

Eco-conscious and green consumption of FMCG hair care products in Pest County, Hungary

Anna Mária Breczku*

* Budapest Business School, Budapest, Hungary. Correspondence: anna.breczku@gmail.com

Abstract: This research examines Hungarian customers' eco-conscious consumption in the sector of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods, namely hair care products. The research provides an introduction to eco-consciousness and sustainability and discusses climate change and controversial opinions on plastic packaging. To receive a wider overview of the behaviour of customers, questions have been formed to lead the research. For instance, how open Hungarian consumers are to sustainable consumption, how much are they influenced by the knowledge they have about environmental problems and climate change, and what changes they have already made to develop eco-conscious purchasing habits. To reach enough participants, the researcher used a questionnaire and analysed its answers in an attempt to answer the research questions. For obtaining more personal and deeper opinions, the research had several personal interviews with participants from different age and gender groups, and asked them about their habits, regarding the consumption of eco-conscious hair care consumption. Furthermore, the researcher also had an interview with a member of Schwarzkopf Professional Hungary. The results of the research reveal that consumers exhibit a high-level environmental awareness, and they are conscious of their purchasing habits, but they lack the motivation to make changes in their purchasing habits. On the other hand, price is an important factor in decision-making, thus there is a lack of sustainable options to choose from.

Keywords: sustainability; fast-moving consumer goods; Pest county; haircare products; consumption habits

1. Introduction

“A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels.”

- Albert Einstein

Human exploitation of the Earth's resources has been going on for hundreds of years (Bell & Taylor, 2020). Albert Einstein's words outline what humanity needs to do to save the planet. It is only in the past few years that companies have begun to realize the serious consequences of their actions on the Earth (Bell & Taylor, 2020). With this awareness, individuals, companies, and governments have all tried to reduce their impact on the Earth as much as possible (Bell & Taylor, 2020). For example, Henkel GmbH, a chemical company headquartered in Germany, followed Sustainable Development Goals. The company is aware of global warming and is committed to complying with the United Nations Paris Agreement. As a result of the company's long history of engagement, Henkel GmbH is almost able to contribute to all seventeen goals. Particularly to the following goals: Goal Four: Quality education; Goal Eight: Decent work and inclusive, sustainable economic growth; Goal Twelve: Responsible consumption and production; Goal Seventeen: Partnerships for the goals (Henkel, 2021b). The company's goal is to participate actively in climate protection (Henkel, 2021a). The reason the researcher has chosen to implement the company and its goals for the research is that the researcher has become a member of Henkel's Hungarian workforce.

Governments are banning plastic straws, plastic food packaging and plastic cups as a response to climate change (European Parliament, 2019). Through the passing of the Bill by the European Parliament, the Hungarian Government has also accepted the legislation which eliminates the use of single-use plastic (European Parliament, 2019). Individuals have also

Citation:

Breczku, A. M. (2022). Eco-conscious and green consumption of FMCG hair care products in Pest County, Hungary. *Prosperitas*, 9(1-2), 3. Budapest Business School. https://doi.org/10.31570/prosp_2022_0013

History:

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Received: | 26 Apr 2022 |
| Last Revised: | 20 May 2022 |
| Accepted: | 31 May 2022 |
| Published: | 22 Jun 2022 |



Copyright:

© 2022 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license.

started to reduce their impact on the Earth by extending their environmental knowledge (Paul et al., 2016).

Our society has already opted for a different path to become aware of environmental problems and decided on making mindful actions (Carfora et al., 2017). We have started to think differently about our environment, are making mindful decisions, and think before we purchase (White et al., 2019). Consumers, whose preferences, and choices influence their decisions and actions by entrepreneurs, firms, and governments make mindful decisions while purchasing (Deaton & Muellbauer, 1980). "Today, progress is being made in many places, but, overall, action to meet the Goals is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required" (United Nations, 2018, The Sustainable Development Agenda). This new type of thinking is spreading in societies. There is not much time left to reverse the breakdown of the Earth's resources (Bell & Taylor, 2020). Polluting waters and seas threaten the wildlife living there and clean water resources (MÄLER, 1990). More than 5.8 million hectares of Australian wildfire burned between September 2019 and January 2020 (Lindenmayer et al., 2020).

The researcher will cover the topics of climate change and how human overconsumption has become prevalent in recent years. Hojnek, Ruzzier and Konecnik Ruzzier (2019) have examined 47 research papers conducted about sustainability, environmental knowledge, and eco-conscious behaviour. Their findings reveal that there is a relation between the consumer's environmental concerns and their intention towards consuming conscious products. Even though they examined 47 different research papers, there is a research gap for this study as these research papers focused on habit, opinion, and knowledge about eco-consciousness in general. Also, these research papers examined topics of this kind, but none have examined specifically the purchasing habits of hair care products and the intention to buy sustainable products, moreover, none of the former research studies was based on the consumption habits of Hungarian consumers living in Pest County. The researcher of the present paper will provide an examination of Hungarian consumers, regarding haircare products and their openness towards eco-conscious consumption.

Customers must be aware of their decisions, acts and behaviours while purchasing (Chen & Hung, 2016). The generation born in the late 1990s and early 2000s is aware of their acts (Yu et al., 2017) and their future generations will strive towards mindful, eco-conscious consumption. On the other hand, modern consumers are worried about their future and life on the planet, and they are more likely to decide on purchasing environmentally friendly products (Khan & Mohsin, 2017). This consumer preference is evident in developed and developing countries as well (Khan & Mohsin, 2017).

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Sustainable Development

1981 was the year when the world first heard about sustainable development (Medvéne Szabad et al., 2005). In 1983 the Brundtland Committee spearheaded by Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, was established by the United Nations. The Committee aimed to find solutions for global problems, make strategic principles and create a national joint force. This is where the story of sustainable development and its strategy began (Medvéne Szabad et al., 2005). The Committee's findings were reported in *Our Common Future*. This report focused on the interactions of the natural environment as well as social changes and their processes. The report concluded that changes in the environment have caused global problems, and these can only be resolved through international cooperation (Medvéne Szabad et al., 2005).

Through the Sustainable Development strategic steps are listed. In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the goals as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2018). Seventeen goals function as a call for the whole society including individuals, corporations, and governments as well: these are seventeen goals for people and the planet.



Figure 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Source: UNESCO, 2015

The Sustainable Development Goals are related to safer living, better education, reducing inequality, developing opportunities, solving climate change, and preserving the natural environment (United Nations, 2021).

2.2. The motivational behaviour between consumers

Companies rely on the natural environment as they as well use natural resources for their operations (Shrivastava & Hart, 1995). Organisations are mostly connected with unsustainable actions (Etzion, 2018). Corporations as groups here reflect someone's original beliefs and values (Schein, 2010). When a group is formed and they are facing new tasks, the group represents one individual belief (Schein, 2010). Later influential group members will try to influence other members, but still, there is no common action (Schein, 2010). In the case of managers, the same issue is relevant. If the corporation's manager can influence employees, the individual belief becomes a shared value or belief and then develops into a shared assumption (Schein, 2010). On the other hand, there is increasing openness to sustainable reporting (Siew, 2015). It is a tool for the organization to communicate about societal issues and have a positive relationship with its stakeholders. In addition, it also ensures transparency (Herzig & Schaltegger, 2011).

