Green. Definitely, my sister who I live with. She's the most radical and probably more of a,
125 like proactive in speaking it. She like passes on the word, like advocate.

126

127 I: So, have you ever had a conversation with Ecostore products with her? So you shop with
128 her?

129

130 P: One of us does the shop. We have a turn. Like we have a roster, like one person does the
131 shop each week. But we buy our own products separately. I probably would have had a
132 conversation, we definitely had a conversation about the cream cleanser, we actually had
133 that conversation about two weeks ago. And so she was saying, I was saying, lets get some
134 cream cleanser for the bath and I was like maybe we should get some Chemico they were
135 like uh, you know we'd rather not get something with chemicals. We could get the [Ecostore]
136 cream cleanser, we think it's just as good.

137

138 I: So you didn't think Ecostore immediately?

139

140 P: Uh, no I didn't 'cause I didn't actually know that they did one. But the reason why I said
141 Chemico is because my mother uses Chemico as well so I was immediately going back to
142 that.

143

144 I: So if you knew they had a cream cleanser, would you have just bought that one?

145

146 P: Yup.

147

148 I: Because you know your sister's a bit?

149

150 P: Well you know, when I buy products I generally like to buy products from the same
151 brand. Like for my skincare brand I only buy Trilogy. And I want to buy the same, so I like to
152 keep it kind of similar and like to use the same.

153

154 I: Any particular reason why?

155

156 P: No. Just a little bit OCD [laughs]. No, just yeah and I like to commit to one brand, it feels
157 like a commitment, you know, yeah.

158

159 I: So have you ever gone off the Ecostore. Or once you made the decision have you always
160 purchased it?

161

162 P: Well, I've definitely gone off their shampoo and conditioner. And I would never buy it
163 again.

164

165 I: Oh okay. Well, tell me about that.

166

167 P: Well I used the shampoo; that was well, okay. It made my hair feel like a clump of a dead
168 bird's nest. And then, but shampoos always like that. And then I used the conditioner and it
169 just didn't condition my hair at all. I think it had aloe vera extract and it actually felt like I
170 had all aloe vera throughout my hair. And it just, it really didn't condition it. And I'm not sure
171 if the reason why it was so cheap was because it was passed its used by date, I didn't check.
172 Yeah, so no, it wasn't a good experience. I felt like you know what, with something like hair, I
173 would really like to pay more and have my hair be really well looked after.

174

175 I: Is that because it's more [about] appearance? Um, you know like everyone sees your hair?

176

177

178 P: Yeah sure, my hair is something that I; I'm lucky to have nice hair. And I want it to kind of
179 stay that way. And um, I do want to treat it as; I've never treated my hair well, as of the last,
180 except for the last year and a half. And I want to give it love whereas normally I wouldn't
181 care and I would just buy the cheapest one.

182

183 I: So you don't feel anything about using chemical products in your hair?

184

185 P: I'm more, I lean more towards, like the products that I use, Akin, which is an organic hair
186 product, so of course I lean towards more organic but if the quality is not good, then there's
187 no point. I suppose that there's kind of an argument to that, so I do use an organic one at the
188 moment but I also use a normal, like a hair salon leave-in mask, so I'm quite, as I said, I'm not
189 radical, I'm just...

190

191 I: But you looked for an organic option?

192

193 P: Yup, yup. Absolutely, and I use one at the moment and it's doing fine.

194

195 I: So when you used the Ecostore one, you were like, what did you do at the shelves?

196

197 P: I went to the pharmacy and like price does factor into it too, but like quality does come
198 first. And I saw, I looked at all their organic ranges and I thought, I think I will use Akin, I
199 think it's the next best, it's the best without having to go like Trilogy, but maybe next time I
200 get Trilogy [inaudible] but yeah it is really important to me.

201

202 I: So what did you end up doing with the product?

203

204 P: It's in the bathroom. And I'm going to use it as a backup whenever I run out, 'cause I was
205 thinking like a student, well okay, when Akin runs out I'll just use this one if I don't have, like
206 as a backup always. But I obviously don't have anything to worry about [inaudible].

207

208 I: But you're not going to chuck it out?

209

210 P: No, I don't believe in wastage. I can't do that with anything.

211

212 I: So you would rather use up a bad product?

213

214 P: Yup, yeah.

215

216 I: Good.

217

218 P: Fun [laughs].

219

220 I: So you mentioned that the people you flat with also choose to buy Ecostore?

221

222 P: Yes.

223

224 I: So, other than your sister is there anyone else?

225

226 P: Yes, Amber is the other flatmate. And we're soon to have a new person called Rachel and
227 she kind of has to fit in with the household, I guess, values as well.

228

229 I: Is that something you looked at when she applied?

230

231 P: Yes. Yup, not as, it wasn't as, well no, it was kind of important for me but not as important,
232 so it was important for my sister that she was like, we live in a semi-vegetarian house which
233 means we only cook fish, there's no red meat to be cooked in the house. Or white meat really
234 either, except for fish.

235

236 I: How does that affect you?

237

238 P: At first it was cool. Then I started getting really, really weak [laughs]. So I brought it up
239 and said can we please get more meat and they agreed, but there was, if I want to eat red
240 meat I have to eat it out.

