

Research Report

Ethical Fuel Consumption Amongst Capetonian Millennial Drivers. A Qualitative Study.

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Date: 29-11-2021

Word count: 12195

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Arts Honours
in Strategic Brand Communication, for the module: Research (RESE8419).

Declaration

I, Bert Pauw, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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29 November 2021

Abstract

This study explores whether the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel is a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers. A qualitative research design was used to gather in-depth *meaningful* data and explore the multifaceted and personal/subjective implications that ethical issues of fuel have on the consumption habits of the participants. Due to a lack of substantial research in the fields of ethical consumption of fuel, particularly in relation to Capetonian millennials, the research had to be exploratory in order to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon, situation, and process.

The findings showed that the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel is not a consideration among the participants. The findings were interpreted to mean that the lack of active consideration of ethical fuel consumption is not due to a lack of compassion or responsibility but is rather brought upon by several factors. These include: a lack of alternative transport that is safe, reliable, and on time; economic reasons; convenience; and the overwhelming and complex nature of this particular ethical dilemma.

Contents

1	Chapter 1: Introduction	7
1.1	Title	7
1.2	Contextualisation	7
1.3	Rationale.....	8
1.4	Problem statement	9
1.5	Purpose statement and research question.....	9
1.6	Objectives	10
2	Chapter 2: Literature review	11
2.1	Conceptualisation	11
2.2	Theoretical Foundation.....	12
2.3	Literature review	14
2.3.1	Motivators of Consumption	14
2.3.2	Challenges Combatting Unethical Supply Chains	15
2.3.3	Socio-Economic Background and Ethical Consumption.....	16
2.3.4	Millennials' Driving Behaviour	17
2.3.5	Ethical Impact Of Fuel Consumption.....	18
2.3.6	Literature Review Conclusion.....	20
3	Chapter 3: Research design and methodology	22
3.1	Research Paradigm.....	22
3.2	Research Design and Approach	23
3.3	Population.....	24
3.4	Sampling	25
3.5	Data-collection Method.....	26
3.5.1	Application of data-collection method.....	27
3.6	Data Analysis Method.....	28
3.6.1	Application of Data Analysis Method.....	29

3.7	Trustworthiness.....	30
4	Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretation of Findings.....	32
4.1	Presentation of findings.....	32
4.1.1	Participant demographics.....	32
4.1.2	Transportation habits.....	32
4.1.3	Origin of fuel – awareness.....	32
4.1.4	Monetary value of Saudi Arabian fuel imports.....	33
4.1.5	Perception of human rights according to country.....	33
4.1.6	Economic boycott of unethical products.....	34
4.1.7	Changing fuel consumption habits.....	36
4.1.8	Constraints to changing fuel consumption.....	37
4.2	Interpretation of findings.....	39
4.2.1	Origin of fuel awareness.....	39
4.2.2	Those unlikely to consider (group 1).....	39
4.2.3	Those likely to consider (group 2).....	40
4.2.4	Why participants do not consider ethical issues of fuel.....	40
4.3	Findings in context.....	44
4.3.1	On ethical consumption.....	44
4.3.2	On convenience, accessibility, and impact.....	44
4.3.3	On collective guilt.....	44
4.3.4	Efficacy of an economic boycott.....	45
4.3.5	Technologies' impact on driving habits.....	45
5	Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	46
5.1	Answering the research question.....	46
5.1.1	Answering research objectives.....	46
5.2	Anticipated Contribution.....	47
5.3	Ethical Considerations.....	47
5.4	Limitations.....	48

6	Reference List.....	49
7	Annexure A – Ethical clearance letter	52
8	Annexure B – Consent form	54
9	Annexure C – Questionnaire	55
10	Annexure D - Concept Document:.....	63

1 Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Title

Ethical Fuel Consumption Amongst Capetonian Millennial Drivers. A Qualitative Study.

1.2 Contextualisation

This research connects studies of: ethical consumption, supply chain of fuel, driving habits, and Capetonian millennials. What follows is a background on each of these topics to locate the research in a larger discourse (Maree, 2021).

According to Peacock (2015), consumers who wish to consume ethically need to ensure that the production of the commodity they are purchasing as well as the supply chain that delivers said commodity does not harm fellow humans (such as children working in sweatshops), future humans (for instance, those who will be born into a world depleted of essential resources, such as fresh drinking water or nutrient rich soil – all necessary for human survival), or other sentient beings (such as livestock kept under inhumane conditions to be eventually turned into food for humans).

Consuming ethically has become ever more difficult in today's globalised world, where supply chains are endlessly long and entangled, causing a lack of supply chain transparency (Doorey, 2011). This is particularly evident when regarding fuel (crude oil), which has an ethically contentious supply chain both from an ecological and socio-political point of view. From funding wars and terrorism (Le Billon, 2021), being extracted in countries infamous for their human rights violations and poor labour laws (De Merit & Young, 2013), to perpetuating historic gender inequality (Majbouri, 2017); and partnered with the difficulty to trace the origin of the fuel lower down the supply-chain (Flinn, 2016) – one could, and should, consider these as hurdles in the way of those who wish to consume fuel ethically.

As the researcher is based in Cape Town, South Africa, the primary research was conducted there, so a brief context of the local fuel supply is necessary. South Africa gets most of its fuel from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Iran (Statistical Review of World Energy, 2020). All of the above mentioned countries are known for human rights violations (Musa, 2017; Onwuazombe, 2017; Ra'ees and Kamal, 2019) and fit into Peacock's parameters of unethical consumption (2015).