Individuals' change is important in developing a more sustainable future. Individuals are more easily motivated in their comfort zone. Still, the question of how an individual can be motivated to act sustainably remains (Brem & Puente-Díaz, 2020). There is a practical example from China: positive behaviour is encouraged but negative behaviour is punished. This, however, brings up another ethical question: "how far does or must a society go?" (Brem & Puente-Díaz, 2020).

In conclusion, the importance of sustainability lies in different elements, but all elements represent sustainability. The elements separately include making mindful decisions, considering our acts and behaviour, protecting the environment, and making fair decisions. Sustainability depends on individuals, corporations, and governments as well. Different levels of the elements must be considered by all and through small steps, the whole society will be able to make crucial changes.

2.3. Exploitation of the Earth

Since 1900 there has been a threefold increase in the population of the Earth. By 2050 the population will have increased and exceeded 9 billion (Medvéne dr. Szabad, et al., 2005). Concerning this population increase, almost 90 per cent of it will happen in developing countries (Medvéne dr. Szabad, et al., 2005). Not only the population but also production has increased as well. Globally the process of mineral sources of energy has grown by 30 times, along with that industrial production has grown by 50 times. All of this has a negative effect on our biosphere, risking all positive and safe favourable conditions (Medvéne dr. Szabad, et al., 2005). Overall, at least 1.6 billion people live without electricity, and this has hardly changed since 1970 (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). In the 21st century, emerging economies provide electricity for those who have not been able to receive any electricity, on the other hand, economies focus on modern energy services and clean, low-carbon energy services (Ahuja & Tatsutani, 2009). As countries are on their way to restricting the use of fossil fuels, some countries have already made actual changes. France has passed a law to ban oil and gas

production in all territories by 2040 (Frost, 2021). Greenland's new elected government put climate issues at the centre of their policies and banned new oil exploration (Frost, 2021). Furthermore, Ireland has banned licenses for new oil and gas exploration (Frost, 2021).

The air, waters, lands and oceans are covered in plastic waste (Bell & Taylor, 2020). Slowly, all forests die because of deforestation, droughts, and fire. Trees are an important element of our living (Bologna & Aquino, 2020). Humans and animals would be nowhere without trees and forests (Bologna & Aquino, 2020): trees clean the atmosphere, provide fresh and clean oxygen as well safety and home for wild animals (Bologna & Aquino, 2020). Resource consumption, population growth and particular forest consumption lead to deforestation and if mankind keeps it this way, we only have a few decades left (Bologna & Aquino, 2020). Animals die out; not all can adapt to the new environment and climate conditions (García-Valdés et al., 2018). Our way of life depends on the environment. For living, air, and medicines we need forests and other essential elements (Bell & Taylor, 2020).

Climate change is here, this is the present. There has already been a 1 Celsius degree rise in global temperatures (Bell & Taylor, 2020). There are already signs showing that this is happening now. There is aridity, hurricanes, floods, and heatwaves and to bring another example: the price of groceries has increased. In Hungary, the average purchasing prices were 3.3 % times more in 2020 than in the year before (HCSO, 2020). The last time the inflation rate was 4.7% at the beginning of the year was in 2012 December (HCSO, 2020). The price increase of groceries was above average: there was an increase of 7.2% (HCSO, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic situation resulted in this high price increase (HCSO, 2020). Because of the unusual quantity of flour, cooking oil, yeast, sugar, and rice purchased, the prices of these products also increased (HCSO, 2020). The prices of fresh products increased because of the lockdowns. Later in the year, their prices started to settle and decreased a bit (HCSO, 2020). Our last chance is to change the way the industry works, change our behaviour, and try to clean the soils and lands also we must try to replant our forests The important part is not that we need to, but it is how we do it (Bell & Taylor, 2020).

Only one species dictates the future of the Earth: it is our mankind and we put tremendous pressure on the planet. This era is called the Anthropocene era. It is a geological era we live in right now, featuring all impacts of humans on the planet and other species (Bell and Taylor, 2020). The Anthropocene Working Group (AWG) was established in 2009, which decides on the time, name, rank, and stratigraphic markers of new geological periods (OGG, 2004). The term originated from Paul Crutzen as he improvised at a conference in Mexico in 2000 (Steffen et al., 2011). The team is made up of stratigraphers, palaeontologists, and – because it involves the evaluation of human impact upon the Earth System – it also includes professionals from these sectors: climate science, ecology, archaeology, human history and the history of science, oceanography, polar science, and even international law (Vidas, 2011). The sixth of July 1945, 5:29 am has been defined as the beginning of this era, when the US Army blew up the first nuclear weapon in the desert of New Mexico (Bell & Taylor, 2020). This is one of the marks that has been engraved in the elements of the Earth (Bell & Taylor, 2020).

We are able to only decrease the damages of climate change. This is causing a catastrophe. 2 Celsius degrees increase in temperature is close, and we do not have much time left (Bell & Taylor, 2020). Under climate change, we mean the unit of all terms that refer to any climate impact. This term can be used to describe situations e.g., the damage in the Amazon rainforests (Lenton et al., 2008). Also, we have already paid the price for destroying different species. Still, we think about these times as the glorious days of food production (Horváth, 2020).

As the population grows, people become richer and the demand for food, water, and energy usage increases (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). These three are strongly linked to each other. Food production requires water and energy, energy generation requires water, and agriculture provides a potential energy source (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). The challenge in this is to make a nutritious diet in a sustainable way accessible for everyone (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). Food production is responsible for one-quarter of 26% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). Each food type has a per cent of emission. In the supply chain, most emissions come from land usage and processes at the farm; beef production solely emits 60 kilograms of greenhouse gases (Ritchie & Roser, 2020).

2.4. Increase in consumption

After the Second World War, the economic upswing made it possible to have mass consumption and allowed consumers to buy more (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005). Moreover, increased production enabled more people to be able to have goods. Wealth made it possible for most living standards to increase. In the beginning, this means a positive change. Nowadays the purchasing habit is more like a dangerous and negative action (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005).

Increased production and purchasing are now associated with wasteful consumption and conspicuous consumption (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005). The one big question is how consumption could evoke an economic societal and ecological crisis. In conclusion, we can say that overconsumption can be called a negative habit as the result of it is a wasteful consumption and other values are overshadowed. Consumption has become an element of life (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005). We consume huge amounts as basic needs are produced in large quantities. The feeling that everything is available, and we can consume in large quantities increases consumption intention and by that, we support the intention of producers to keep on producing this way (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005). Maximized consumption puts pressure on the biosphere as well. Wasteful consumption also means the extremely fast use of earthly resources like fossil fuels and mineral resources. Everything slowly converts into waste, and it increases our problems. All these tendencies risk future generations' quality of life (Medvééné Szabad et al., 2005).