241

242 I: Any other flat values?

243

244 P: To be considerable and to be like, independent and also to have a sense of humour.
245 Laughter is really important to us, music is really important to us, foods really important. So
246 its like laughter, music, food. They're the three main things in our house and we all work
247 really hard so it's someone who's really respectful with that.
248
249 I: So when you buy Ecostore is that for the flat, or your own?
250
251 P: For the flat. Yup, but I've bought it personally for me as well because of...
252
253 I: So how do you come to an agreement to buy it for the flat?
254
255 P: It just goes without saying.
256
257 I: Really?
258
259 P: Yup.
260
261 I: It is a bit more pricier in some categories.
262
263 P: Yeah it is, if someone bought home something that wasn't, what would probably happen
264 would be when we sat down to say to add our things to the, because we sit down and have a
265 chat about what each person wants to add to the shopping list we would probably say,
266 someone would bring up the fact that it wasn't an organic product that had been [added],
267 that had not been naturally derived and could we please get something different next time.
268 So it wouldn't start an argument or it wouldn't lead to a confrontation it would just be like
269 hey, next time can we get [something else?]
270
271 I: Has that ever happened to your knowledge?
272
273 P: No, no, it's just one of the things. That people just, it's like the unspoken rule.
274
275 I: So if someone came back with Greenworks, or what's another, or just a different green
276 brand, would there be any [incident]
277

278 P: No, but I think there would be a recognition of the fact that it was different. That it wasn't
279 the brand that we had normally bought but no one would vocalise it, I don't think it would
280 be an issue.

281

282 I: But that hasn't happened before?

283

284 P: I do remember seeing a Greenworks detergent I think, but that was like, that's where
285 those urges came from because I recognised it but I didn't feel the need to say anything. I do
286 prefer Ecostore, I think it's probably just because of the branding

287

288 I: So who was the first person that said oh, we have to get Ecostore?

289

290 P: I don't know, because I didn't, I moved into the flat.

291

292 I: Okay, and that's something you noticed when you came in?

293

294 P: Yeah. Just was made aware of and when you move into, well when I move into a new
295 space whether it be work, whether it be at home, whether it be in a social environment, I
296 observe to see what is the norm behaviour in that environment and then adapt to it.

297

298 I: You don't ever challenge it?

299

300 P: Well in this situation I challenged the food. I mentioned that this was something I needed
301 but my sister stuck by her value of being vegetarian, which is really cool. I felt pleased that I
302 had challenged that but generally I really just like to go with the flow. I don't, I like to look at
303 things on the big picture and the scale of things and how important is this to me, and how
304 like it is taking anything away from myself.

305

306 I: So what happens when you go home from the supermarket? Or what happens at the
307 supermarket when you buy it, do you use plastic bags, do you pick it straight up off the shelf,
308 do you wait for a discount, those kinds of things?

309

310 P: What would happen is I would look to see what products are on special and if none, I
311 would obviously still buy whatever it is that I ran out of.

312

313 I: I guess this would be specifically for Ecostore?

314

315 P: Yeah, yeah sure. So I would check to see which one had a discount and then I would just,
316 but then I would only be looking at that type of brand. Yeah and then I would put it straight
317 in and then, we would have our own carrier bags from home that we use but I actually
318 forgot them the last time we shopped.

319

320 I: So what happens before the shop, do you guys get together, do you do something?

321

322 P: So before the shop, it usually happens at dinnertime, we'd be sitting around and we'll say
323 oh, we'll just talk about whose doing the food shop this is just a reminder. You know, just
324 naturally comes up in the conversation. And then we'll talk about what is important for us to
325 be on that shop for the week and so well obviously proteins very important in our house. So
326 that we come up and people will talk about what is necessary for them and we'll almost like
327 have a mutual discussion. Like last week we were driving back from a road trip and we were
328 all in the car, I was doing the shop and everyone was throwing out ideas about what they
329 wanted and I was writing it down.

330

331 I: So like cleaning products, is that something discussed?

332

333 P: Cleaning products have come up very recently because I underspent so we have an extra
334 thirty dollars and we're getting low on cleaning products and my sister was like, we really,
335 we just need to stock up on cleaning products, we want to get some really good ones and I
336 was like yeah, a hundred percent, I'm there with you. So this conversation happened
337 yesterday.

338

339 I: Oh okay, that's interesting. So she was like definitely, did she say something about which
340 ones you should get?

341

342 P: We didn't speak; we've never spoken about the brand. It's just one of those things that
343 will be okay, you know.

344

345 I: So when you get home from the shop do you have to unpack and like

346

347 P: Yeah, get home, the shops done in the weekend, whoever is on the shop is also on cleaning
348 as well in the house that week. Just once on the weekend. So it just depends on what order
349 you want to do it in but generally it's done later in the day.

350

351 I: So do you have to unpack things in front of other people or

352

353 P: Generally you're only there by yourself. 'Cause other people will just get out of your way,
354 while you're doing the cleaning and that. But I suppose you just have to unpack it by
355 yourself.

356

357 I: So where do you store your Ecostore products?

358

359 P: So the detergent lives on the windowsill. Or in the cupboard below the sink, pretty much
360 the same place. The toilet cleaner lives in the bathroom, in the toilet sorry. And the shampoo
361 and conditioner are on a ledge in the shower.

362

363 I: Is there any particular reason why you put it on the windowsill?

364

365 P: Well actually, the others put it on the windowsill and I put it in the cupboard because I
366 like things to be simplistic and I just don't like looking at things, but I don't know. Because
367 for my sister, she's quite well known in the community and a lot of her friends are very like
368 staunch and maybe for her she would make a statement by having it on the windowsill to
369 say, it would just reiterate or reaffirm this is who I am, I associate myself with Ecostore.