Non-conscious consumption

Non-conscious consumption also depends on governments. Without sustainable consumption policies, citizens do not perceive the mindfulness of governments (Biswas & Roy, 2015a). Governments offer subsidies and supportive policies to boost industries. Discounts on products have a high influence on customers (Biswas & Roy, 2015a). They should direct the preference for non-green consumption in a different direction and put green consumption into a preferential segment. Governments must also manage the post-consumption phase, the afterlife, and the disposal of products (Biswas & Roy, 2015a). Even though the type of product purchased by consumers depends on the consumers' choice, behaviour, perceptions, and habits, governments can influence these (Biswas & Roy, 2015a).

There is another crucial factor in non-conscious consumption: greenwashing. It seems natural that companies go green because of the increasing concerns about global warming, climate change, pollution, extinction of species and deforestation (de Jong et al., 2019). Companies go green because of the beneficial positioning of the company (de Jong et al., 2019). We talk about greenwashing when a company claims to be green, but its performance is not even close to being environmentally friendly (de Jong et al., 2019). Instead, companies should be transparent and should communicate true messages with clarity to maintain their appearance in the sight of consumers as valuable companies (de Jong et al., 2019).

Exclusion of packaging

A purchasing opportunity to exclude packaging are stores which are specially created for this opportunity (Scharpenberg et al., 2021). These stores offer an alternative for a more sustainable retail system (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017) and they work with different technologies (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017). Removing the packaging requires different weighting and paying for products. Stores create new solutions to packaging, for example, recycled paper material to wrap meat. Some stores programme the weight of the containers available in their store, which makes shopping easier (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017). From the side of logistics, a well-prepared plan of transportation can reduce emissions, as well as products with less packaging make the transported packages lighter, which enables distributors to transport more in one round (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017). The research based on zero-waste packaging stores and owners states that consumers are not willing to pay more for a less convenient shopping experience because of the improved performance of cheaper but not sustainable products (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017). On the other hand, owners are happy because there is a niche of consumers as environmental awareness is growing, and for some consumers, environmental performance has become a priority (Beitzen-Heineke et al.,

2017). Zero waste/zero packaging stores offer consumers the opportunity to make conscious decisions, giving opportunities for various products, but in a more environmentally friendly way. These stores may shorten the supply chain by supporting smaller scales but increase overall transparency in the food supply chain. Focusing on seasonal, unprocessed food avoids energy-intensive storage, manufacturing, and disposal processes (Beitzen-Heineke et al., 2017).

In Hungary, there are opportunities for consumers to purchase in a zero-waste way. There are 68 such stores located in the counties of Hungary (xforest.hu, 2019). The working method is like in the store explained above (xforest.hu, 2019). There is a significant increase in the number of new zero-waste stores (xforest.hu, 2019). As the number of these stores grows, consumers will have more options to choose from.

Individual intention for change can motivate other customers for a change. Customers who avoid plastic bags while purchasing have an influence on other customers. If the chain continues, companies can join this movement and from this point, the whole system can change. This motivational chain depends on different but important factors (Biswas & Roy, 2015b). Speaking about our personal decisions can motivate others to join the change (Bell & Taylor, 2020).

For a change in consumer behaviour, positive communication between consumers is crucial. Sustainable consumption receives social recognition. Positive word-of-mouth helps the communication flow and increases interest. Socio-cultural practices assume the role of significant motivators (Biswas & Roy, 2015b). Marketers are the other essential elements of change. From marketers, a follow-up is needed. They should reduce consumers' post-purchase dissonance and prevent the spread of negative words, which hinder sustainable consumption behaviour (Biswas & Roy, 2015b).

A conscious customer considers the value of the environment, and other's future and sometimes puts aside personal intentions (White et al., 2019).

2.5. Plastic: the usual packaging of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods

Plastic is a well-known and most used material in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. Therefore, it is one of the biggest damaging materials in the environment and it causes serious problems. Plastic is a lightweight material with high tenacity. This material does not corrode (Giacovelli, 2018).

As FMCG products are packed in plastic wrapping and this packaging has a short lifetime, they rapidly become waste. Of the ever-produced plastic waste, 79% sits in landfills, dumps, or the environment (Giacovelli, 2018).

Furthermore, packaging has an impact on the environment, based on research in 2015, 15% of species are affected by plastic entering the oceans, which endangers their lives (Jambeck et al., 2015). Something new and innovative should be developed by manufacturers as soon as possible to begin the change for those packaging. This should be the new approach to have a balance between sustainable packaging and attractive design (Srinivasan & Lu, 2014). Oloyede and Lignou (2021) examined and listened to the wishes of consumers regarding sustainable packaging. Their conclusion suggests using only the necessary amount of packaging material to wrap the product. On the other hand, customers do expect sustainable packaging, but it should have all functionalities any other packaging material should have (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021). They need safe but convenient packaging (Draskovic et al., 2009). An important suggestion from the participants of this study is that eco-friendly packaging should stand out from other packaging materials, and must be eye-catching (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021).

In 2000 the Parliament of Hungary passed the law on waste management (Medvééné dr. Szabad et al., 2005). The law's goal is to ensure the health of the country's citizens, ensure sustainable development and foster more environmentally conscious thinking and living. Also, to lower the amount of waste and harmful waste produced at the country level. The principles refer to the improvement of the conditions of waste deposits and support them with regulations on the way of shipment of waste (Medvééné dr. Szabad et al., 2005).

In Hungary, the amount of agricultural and food industrial waste reduced from 6 215 tons to 790 tons between 2004 and 2019 (HCSO, 2019). On the other hand, Table 1 below shows the amount of selective waste collected in 2019 in Hungary with regard to corporations carrying out public administration and activities (HCSO, 2019).

| The composition of selectively collected waste | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Corporations carrying out public administration and activities | | | |
| (year, 2019) | | | |
| Mutatók | | | |
| Place of service | The (tons) amount of separated plastic waste from the collected litter | The (tons) amount of all separated waste from the collected litter | The amount (tons) of post-sorted waste which can not be utilized |
| Total of all place of services | 67631.2 | 604522.3 | 22735 |
| Central Hungary | 21763.7 | 210405.6 | 7680 |
| Transdanubia | 23165.3 | 185637.2 | 1964 |
| Great Hungarian Plane and North Hungary | 22702.2 | 208479.5 | 13091 |

Figure 2. The composition of selectively collected waste. *Source: Translated based on HCSO, 2019*

Figure 2 underlines the fact, that plastic waste is collected yearly, and the amount (tons) shows how much we produce plastic waste (HCSO, 2019). Furthermore, to make a comparison between the data for the years 2019 and 2020, Figure 3 shows the tons of changes in waste collection.

| The composition of selectively collected waste | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Corporations carrying out public administration and activities | | | |
| (year, 2020) | | | |
| Indexes | | | |
| Place of service | The amount (tons) of post-sorted waste which can not be utilized | The amount (tons) of separated plastic waste from the collected litter | The amount (tons) of all separated waste from the collected litter |
| Total of all place of services | 37085 | 72920.6 | 636999.2 |
| Central Hungary | 7846 | 25556.1 | 211393.5 |
| Transdanubia | 5249 | 20823.9 | 183836.4 |
| Great Hungarian Plain and North Hungary | 23990 | 26540.6 | 241769.3 |

Figure 3. The composition of selectively collected waste. *Source: Translated based on HCSO, 2019*

As indicated in the table above, considerable changes can be seen in the sum of the amount of waste which cannot be utilized: the amount has grown from 22,735 tons to 37,085 tons. This means that we produced more waste which cannot be reused or recycled. On the other hand, plastic waste indeed grew, but in this case, this amount could have been recycled. From the whole table, the conclusion that can be made is the following: we produce more waste year by year.

2.6. Haircare products

Haircare products are generally used on a weekly basis. Customers use liquid shampoos and conditioners every second day (Cosmetics Europe, 2020). Based on the studies by Jagadeesan and Balaji (2017), male consumers also use hair care products to protect their hair and improve its strength. On the other hand, they prefer branded products rather than medical protection. For consumers, it is important to choose the product which suits them the best. Cosmetic and care products are used every day, and consumers develop a routine for the usage of such products (Amberg & Róbert, 2021). The products have pleasing scents and they add to the personality, style, and appearance of the user (Amberg & Róbert, 2021).

2.7. Establishing the research gap

The Basics of Environmental Economics has a wide overview and examination of the relationship between nature and economics. It was a great book to help the researcher with information about the beginnings of sustainability and the management of waste. On the other

hand, the book discusses the environment and how we are responsible for the future of the World.

Furthermore, this book also discusses the habits of consumers and the negative side effects of wasteful consumption. Reading the book made the researcher realize that her topic, the examination of the eco-conscious consumption habits of Hungarians is important because consumers are individually responsible for the future of our Earth and the future of further generations. The book highlighted the research area and gave support to examining the eco-conscious and green consumption of everyday products in Hungary.

The research focused on sustainable consumption, and intention toward eco-conscious hair care products. Research questions as guidelines helped the research to keep the focus on how much customers are open to incremental consumption changes and what are the positive and negative effects and implications of the eco-conscious consumer. What has impacted customers to change their consumption behaviours towards more eco-conscious alternatives? On the other hand, what is the personal choice of a customer: plastic, or non-plastic packaging? What motivates customers to make mindful decisions?

3. Methods

Two research methodologies were used in the scope of this research, which resulted in a mixed-method study. The mixed-method is an integrated approach to addressing complex practical problems. The results generated this way have more scientific proof (Ivanka & Wingo, 2018). In the case of qualitative data, quality is important (Nunan et al., 2020). A questionnaire is a pre-designed survey for a specific purpose. A variety of data can be collected through surveys and can be used to determine a brand image, show market segmentation, behaviour end so on (Nunan et al., 2020).

The researcher has conducted several personal interviews. These interviews were conducted with people of different genders and age groups in Hungarian. The participants were mainly women as they were more open to having an interview on this topic. For relevance, the topic has been discussed from another point of view with a professional about personal thoughts and brand decisions. An in-depth interview was conducted with the Trade Marketing Manager of Schwarzkopf Professional Hungary.

For the questionnaire, the primary target group was citizens living in Pest County categorized by age, gender, and place of residence. The decision to only examine the citizens of Pest County was made to have a narrower target group but a valid research area. To be able to reach the most and those who only speak Hungarian, the questionnaire was published in Hungarian.

The questionnaire was created online with the help of Google Forms and was distributed on different online platforms. The decision to use this type of survey tool was made based on the knowledge the researcher has about this platform and from the researcher's earlier experience. This type of survey provides a useful representation of collected data, and the answers can easily be converted into specific data and numerical data.

The used online platforms were Facebook, different groups on Facebook and office e-mails as these were the two options that gave the possibility to reach many participants. The questionnaire was a self-prepared survey, which was easily understandable for all participants. The questionnaire had closed-ended questions as these questions can easily be answered and are objective and consistent; answers are easier to analyse. Only one was an open-ended question and concerned outside factors that motivate the consumer towards changing to eco-conscious consumption habits. Also, in the case of one question, participants were able to give personal answers besides the options available for them to choose from.

4. Results

It is important to visualize the results of the study, and it is equally important to include in this section a brief analysis of the paper's data as well as a discussion concerning the reliability and validity of the data used.

The result of the primary research both interviews and questionnaire are discussed in this section.

7 personal interviews were conducted with consumers to have deeper conversations about this topic. The participants were the following: Female (1) 23, Female (2) 24, Female (3) 51, Female (4) 52, Male (5) 58, Female (6) 62, Female (7) 86. The first question focused on the usage of hair care products and the purpose of using them. The common answer was using shampoo for cleaning the hair. The second most frequently mentioned product was hair spray for fixing hair; this was only mentioned by women. The following question focused on the purchase of each product used by respondents. The shampoo is purchased in different time periods by every participant. The purchasing frequency depends on how frequently they wash their hair. Participants said they purchase these products because they have tried them before, and they are effective for them. They said they would not switch to another product if the product in question had been good for years. Consumers purchase the efficiency of the product. On the other hand, if a consumer has a problematic scalp, they have no other choice but to decide on the product purchased. That is why in their case price is not a determining factor as to why they purchase the product. As previous findings support the fact that consumers need motivation for purchasing decisions, one question during the interviews was about the topic of external forces and their motivational effectiveness. All respondents are motivated and affected in a way while deciding on which product to purchase. In the case of shampoo, the usually used material is plastic in a tube or bottle. In response to this question, everyone said using and purchasing the material is not a question of preference. This is the only option available. If there were different options, they may be able to say a preference. Environmental knowledge has a crucial part in the decision making of consumers and how they act while purchasing. 6 out of 7 are aware of climate change thus 7 out of 7 were able to mention environmental problems. The problems mentioned were heatwaves, unbearable summer heat and rapid changes of seasons without intermediary temperatures. Purchasing habits in an eco-conscious context are using canvas bags or reusable bags. Customers try to avoid plastic packaging in stores, for example when purchasing vegetables or fruits. Regarding hair cosmetics, consumers have not changed a thing regarding their consumption. Concerning the future, interviewees were asked if they had any intention of replacing their usually purchased hair care products with eco-friendly versions. The ones who said yes also mentioned that they would if the company changed the material of the products they offer.