370

371 I: Do you think that?

372

373 P: I don't know. I have no idea.

374

375 I: What about anything else in the house. That might be a bit

376

377 P: Our house is very, it's a cottage and we have jars of lentils and rice and everything, that's
378 exposed but it's simply a storage thing. But when you walk into our house it definitely
379 speaks to people as to who we are. Like we have a piano. We have two bowls of fresh, we get
380 an organic vege box every week delivered to our door and we've got two massive bowls, one

381 of vegetables, like root vegetables and one of fruit. So you can walk in and instantly [clicks
382 fingers] get a feel of who we are, it's like the whole package.

383

384 I: Do you think that represents you?

385

386 P: I think it represents a part of me. It doesn't represent all of me.

387

388 I: Or do you think it represents a collective?

389

390 P: Yeah definitely, it represents a collective. That's exactly right and that's exactly what our
391 flat is. We're totally collective, we're a mini collective society and that's the way we treat it.
392 You know, democratic kind of thing.

393

394 I: Do you think your sister...

395

396 P: She's the, not the leader, but, she is the leaseholder and she is the person who found the
397 house and moved in initially by herself first. And that's the, she came from a really bad
398 environment last year and she got really sad because of it, so she was adamant when she
399 moved into this house that it was only going to be filled with love and it was going to be
400 respectful and everyone's voices were going to be heard. So that's the way that she's made it.

401

402 I: So when you do have people coming in do they ever remark on, your house is quite

403

404 P: Yeah, we've had people, my friends came on Sunday just for a walk and Jacinta. my friend,
405 just were, they were both like, this house is amazing. I love it, I love it. She sat, we've got
406 about, we don't have a couch but we've got a table with four chairs, we've got two more
407 chairs, and we've just got armchairs everyone and she just sat in every single chair. She said
408 oh, I just have to sit in every single chair, sitting on the floor and she was just almost kind of
409 absorbing it, it was quite strange. But people are just like, a couple of people come over and
410 oh, Tanya* this house is so you. I'm like oh that's interesting.

411

412 I: So like what parts of you do you think are reflected in it?

413

414 P: Yeah, yeah.

415

416 I: Do they get a green [vibe] or...

417

418 P: I would say they get a real sense of just, natural feel, it's just natural, I feel like it's a warm
419 space and it's a happy space.

420

421 I: So I guess when you said your sister's got quite radical friends, do they ever remark on
422 things like that when they're over?

423

424 P: No, wouldn't even, it would just be the norm to them.

425

426 I: Would they?

427

428 P: They're not even that radical but I mean someone from, I don't know, this world
429 [referring to office workplace] would think they would be radical.

430

431 I: So on the way you use the products. So just off the top off your head would you use them
432 any differently to a normal product? So like before you moved into this home, did you just
433 the normal ones?

434

435 P: Like normal spray and wipe?

436

437 I: Like normal spray and wipe, Sunlight?

438

439 P: I'd just use like, it's kinda rare that I would make a shopping decision on my own. Because
440 I've always lived in a shared, public situation. And so I've always moved into flats, and I
441 moved a lot and the products have already been there.

442

443 I: So I guess in your last flat, did they use Ecostore?

444

445 P: I don't even remember where I used to live. So I have honestly moved, ridiculous amounts
446 of time. Yeah hand washes, yup. But like I would buy those myself. And soap.

447

448 I: Do you think you would use them, the spray?

449

450 P: I just tend to use whatever is in that house but if it comes time to buy another one and it
451 was my turn that's the one I would go for. But I'm not averse to picking up a spray and wipe
452 bottle and spraying a counter and everything.

453

454 I: So you would use Ecostore in exactly the same way, do you think?

455

456 P: Yeah, I think so. Oh, you know what, this is going to be interesting. The toilet cleaner I
457 think I use more, yeah. Really like. Its actually really clear and it's hard to see so when you're
458 using a normal toilet cleaner it's usually a purple colour or it's a bright thick creamy white,
459 but this one is actually really clear and you can't actually see it on the bowl. So when I'm
460 doing it, I do it probably about four times around. So I probably end up using more than
461 what's necessary.

462

463 I: So why's that, is it because it's just clear?

464

465 P: Clear, yeah.

466

467 I: Do you feel that it does the same job?

468

469 P: Yeah I do, but because it's clear you think the amount that is not enough to be cleaning it.
470 So I will put more in and will be like oh, oh, that's thick now, yeah. Not with the [Ecostore]
471 spray and wipe I don't think I would spray more. The conditioner, I definitely would use like
472 three times to try condition my hair.

473

474 I: I guess, tell me about the first time you used the shampoo and conditioner. Do you just
475 treat it like a normal shampoo and conditioner?

476

477 P: Yeah. I did nothing more.

478

479 I: But then you found...

480

481 P: When I rinsed out my hair with the conditioner I was like, my hair feels like straw. I'm
482 going to have to use that again.

483

484 I: And would you use it differently if you had to use it another time?

485

486 P: I'd just use way more conditioner. And maybe mix it with another conditioner I'd have to

487

488 I: So overall how do you rate the performance of the products?

489

490 P: Does that encompass [all product categories]?

491

492 I: I guess.

493

494 P: Because I'm really not impressed with the cosmetic products but I don't feel like that's

495 their forte, I feel like that's not really their market, but I might be wrong. I feel like their

496 cleaning products are what they initially started with, and then their beauty products grew

497 from that. So their cleaning products I would rate them as, should I rate it out of ten?

498

499 I: Um, or just compare it to a normal brand? If that 's possible.

500

501 P: Oh okay. I think it beats normal brands in its appearance, I think it beats normal brands in

502 its values, I think it beats normal brands in the job that it does, simply because it does the

503 job and it's good at caring for our environment as well. It doesn't beat normal brands in

504 price.

505

506 I: But price isn't a huge factor?

507

508 P: Mmm [agrees]. 'Cause if you live that way its not even negotiable, you don't even really

509 think about it.

510

511 I: Do you live that way?

512

513 P: Yes.

514

515 I: Have you ever used their laundry products?

516

517 P: Yes, I use their washing powder, yup. And their soap and their hand wash.

518

519 I: I think everyone uses quite a few.

520

521 P: I just forget.

522

523 I: Any reason why you've bought so many across the range, is that because of the flat?

524

525 P: It is, it's just been over a real period of time. In the flat, like the three I've talked about are
526 the ones in there at the moment but in the past I've used their soap 'cause I just wanted to
527 try it out as well, and their hand wash is dinky, it [has] got a cute little packaging.

528

529 I: You like it?

530

531 P: Yeah I like it, it's got a little round, the top of it is more round than a normal squigee.

532

533 I: So you've said you wanted to try them. So what convinced you to want to try them?

534

535 P: Probably, just wanting to do the right thing.

536

537 I: So you felt you were doing...

538

539 P: A good thing. By buying this product.

540

541 I: You haven't bought them on a regular basis since?

542

543 P: Well, the only reason why is because I've moved into flats where it's already been,
544 everywhere I've lived in, the products are already there. So I guess that's what I mean, I'm
545 not like passionate enough to be " they do not have Ecostore, I'm going to go out and buy it"
546 because financially that hasn't really been [the case], yeah.

547

548 I: That's something you think your sister would do?

549

550 P: Um no, I don't think so.

551

552 I: You don't think she would?

553

554 P: Oh, I'm just thinking of our mum's house, but um no, probably if she lived in a flat and
555 they weren't buying Ecostore she would probably say, guys, I feel like we need to buy
556 Ecostore, how do you feel about spending a little bit more money. So she would bring it up.
557 Whereas I'm like, I'll just make everyone happy, go with the flow don't want to rock any
558 boats. That's my, it actually sums up both of us really well.
559
560 I: Um, why do think she's like that?
561
562 P: I'd have to check about that. From day one, its important to speak out, um because I think
563 it's integral to who she is, I think she was also born that way [laughs]
564
565 I: Like when did she decide to become a vegetarian, for example?
566
567 P: I don't actually really know. She was always very free spirited from the age of, god, just
568 [laughs] from day one.
569
570 I: So it wasn't some specific [time]?
571
572 P: No, we've all been brought up quite similar but she's just a bit more outspoken like in
573 terms of that, what's that, I don't want to say advocate again, it's someone who is, almost like
574 a pioneer, you know, like I'm going to be the pioneer and I'm going to be, just quite, not
575 argumentative, but she's a critical thinker, yeah.
576
577 I: Would you say she's more about green, or sustainable, or organic? I guess there's a lot of
578 different words, which ones do you think describe her?
579
580 P: She is, it's like labelling people, it's hard.
581
582 I: People do it for lots of different reasons.
583
584 P: She's doing it because she believes I guess that on the scale of things, this is part of my
585 belief as well, it's a privilege for us to be on this earth, we believe, there's a common belief
586 that people own it, but like we don't. We're kind of like just visiting here [laughs] in a way, so
587 I think, yeah. I don't know she, what is she, like we believe in nature, yeah, and mother earth.
588 And I think that that's, yeah.

589

590 I: Is that something you try to get your friends to do?

591

592 P: I don't like to make anyone do anything [laughs] that they don't want to do and I think
593 that people will have their own set of, I don't believe that my way is the right way, it's the
594 right way for me, it's not the right way for somebody else. Yeah, that's what I mean, I'm not,
595 like as staunch. But yeah, I think that I would try to influence people but not in the [purchase
596 of cleaning products].

597

598 I: So I guess in your old flats you just went with the products?

599

600 P: Yeah, it didn't feel like it was that crucial to me that really, I don't feel that we had to make
601 a big movement for us to all change. Like it really didn't, But then I've changed a lot in the
602 last year from what I used to be like, so...

603

604 I: How so?

605

606 P: I've just become more, I care more about different things, I've realised that other things
607 don't actually mean so much to me anymore. And just try to be really true to myself. So
608 whereas before, I think, it comes with age, with before I didn't really know who I was. And
609 I'm a lot more, I know more about, yeah I'm more comfortable with who I am.

610

611 I: Was there like a specific moment where you just [realised]?

612

613 P: Yeah kind of, yeah when I was in France. And I was on my own, I spent a lot of time by
614 myself last year, so that was over a year ago and I just had a lot, a lot of time alone writing so
615 I received a, I didn't have technology or, and I was living with not much electricity or
616 anything so I didn't have any in, it's amazing what happens when you don't have any
617 influences surrounding you like media, friends, parents, you just discover who you are,
618 simply on your own. And that was a defining moment for me and then it's really been
619 nurtured throughout my counselling degree because they teach you a lot about who [you
620 are], you have to discover who you are and yeah, it's an amazing process, but it's the hardest
621 thing that has ever had happened to me in my life, 'cause it's really, you have to challenge
622 yourself. And it's really, really hard. Yeah, and change the things about yourself that you
623 don't like and admit them as well.