Another in-depth interview was conducted with a member of Schwarzkopf Professional Hungary. The Trade Marketing Manager of the Schwarzkopf Brand in Hungary said she believes in professional hair care. These products have the relevant amount of ingredients and can successfully help the maintenance of the hair. Brand and efficiency influence her purchasing decisions. She trusts professional recommendations still; she is open to trying new products. Packaging in her preference is sustainable and refillable. In her opinion, it is not enough for brands to provide environmentally friendly packaging and she says there is still room for improvement. In this case, she explained Henkel Beauty Care Professional strives for sustainable packaging options and she thinks, this is where every brand needs to move. She is aware of environmental problems and climate change and has already made decisions in her personal life to take care of the environment.

In the case of professional hair care, Schwarzkopf Professional globally saves 350 tons of virgin aluminium, 340 tons of virgin paper and 80 tons of virgin plastic per year thanks to the sustainable packaging of the Igora Royal range, which is the backbone of Schwarzkopf Professional portfolio. Concerning brand effect, the Trade Marketing Manager has explained it is pleasant if the brand meets the goals of the individual, but the company must strive to serve environmental needs. She believes it is important to work for a company whose principles the individual can identify with.

The survey was closed after reaching $N=258$ participants. The opening question of the survey asked consumers about what type of hair care products they use. There were 16 options to choose from. As the chart shows, the most used products are shampoo and hair conditioner. This is a result the researcher of this study has expected: usually, people clean their hair and try to provide the hair with some care and nourishment.

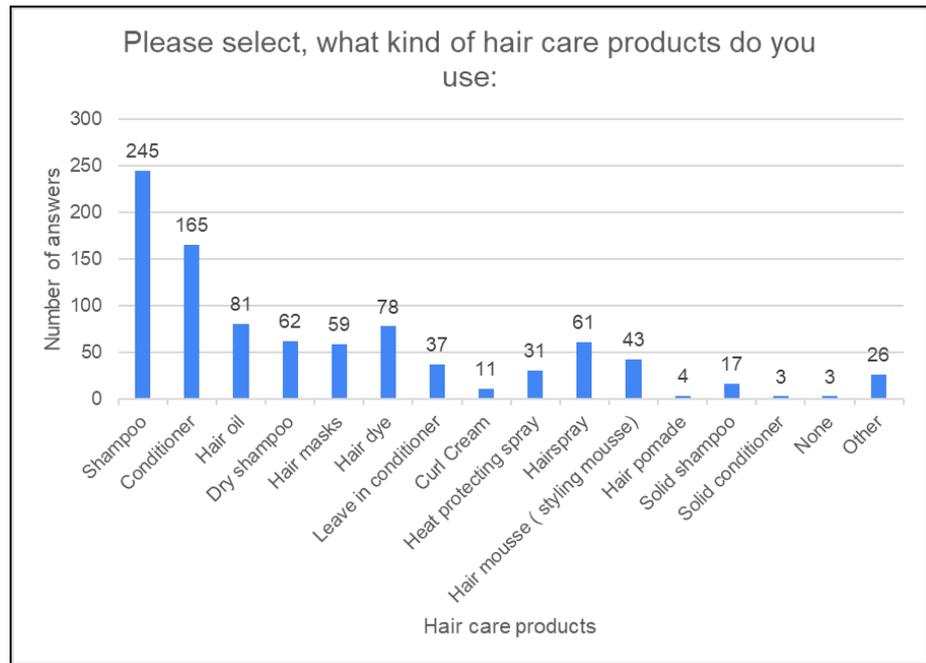


Figure 4. Packaging preferred by customers. Source: own work, 2021

As plastic is one of the biggest factors of environmental problems, a separate section was dedicated to the intention of consumers as to why they purchase plastic packaging. Almost half of the participants answered this question too. They answered that there is nothing else available; on the other hand, they answered that they do not care about the packaging, they purchase the product/brand. The researcher was able to measure the level of knowledge of consumers about environmental problems and climate change. The first question of this section focused on the awareness of consumers. A positive result can be seen: most participants know, learn, and act about the problems and another big group knows and sometimes reads about it as well.

Further questions gave the result that consumers act and make changes in their personal lives due to their awareness of climate change: for instance, they recycle the waste they produce, make mindful decisions while purchasing and try to avoid plastic and are likely to use canvas bags. Consumers do not just consider their decisions, but they look forward to choosing the greener option.



Figure 5. Extent to which consumers make changes in their habits to be more eco-conscious. Source: own work, 2021

The conclusion can be made that people are self-motivated. They need their inner motivation to make changes and for that motivation they require knowledge. As the total the

results of these two aspects show, 94.9% of participants require motivation to come from them in addition to personal knowledge.

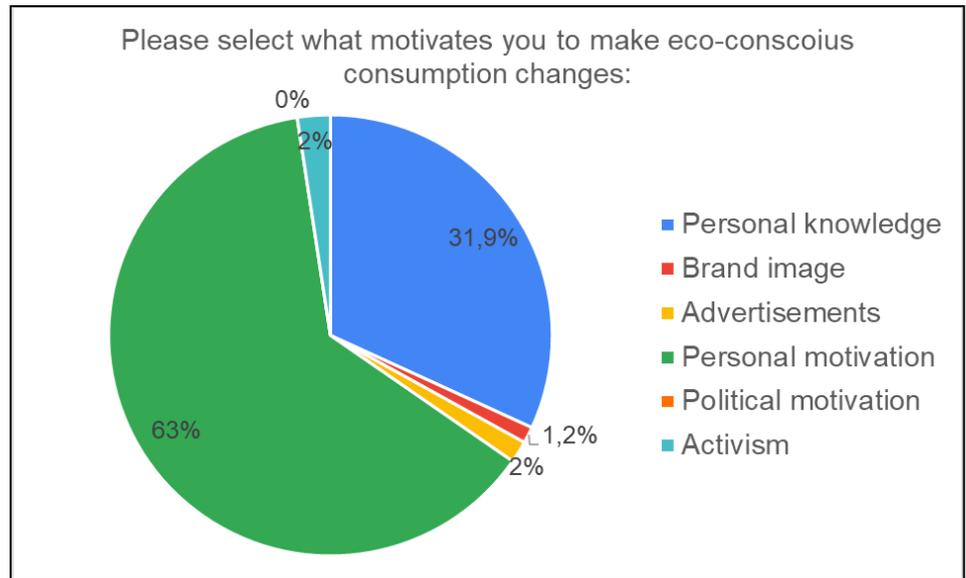


Figure 6. Factors motivating customers towards eco-conscious consumption changes. Source: own work, 2021

As customers consume, they must make decisions on different aspects. The following question required the consumers to rate the aspects from 1 to 9 concerning how important these factors are for them while making a purchasing decision. Through the evaluation of the answers, the participants ranked the following aspects:

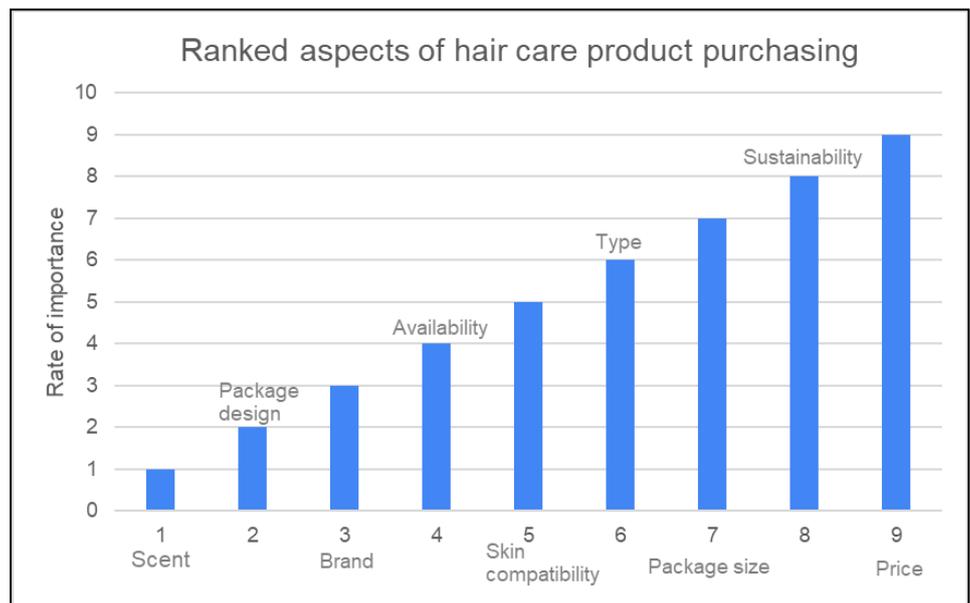


Figure 7. Ranking of aspects when making purchasing decisions about hair care products. Source: own work, 2021

The knowledge of consumers regarding eco-conscious hair care products was also assessed. The results show that participants can be almost divided into two equal size groups concerning their knowledge or lack of knowledge about these products. 56% are interested in eco-conscious hair care products. This is another proof that consumers are interested in sustainability, they are searching for such products in fields like hair care as well. Still, they lack knowledge about these products and their availability.

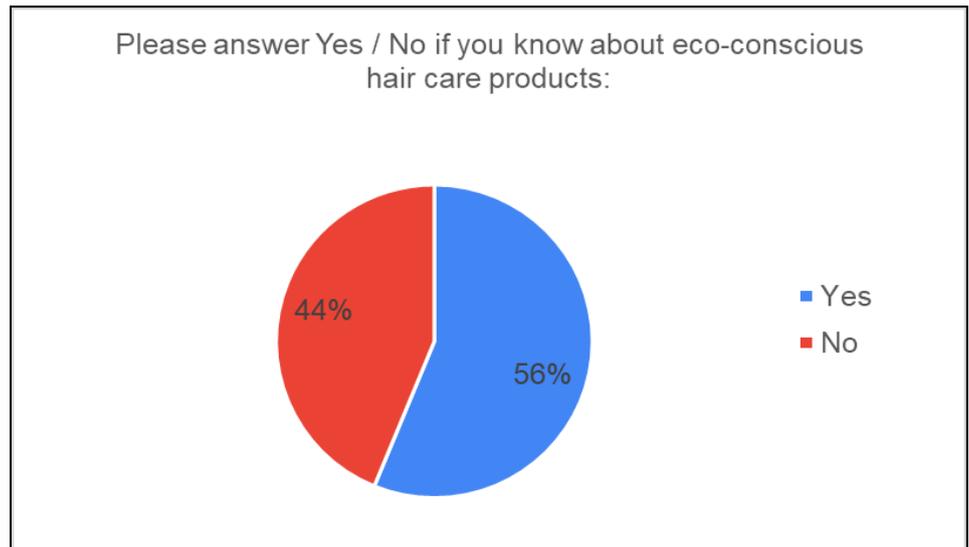


Figure 8. Consumers' knowledge about eco-conscious hair care products. *Source: own work, 2021*

With the help of the survey, the researcher was able to cover all age groups by engaging different numbers of participants in these age groups. Most respondents are in the age group of 18-24, to be followed by an equal number of persons from the age groups of 41-50 and 50 and above, and there were some participants from the age groups of 25-30 and 31-40. The explanation for this ratio of ages is that the researcher was more likely to reach participants through Facebook from these age groups, but other age groups were successfully reached as well owing to resharing and office e-mails.

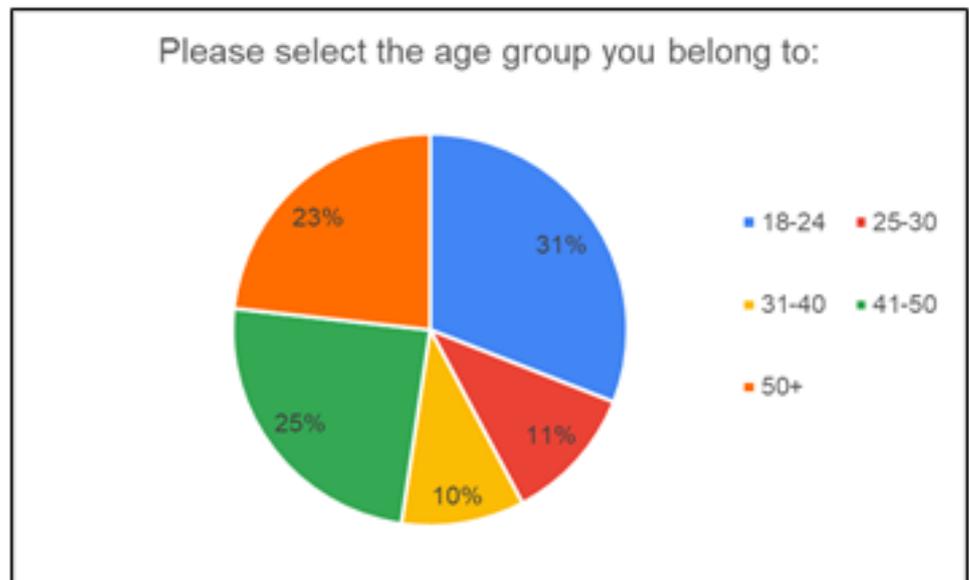


Figure 9. Consumers' knowledge about eco-conscious hair care products. *Source: own work, 2021*

The majority of the participants were female (73%). The researcher explains this as follows: the topic of hair care was more eye-catching and relevant for women, and on the other hand, with respect to the interviews, women were more willing to participate in the survey.