624

625 I: It's really interesting.

626

627 P: Mm, it is, I love it.

628

629 I: So what happens when you run out of an Ecostore product?

630

631 P: Buy some more.

632

633 I: So it's just the default thing to do?

634

635 P: Yeah.

636

637 I: So when you go through your list, do you just say Ecostore product or do you say kitchen
638 wipe?

639

640 P: I would say we would put, write down detergent and then we would have a discussion
641 and it would be made clear that it's to buy.

642

643 I: Oh really, so something detergent it would be?

644

645 P: It would be written detergent and then we'll all talk about it. And then, I don't know for
646 sure if someone would say Ecostore, it would just simply be that the notion to buy an
647 organic brand, but wouldn't need to be written down as well. It's the given, and if it was me I
648 would buy Ecostore.

649

650 I: And why's that?

651

652 P: Because I believe that that brand is the best out of all the brands.

653

654 I: So do you see any other, you can think of any others off the top of your head, of brands
655 that fit in that category?

656

657 P: Um, well there's Greenworks isn't there. And [pauses] I really can't, that's why their
658 branding's really good.

659

660 I: No that's fine.

661

662 P: No I can't. So yeah, that's pretty good, market leader.

663

664 I: In your eyes?

665

666 P: Yeah, I think.

667

668 I: Does your flat, or sister think that Ecostore is also the leader in terms of...

669

670 P: You would have to ask her, yeah, but I'd say so. That would be my assumption.

671

672 I: Yeah, I guess if you went home with Greenworks instead of Ecostore no one would say
673 anything?

674

675 P: Don't think so.

676

677 I: So what happens with the packaging when you finish with it?

678

679 P: Um, we recycle.

680

681 I: Everything?

682

683 P: Yup.

684

685 I: Is that something you always do?

686

687 P: Yup. Always, we've got three separate bins in three separate places, we have a recycle bin
688 outside our front door, outside the, there's a door by the kitchen; French doors and then we
689 have a compost. We've got a compost [bin], we've got a vegetable garden. And then we have
690 a normal bin, which is, I then we have a fire, which is for paper.

691

692 I: Yup, that's quite a lot of work.

693

694 P: [laughs]

695

696 I: So would say you put a lot of effort into being green or sustainable or...

697

698 P: I think in our house we do. Well I generally, I just try and do what I believe is right. And I
699 could definitely be greener, I think I use too much paper, I think I throw too many things
700 away.

701

702 I: Is that something you're looking to change?

703

704 P: Yeah it's something that I'm aware of and I'll think I'll definitely become more with each
705 day as I get older, I'll become more, I'll become more passionate. Because I'm still on this
706 journey of figuring out things about myself, yeah.

707

708 I: So how did you know of the Ecostore brand?

709

710 P: Through my mum.

711

712 I: Through your mum, yea. So what were the kinds of things she said about the brand when
713 you first looked at [it]?

714

715 P: I honestly can't remember the discussion because it's been in our house for as long as I
716 can remember.

717

718 I: Was that growing up or even...

719

720 P: Yeah.

721

722 I: So I guess even when it was first launched?

723

724 P: When it was launched, that's when I'm pretty sure I remember we got the spray, and then
725 the laundry powder that's what I can remember. Definitely the spray first, yeah.

726

727 I: Could you possibly recall what your mother thought when she first bought them?

728

729 P: I'd say she, when she bought them, she would have thought it was good. But...
730
731 I: Can't recall? No worries, all good.
732
733 P: Yeah, it's unfortunate that I'm not older and the decision maker in the house.
734
735 I: Have you ever gifted or, [been] gifted an Ecostore product to or from anyone else?
736
737 P: No.
738
739 I: Or shared? Or recommended? Even just to friends?
740
741 P: I probably recommended the body wash, coconut and vanilla. It smells really beautiful.
742 And uh, what is that? Vanilla bean, one of things, oh it has got to be the hand wash [laughs],
743 yeah, probably that, I probably recommended the body wash, coconut and vanilla. It smells
744 really beautiful.
745
746 I: So when your friends visit you at home, do they ever notice, oh wow there's Ecostore
747 products everywhere?
748
749 P: No, it wouldn't be, it's not like that. It's not that in your face.
750
751 I: So I guess it's never been mentioned or So I guess I'll just finish with, what do you make of
752 eco or green? Do you, 'cause obviously there are a lot of words that people can use, how do
753 you see them in terms of Ecostore?
754
755 P: Um, what they stand for?
756
757 I: Um, yeah.
758
759 P: Is that what you mean?
760
761 I: Yeah.
762
763 P: So what's Ecostore values, are they eco or green?

764

765 I: Yup, I believe that they are ethical, I believe that they have integrity as a brand, I believe
766 that they care about the environment and animals and people and the wellbeing of all of
767 those three things. I believe that they're holding themselves accountable to their personal
768 values. Because when they did this, when they brought this stuff out, this whole green
769 movement wasn't in fashion. It was a long time ago, like I don't believe they've done it
770 commercially to make money. I think they've done it because they had a vision.

771

772 P: Have you ever looked them up or done any research?

773

774 I: No I haven't, but I'm actually going to now.

775

776 I: Why?

777

778 P: 'Cause I'm interested. I'm talking, because I'm saying all these things that I think they are,
779 but where does that come from? Like it's my own thing.

780

781 I: Something you got from their packaging and

782

783 P: Yeah. My mum, probably my mum.

784

785 I: But you trust your mum?

786

787 P: Well that's the sort of things I think about from my mum so I'll just be projecting it from
788 her to that.

789

790 I: Even though, we're not sure if your mum did any research or

791

792 P: Yeah, she probably just picked it up off the shelf [laughs].

793

794 I: So do you consider yourself a very green person? I guess you said you were sort of in the
795 middle.

796

797 P: Um. Well there's the continuum from here to here, from there up to there, I can't do hand
798 movements, I'm slightly above average. Would you agree, am I allowed to ask you a
799 question?
800

801 I: It's hard because I don't know your life.
802

803 P: But I just told you about my life.
804

805 I: I guess it's how you define green. To you, is Ecostore green, is it sustainable, or it natural,
806 how do you see all those concepts working together?
807

808 P: Yeah, I believe it's all of those things. You can, everyone's perception of those words is
809 different. I think it's all of those, someone said do you think Ecostore's green? I would say
810 yes. In terms of like, green I just think of planet. You think it's natural, yes. What is the other
811 word you said?
812

813 I: Sustainable.
814

815 P: Sustainable. I'd be like, well, that's a hard one 'cause they're using plants but, yeah,
816 instead of using chemicals.
817

818 I: So even if your sister had to give one justification for liking Ecostore, which one would it
819 be?
820

821 P: Probably be about the environment. Yeah, like not having harsh chemicals, basically.
822

823 I: So do you see it as organic as well?
824

825 P: Yes.
826

827 I: That's because
828

829 P: Because we care about our bodies, yeah.
830

831 I: So you definitely feel that avoiding chemicals as much as possible

832

833 P: Yeah, my health is incredibly important to me and it's pretty amazing to think of what
834 your body can absorb from food, yeah. I'm having this real epiphany while we're talking.

835

836 I: That's good. So you're really committed to not using chemicals?

837

838 P: Yup.

839

840 I: Were you like that before?

841

842 P: Not as such. Not as much, not as such. My sister has, I adapt to whatever environment I'm
843 in, as I said before, whether I'm at work, I observe to see what is appropriate behaviour and
844 I'd say that my environment that surrounds me at the moment is very much natural, I live in
845 the bush, I live by the sea, I live with a reasonably passionate person about the environment
846 so it's; and she is the person that I respect and who I'm closest to most in the world.

847

848 I: So if you hypothetically had to move, do you think you would carry any of those values or
849 behaviours?

850

851 P: Absolutely. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I felt it is integral to who I am. It's always been there.

852

853 I: So how you've always gone with the flow, so now you would be a bit more

854

855 P: It's just an age thing, I've never, I've [always] lived in flats, with like randoms, as they get
856 older or not we're not going to do that any more. The next step will be buying my own home,
857 so I will be the decision maker. And it just comes with age, you discover, well I have
858 discovered what is important to me, yeah and that is crucial, to who I am now.

859

860 I: So you definitely, for Ecostore you would definitely buy Ecostore?

861

862 P: Absolutely. All their cleaning products, yup. I feel like, yeah I am an adult now.

Interview: Jennifer

I: So if you'd just to like to start by walking me through your first experience of an Ecostore product?

P: It's funny, I was actually trying to think today but I couldn't remember. I, when that was, I've been sort of using them now for several years, three or four years. I don't know if I may have read about it or if I may have read about it or just have seen it in the supermarket.

I: So do you recall the first time you purchase it?

P: Honestly, I don't know.

I: How about you talk me through a typical time you buy an Ecostore product?

P: Like I said, we've been going there for a few years, and we normally go the shop because they do refill stuff for you, like laundry detergent and dishwashing liquid and stuff so I would say we make most of our purchases at their store when we go and get our things refilled.

I: Have you always been refilling?

P: Pretty much. As soon as we found out they did that, it was like, good. Good deal.

I: So what's your thinking about buying it in the store instead of the supermarket?

P: I kinda think I'd rather cut out the middleman and not give Foodtown my money. I'd rather give it straight to those guys.

I: So what do you do typically when you visit the Ecostore?

P: Well we just get our bottles refilled. Have a browse around and buy other bits and pieces that we might need.

I: Are there things you look out for?

36

37 P: Um, no. I just like to have a browse and see what's in there, so shopping's good [laughs].

38

39 I: So how often do you go?

40

41 P: I guess it would only be every two or three months, that's when things tend to run out. We
42 need to get our top up, yeah.

43

44 I: So do you purchase quite a lot each time?

45

46 P: Well we had some of our bags quite full the other day when you were there.

47

48 I: Are there things that you typically get each time?

49

50 P: We always get laundry detergent, dishwashing liquid, soap, we buy sort of their cleaning
51 products as well, like there's sort of a spray-on cleaner. And like a cream cleansing product.
52 What else? Shampoo, I don't use the shampoo, Geoffrey [husband] uses the shampoo. We get
53 it from there as well.