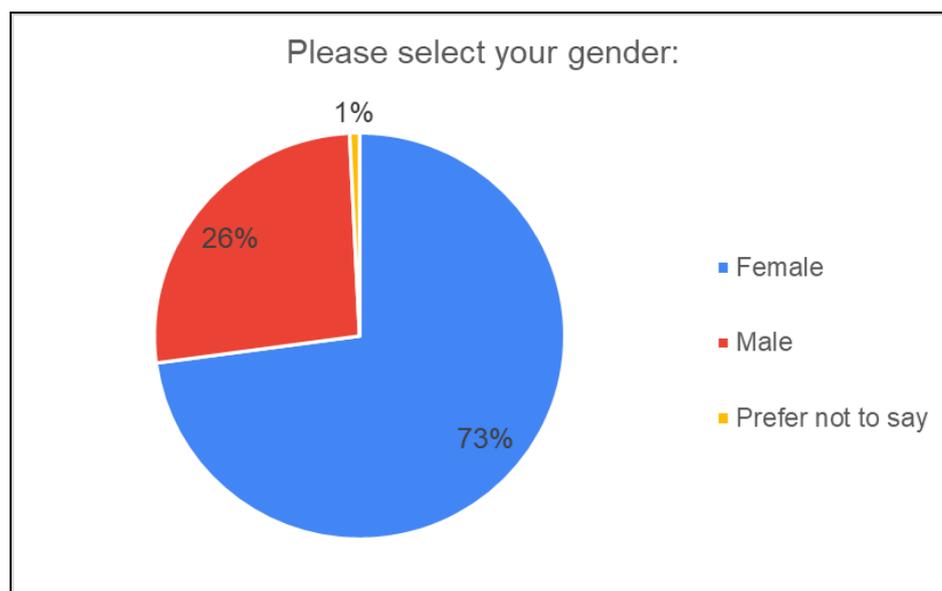


Figure 10. Gender of respondents. *Source: own work, 2021*

5. Discussion

Customers frequently purchase hair care products. This means consumers care about their looks and how their hair feels. Consumers are not looking for the packaging, they rather look for the product inside. They seek the desired efficiency as a tool for their hair. Even though they do not have a preference for packaging, they are likely to purchase plastic bottles because these are available. On the other hand, the important factors of purchase are occasionally the brand and the product.

Consumers are quite knowledgeable about environmental problems. However, they do not seem to consider changing to eco-conscious hair care products. Conscious acts can be seen through their daily purchasing habits for instance excluding plastic bags. The lack of attention from companies on Fast-moving consumer goods, and hair care product packaging results in low attention from consumers towards sustainable products.

The primary research indeed shows that inner motivation and personal knowledge are the motivational factors to prompt a switch to eco-conscious and sustainable buying habits. It is crucial to implement eco-conscious thinking in daily life from an early age, by providing education for children.

On the other hand, consumers consider price and sustainability as the most important factors in decision making. Companies should consider these two factors and create an equilibrium between price and sustainability.

Consumers have already met with eco-conscious products in stores despite it does not mean they are willing to buy it Still it is a great sign for companies, that consumers are ready for the change, and they seek forward to new products, which meet their preferences. The attitude of consumers is important but, as the personal interviews reveal, individual acts are not enough. There should be a strong intention for change from the side of companies.

6. Conclusions

Customers could be more eco-conscious and eco-friendly. The products surrounding them should have a strong, eco-conscious background from the company.

It is important to encourage consumers to be attentive to sustainability. Tools of communication to make awareness about eco-consciousness could be commercials, promoting activists and providing information through their campaigns and communications.

Actions must be taken as well. Companies should increase the availability of eco-conscious hair care products. First, they should produce plastic bottles from already used

plastics and should encourage customers to recycle. Another change could be putting hair care products for specific hair needs in glass vials for purchase in pharmacies.

Companies could develop a system of refill bars. This system would provide the opportunity for consumers to refill their bottles after using the product. In this case, the companies must create bottles that are possible to be refilled. On the other hand, companies that are retailers of these brands should cooperate with the companies in developing this system. The products to be refilled are shampoos, conditioners, and hair oils because these products do not require any additional power-gas. Developing products such as hair sprays without gas is another field for R&D and companies to start working on.

Another type of communication is the display of products in stores. Companies, brands, and drugstores should better display eco-conscious products to motivate customers to purchase sustainable products.

Funding: This research was funded by Budapest Business School Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism, grant number 300.000 HUF.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Amberg, N., & Róbert, M. (2021). A kozmetikai piac és a fogyasztói döntéshozatal bemutatása ökonómiai megközelítésben [Introduction of the cosmetics market and consumer decision making from an economic view]. *Köz-Gazdaság*, 16(1), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.14267/retp2021.01.09>
2. Beitzten-Heineke, E. F., Balta-Ozkan, N., & Reefke, H. (2017). The prospects of zero-packaging grocery stores to improve the social and environmental impacts of the food supply chain. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 140(Part 3), 1528–1541. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.09.227>
3. Bell, A. R., & Taylor, M. (2020). *Can we save the planet?* Thames & Hudson Ltd.
4. Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015a). Green products: an exploratory study on the consumer behaviour in emerging economies of the East. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 87, 463–468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.075>
5. Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015b). Leveraging factors for sustained green consumption behavior based on consumption value perceptions: testing the structural model. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 95, 332–340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.02.042>
6. Bologna, M., & Aquino, G. (2020). Deforestation and world population sustainability: a quantitative analysis. *Scientific Reports*, 10(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-63657-6>
7. Brem, A., & Puente-Díaz, R. (2020). Are you acting sustainably in your daily practice? Introduction of the Four-S model of sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 267, 122074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.122074>
8. Carfora, V., Caso, D., Sparks, P., & Conner, M. (2017). Moderating effects of pro-environmental self-identity on pro-environmental intentions and behaviour: A multi-behaviour study. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 53, 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2017.07.001>
9. Chen, S.-C., & Hung, C.-W. (2016). Elucidating the factors influencing the acceptance of green products: An extension of theory of planned behavior. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 112, 155–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.08.022>
10. Cosmetics Europe. (2020). Cosmetics Industry. Cosmetics Europe - the Personal Care Association. <https://cosmeticseurope.eu/cosmetics-industry/> [1 June 2022]
11. Deaton, A., & Muellbauer, J. (1980). *Economics and Consumer Behavior*. Cambridge University Press.
12. de Jong, M. D. T., Huluba, G., & Beldad, A. D. (2019). Different Shades of Greenwashing: Consumers' Reactions to Environmental Lies, Half-Lies, and Organizations Taking Credit for Following Legal Obligations. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 34(1), 38–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651919874105>
13. Draskovic, N., Temperley, J., & Pavicic, J. (2009). Comparative perception(s) of consumer goods packaging: Croatian consumer perspective(s). *International Journal of Management Cases*, 11(2), 154–163. <https://doi.org/10.5848/apbj.2009.00028>
14. Etzion, D. (2018). Management for sustainability. *Nature Sustainability*, 1(12), 744–749. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0184-z>
15. European Parliament. (2019, March 27). A Parlament támogatja az eldobható műanyagok betiltását 2021-től | Hírek | Európai Parlament. [Parliament supports a ban on disposable plastics from 2021 onwards]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/hu/press-room/20190321IPR32111/a-parlament-tamogatja-az-eldobhato-muanyagok-betiltasat-2021-tol> [1 June 2022]
16. García-Valdés, R., Bugmann, H., & Morin, X. (2018). Climate change-driven extinctions of tree species affect forest functioning more than random extinctions. *Diversity and Distributions*, 24(7), 906–918. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ddi.12744>
17. Giacobelli, C. (2018). SINGLE-USE PLASTICS A Roadmap for Sustainability Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. <https://www.reloopplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/UNEP-report-on-single-use-plastic.pdf> [1 June 2022]
18. Henkel (2021a). *Climate Action*. www.henkel.com. <https://www.henkel.com/spotlight/features/climate-action> [1 June 2022]
19. Henkel (2021b). *Sustainable Development Goals*. www.henkel.com. <https://www.henkel.com/sustainability/positions/sustainable-development-goals> [1 June 2022]
20. Herzig, C., & Schaltegger, S. (2011). Corporate sustainability reporting. In J. Godeman, & G. Michelsen (Eds.), *Sustainability Communication. Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Theoretical Foundations* (151–170). Dordrecht: Springer
21. Hojnik, J., Ruzzier, M., & Konečnik Ruzzier, M. (2019). Transition towards Sustainability: Adoption of Eco-Products among Consumers. *Sustainability*, 11(16), 4308. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11164308>