54

55 I: Any particular reason why you don't use it?

56

57 P: I don't think it's actually quite as good as the stuff I buy from the hair place. I haven't
58 really tried it properly to be honest. I might find myself using it one day.

59

60 I: What about the rest of the products, how do you think they compare?

61

62 P: Yeah, they're great. I mean there's sort of like, I like the fact that, they're obviously like
63 non-toxic and you know, as far as cleaning products and stuff like that goes. I actually suffer
64 from allergies so something like that is really good. That is sort of one of the main reasons
65 why we use their stuff.

66

67 I: Do you think that was one of the things that attracted you to it most?

68

69 P: Yeah, definitely.

70

71 I: So before that, were you using just the standard?

72

73 P: I think so, I think we may, I have a feeling we probably use other eco brands as well. The
74 odd one here and there.

75

76 I: So the reason you use so many Ecostore ones?

77

78 P: Just basically it's the habit we've got into. I like their refill systems and stuff. I like their
79 products. And it's good value for money to just go and get that stuff refilled. Do it all in one
80 hit then it's all done for a few months, you don't have to think about it again for a while.

81

82 I: I guess there are only a couple products that they refill?

83

84 P: Yeah, as far as I'm concerned.

85

86 I: So what happens when you get home with all your products?

87

88 P: Put them all away and use them.

89

90 I: Is there any particular places you put them away?

91

92 P: [laughs] no.

93

94 I: Or any big containers?

95

96 P: No, just...

97

98 I: Just the regular places?

99

100 P: Mm-hmm

101

102 I: So the way you use them. Do you see any particular differences to the way you would use
103 normal ones?

104

105 P: I think as far as the laundry liquid and dishwashing stuff, I would. It's quite concentrated.
106 You don't need to use too much of it. So it goes a long way.
107
108 I: Is that something you found out after using it?
109
110 P: Yeah, yeah.
111
112 I: With any new product, do you have a look at the instructions and packaging?
113
114 P: Yeah, I like their packaging as well. I'm someone who always looks at packaging. And
115 yeah, it's cool. I like their branding, their packaging.
116
117 I: So what kind of message do you think they want to say to their customers?
118
119 P: It's quite, it's kinda clean and down to earth. Very down to earth, it always got pictures of
120 people and kids and stuff on their packaging. It's quite, it's well designed; I like the design of
121 their brand.
122
123 I: Do you think there are quite truthful behind what they say as well?
124
125 P: I'm sure they appear to be, I've looked at their website and things in the past. They do
126 definitely seem quite genuine. There's something, there was something about them in the
127 news a few months ago, you probably know better than me.
128
129 I: It was about the pH levels.
130
131 P: Yeah. But she sorta seemed to defend herself quite well. And state her case, I can't
132 remember exactly what she said.
133
134 I: Who was she sorry?
135
136 P: I don't know. The owner, there you go.
137
138 I: So you've said you've been to their website? So what was your thinking behind that. Were
139 you looking for something?

140

141 P: I think I might have been. I think that's actually what alerted me to the fact that there's a
142 shop where we go get stuff refilled. I think that's where I found out about it, on the website.

143

144 I: Did you buy it from somewhere else before that?

145

146 P: Yeah, probably. Probably I would say the supermarket.

147

148 I: So what attracted you to the store the first time?

149

150 P: Like I said it was just handy, I like the idea of just refilling things. Not having to throw
151 your bottles away and get another one. Sorta had ours for years now [laughs].

152

153 I: So you've always refilled the products?

154

155 P: Yeah. Not always, there will be a time when we just run out and have to buy another one
156 from the supermarket. But most of the time we refill them.

157

158 I: So what do you do with the packaging of stuff that you don't refill?

159

160 P: You mean just general stuff?

161

162 I: Yeah, just general stuff.

163

164 P: It goes in the recycling if it can.

165

166 I: So you always recycle everything?

167

168 P: Try to. Yeah, yup.

169

170 I: So what did you think of the products before you buy them?

171

172 P: Before I bought them?

173

174 I: Like maybe the new products? Do you take a look and say I'm going to try this?

175

176 P: Yeah I do, or I might read about them somewhere, they seem to get a little bit of press. For
177 example I use the hand wash, and a few years ago I remember reading about it in quite a few
178 places but tried it anyway.

179

180 I: So how do you see them as being different from other products, whether regular or other
181 ones or other green brands as well?

182

183 P: That's a good question. I mean obviously, the green things the main point of difference
184 between them and other things. As far as other green brands go, there's not many I can think
185 of that encompass such a big range of items in this country.

186

187 I: Anything encompassing a large range is a good thing?

188

189 P: Yeah of course it is. I mean, I don't know. I guess there's a bit of brand loyalty coming out
190 there without me even realising now that I'm sitting here talking to you.

191

192 I: Yeah, there seems to be quite a bit of brand loyalty. Any idea what makes you so loyal to
193 that brand?

194

195 P: I don't know, just been using them for such a long time. They seem to be good value for
196 money and their products are just really nice. I mean their soap are really nice and their
197 hand cleansers and that sort of stuff actually smelt really nice and they're nice products.

198

199 I: Have you ever gone off them?

200

201 P: No.

202

203 I: You mentioned you tried some other green brands?

204

205 P: Yeah I have, honestly, I don't know. We just always come back to using those ones again.
206 But there will be the odd time in the supermarket when I'll try other ones. But we end up
207 just using them [Ecostore].