22. Horváth, B. (2020). *A Fenntarthatóság Pszichológiája*. [The Psychology of Sustainability]. Typotex.
23. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (2019). STADAT – 5.5.2. *Az egyes hulladékfajták mennyisége a kezelés módja szerint (2004–)*. [Quantity of each type of waste by type of treatment (2004-)]. https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_ur006b.html [1 June 2022]
24. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (2020a). *A fogyasztói árak alakulása 2020-ban*. [Developments in consumer prices in 2020]. <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/fogyar/fogyar2020/index.html> [1 June 2022]
25. Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (2020b). HCSO Statinfo v39. <https://statinfo.ksh.hu/Statinfo/haViewer.jsp> [1 June 2022]
26. Ivankova, N., & Wingo, N. (2018). Applying Mixed Methods in Action Research: Methodological Potentials and Advantages. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62(7), 978–997. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764218772673>
27. Jagadeesan, P., & Balaji, P. (2017). Hair Care Product Usage Purposes and Brand Predilection of Male Consumers. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development*, 8(4), 367. <https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2017.00371.0>
28. Jambeck, J. R., Geyer, R., Wilcox, C., Siegler, T. R., Perryman, M., Andrady, A., Narayan, R., & Law, K. L. (2015). Plastic Waste Inputs from Land into the Ocean. *Science*, 347(6223), 768–771. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1260352>
29. Khan, S. N., & Mohsin, M. (2017). The power of emotional value: Exploring the effects of values on green product consumer choice behavior. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 150, 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.02.187>
30. Lenton, T. M., Held, H., Kriegler, E., Hall, J. W., Lucht, W., Rahmstorf, S., & Schellnhuber, H. J. (2008). Tipping elements in the Earth's climate system. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105(6), 1786–1793. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0705414105>
31. Lindenmayer, D. B., Kooyman, R. M., Taylor, C., Ward, M., & Watson, J. E. M. (2020). Recent Australian wildfires made worse by logging and associated forest management. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 4(7), 898–900. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1195-5>
32. Mäler, K.-G. (1990). International Environmental Problems. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 6(1), 80–108. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23606116?casa_token=xQk91LjF87AAAAA%3AmKP2fctx-ec7wQmLW-s-6b1Ag0plrlP2-dHrUY3kbPGxma8MCPnufz3rGc73_4x4fEt-V0zgjikMyLACOhMesWhV860PFXnWa94s2n7C35VE3D3URSRf&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents [1 June 2022]
33. Medvéne Szabad, K., Fabula, L., Hazayné Ladányi, É., Hubai, J., Kerekes, S., Kobjakov, Z., Kovács, K., Búzás, G., Mocsy, F., & Vass, N. (2005). *A környezetgazdaságtan alapjai* [Basics of environmental economics]. (K. Medvéne Szabad, Ed.). Perfekt Gazdasági Tanácsadó és Oktató Részvénytársaság.
34. Nunan, D., Malhotra, N. K., & Birks, D. F. (2020). *Marketing Research: Applied Insight*. Pearson, UK.
35. Ogg, J. (2004). Status of Divisions of the International Geologic Time Scale. *Lethaia*, 37(2), 183–199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00241160410006492>
36. Oloyede, O. O., & Lignou, S. (2021). Sustainable Paper-Based Packaging: A Consumer's Perspective. *Foods*, 10(5), 1035. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods10051035>
37. Paul, J., Modi, A., & Patel, J. (2016). Predicting green product consumption using theory of planned behavior and reasoned action. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 29, 123–134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2015.11.006>
38. Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2020, January). *Environmental impacts of food production*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/environmental-impacts-of-food> [1 June 2022]
39. Scharpenberg, C., Schmehl, M., Glimbovski, M., & Geldermann, J. (2021). Analyzing the packaging strategy of packaging-free supermarkets. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 292, 126048. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126048>
40. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. John Wiley & Sons.
41. Shrivastava, P., & Hart, S. (1995). Creating sustainable corporations. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 4(3), 154–165. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3280040307>
42. Siew, R. Y. J. (2015). A review of corporate sustainability reporting tools (SRTs). *Journal of Environmental Management*, 164, 180–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2015.09.010>
43. Srinivasan, S., & Lu, W. F. (2014). Development of a Supporting Tool for Sustainable FMCG Packaging Designs. *Procedia CIRP*, 15, 395–400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procir.2014.06.079>
44. Steffen, W., Grinevald, J., Crutzen, P., & McNeill, J. (2011). The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 369(1938), 842–867. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2010.0327>
45. United Nations (2018). *The Sustainable Development Agenda - United Nations Sustainable Development*. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> [1 June 2022]
46. United Nations. (2021). *The 17 Goals*. United Nations; United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> [1 June 2022]
47. Vidas, D. (2011). The Anthropocene and the international law of the sea. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 369(1938), 909–925. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2010.0326>
48. White, K., Habib, R., & Hardisty, D. J. (2019). How to SHIFT Consumer Behaviors to be More Sustainable: A Literature Review and Guiding Framework. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(3), 22–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919825649>
49. Xforest (2019, November 25). *Csomagolásmentes boltok térképe*. [Map of non-packaging stores]. XForest. <https://xforest.hu/csomagolasmentes-boltok-terkepe/> [1 June 2022]
50. Yu, T.-Y., Yu, T.-K., & Chao, C.-M. (2017). Understanding Taiwanese undergraduate students' pro-environmental behavioral intention towards green products in the fight against climate change. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 161, 390–402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.05.115>