208

209 I: Has there ever been an occasion where you haven't had an Ecostore product and just end
210 up going for another one?

211

212 P: Yeah, yeah. Occasionally. Not very often.

213

214 I: But that's something you try and avoid?

215

216 P: Yeah I guess so. If it's there and on special I'll buy it.

217

218 I: So what do you think the Ecostore products stand for?

219

220 P: I guess sustainability, sort of eco friendly, green. Non-toxic so you know not so harmful. I
221 guess especially now being pregnant and stuff, I'm just conscious of what's going into my
222 body, I always have been [like that] but that's quite important to me right now. I'm pretty
223 sure they don't test on animals, and things like that as well.

224

225 I: Do you think getting pregnant changed your outlook on life?

226

227 P: Um, of course it does, yeah. But as far as like the way we eat and the products we use and
228 have, and sort of our lifestyle, it really hasn't changed a lot because I'm conscious of those
229 sorts of things anyways.

230

231 I: So for the next generation, you would like to keep a green lifestyle?

232

233 P: Yeah, definitely.

234

235 I: So what motivates you to be a green person?

236

237 P: I guess you sort of read things and look at things on TV and it's just horrifying and you
238 sort of think if you can do some small things and help what's going on, you can do your little
239 bit and your part, and if everyone did that then hopefully it might make a difference, because
240 yup.

241

242 I: Do you think using Ecostore products makes much of a difference?

243

244 P: Oh, I'd like to think so, yeah.

245

246 I: But you don't?

247

248 P: I guess in some small way, I'm sure it does, yeah. I'm sure their manufacturing processes
249 and stuff like that are not as bad as what other companies who produce similar items would
250 be. I would like to think so, yeah.

251

252 I: Have you ever gifted an Ecostore product to anyone?

253

254 P: Yes. When Geoffrey's brother had a baby last year we gave him a gift package of baby
255 stuff.

256

257 I: So what was your thinking behind that gift?

258

259 P: His baby's mother is also very eco-conscious and stuff. And I definitely thought that would
260 be something that she would like for her child as well.

261

262 I: How did you know she was eco-conscious?

263

264 P: She lives in the UK, but whenever she's visited, the foods all organic and everything's
265 natural and yup.

266

267 I: I'm guessing she liked the gift?

268

269 P: Yeah, apparently it was good, yup.

270

271 I: Oh yeah, I guess they're based in the U.K. I wonder what kind of green options they have
272 over there?

273

274 P: Well, oh yeah. Just, I don't know. I'm sure it would cost a fortune to buy over there.

275

276 I: And any other person you've gifted it to?

277

278 P: I don't think so, no. Oh, actually no. We also brought a gardening set for Geoffrey's
279 [husband] mum. She loved it. It was great, yeah.
280
281 I: Is his mum quite green?
282
283 P: She's green fingered. So it was actually sort of like a little thing for weeding. It was like
284 some I think some soap and hand cream sort of thing.
285
286 I: Would you say Geoffrey is quite green?
287
288 P: Oh yeah [laughs].
289
290 I: Would that be from your influence?
291
292 P: I don't know, you would have to ask him [laughs]
293
294 I: No worries; will move to a question you can answer. Have you ever recommended it to
295 your friends and family?
296
297 P: Um, no, can't say I have really. I suppose gifting it is recommending it in a way. It is, it's
298 sort of introducing it to people.
299
300 I: Are they quite noticeable in your house? I'm just wondering if anyone has ever brought it
301 up in a conversation.
302
303 P: I do actually remember that Geoffrey's sister came to stay and wow, that soaps really nice,
304 what is it.
305
306 I: Oh it wasn't because it was Ecostore; it was because she liked this?
307
308 P: Because she liked the soap.
309
310 I: So what do you make of just the green or eco in products?
311

312 P: It's sorta a minefield. You sort of read things and you think that people are just putting a
313 label on something to sell it but is it really green? To know what is green and what isn't. I
314 have a feeling that these guys are quite genuine about what they do, though.

315

316 I: Is there any particular reason why you think they are more genuine then?

317

318 P: Uh, I don't know. I don't know, I'm pretty sure they've got a little lamb labels and stamps
319 on the back of their packaging, which says they are. I haven't really thought a lot about them.

320

321 I: But you just trust them?

322

323 P: Yeah.

324

325 I: So what are the other green things that you do at home? Do you consider yourself a very
326 green person?

327

328 P: [pauses][laughs] Um, look averagely I suppose. I'm conscious of it but not overtly green.
329 We are guilty of conspicuous consumption as well so [laughs]

330

331 I: Well I'd say using all Ecostore products is quite a green thing to do.

332

333 P: Oh yeah I guess it is.

334

335 I: You don't see yourself as someone like Geoffrey's sister?

336

337 P: Um, in a way, sister-in-law. I mean, I'm conscious of these things. I guess we can afford to
338 be now, with these things cost a bit of money, take a bit more time and effort so I'd be
339 interested to know how that changes once we have a child and that sort of thing goes.

340

341 I: Do you expect it to?

342

343 P: I hope not. I mean that is the good thing about Ecostore stuff, it isn't pricey, a lot of natural
344 skin products can be quite expensive.

345

346 I: Would you be quite disappointed if you couldn't use them any more?

347

348 P: Yeah I would, yup.

349

350 I: How would that make you feel?

351

352 P: Uh, I don't know. I hope that situation wouldn't arise yeah.