Based on the researcher's literature review there seems to be a research silence (Maree, 2021) internationally on the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel among drivers, and furthermore when placed in context of South Africa – all of which has led the researcher to explore the topic further.

1.3 Rationale

This rationale will illustrate how the researcher's interest was piqued by this field of research and why they believe their study worthy to conduct (Maree, 2021).

The researcher developed an interest in ethical consumption growing up surrounded by what seemed like unnecessary and excessive consumption of commodities that were mineral and resource heavy in their production – such as luxurious vehicles, mansion houses and diamond jewellery: all objects that have more resource-modest alternatives that are, functionally, just as efficient. Initially, the researcher was concerned with the effects the raw material extraction and manufacture of such commodities had on the natural world, such as the ecological destruction caused by diamond mines (Anyu and Moki, 2013), or the carbon footprint of petroleum fuelled cargo planes used to import exotic materials that had functionally similar local alternatives (Van Passel, 2010).

Since then, the awareness around sustainable consumption became more prevalent among the peers of the researcher, but in line with what Peacock (2015) noticed in a study, there is a strong skew towards not harming the environment, and less of a focus on the negative socio-political impact one's consumption habits may have, such as harm suffered by humans involved, in the production of said commodity. This has led the researcher to shift their focus into the lesser-known socio-political impacts of consumption.

Instead of looking at the excessive consumption of others, over time the researcher started to question his own consumption habits more critically. Since looking at various commodities he consumes daily, the researcher identified dependence on fuel as his most consumed material. From transport (fuel-powered vehicles) to the production and transportation of every single item he buys at the grocery store, everything depends on fuel. The researcher discovered that South Africans are responsible for around 700 litres of fuel per capita (Statistical Review of World Energy, 2020) and wants to explore if the socio-political impact

that fuel consumption has further down the supply chain is a consideration for the generational and geographic peers of the researcher – millennials in Cape Town.

Research by Montgomery, Wolske and Lyon (2020) has shown that millennials are driving less due to, among other reasons, concerns about the environmental impact of fuel consumption. Their research did not say if the socio-political impact of fuel consumption was a concern for millennials, nor what South African drivers of the same generation might feel about the issue. Their study is potentially the nearest to what the researcher proposed to study, as further inquiry into this topic – which can be found in the literature review – yielded no other research that covers this exact topic. All of which led the researcher to believe that it is a relevant topic to research.

1.4 Problem statement

Fuel has an ethically contentious supply chain, both from an ecological and socio-political point of view. From funding wars and terrorism (Le Billon, 2021), to being extracted in countries infamous for their human rights violations and poor labour laws (De Meritt & Young, 2013). By consuming fuel, there is the risk of indirectly causing harm to those affected by the fuel supply chain, which is an ethical dilemma (Peacock, 2015). Therefore, this research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding on whether the socio-political ethical issues of the fuel supply chain is a consideration for the consumer: in this case, upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers.

1.5 Purpose statement and research question

The purpose of this research is to find out if socio-political ethical consumption of fuel is a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers.

This leads to the primary research question: Is the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers?

1.6 Objectives

1. To explore whether upper-class millennial Capetonians are aware of the socio-political ethical issues of the fuel supply chain.
2. To find out if this impacts their consumption habits of fuel.
3. If it does impact their consumption habits, the next objective will be to explore how and why it impacts their consumption habits.

2 Chapter 2: Literature review

This literature review references theoretical writing with regards to ethical consumption, the motivators of consumption, unethical supply-chains and the challenges faced in combatting them, the role socio-economic backgrounds may play in ethical consumption, as well as the driving habits of millennial drivers. In analysing the selected literature in relation to these topics, the researcher was able to build a foundation for the question of whether upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers might consider the ethical impact of their fuel consumption.

2.1 Conceptualisation

Ethical Consumption: describes the deliberate choice to only use (consume) commodities that has not caused harm to other humans and/or non-human sentient beings through its entire supply chain (Peacock, 2015).

Fuel Consumption: refers to the fuel – petroleum or diesel – that is used (consumed) to power the combustion engine of automobiles. Petroleum and diesel is both a refined product of crude oil (Elavarasan, Kannan and Karthikeyan, 2019).

Supply Chain: describes the entire route that a product travels from raw material, to production, to packaging, to transporting, to the final shop that sells the product to the end consumer. This process follows a 'chain' structure that consists of people, organisations, and resources, all interlinked with one another (Kozlenkova, Hult, Lund, Mena and Kekec, 2015). In the context of this study and ethical consumption it is a crucial concept to understand because it is not always the first place one associates with a product that causes harm. For instance, it is not necessarily Shell that causes direct harm to anyone, but the organisations that they purchase the crude oil from.

Supply Chain Transparency: is a process where companies are encouraged by stakeholders, such as human rights activists, to disclose which factories they outsource their manufacturing to, to illuminate potential dubious *links* along the *chain* of supply (Montgomery et al, 2020). This transparency is to pressure corporations (who do not want consumers and activists alike to know about the dubious links that were previously hidden) to stop financially empowering other corporations or governments that are known for harmful

business practice such as using child labour or having bad labour laws (Montgomery et al, 2020).

Millennials: is a generation of people born between the years 1981-1996 (Montgomery et al, 2020). Therefore, in 2021, the year of this research will be done, the generation will cover ages 25-40.

Drivers: in the context of this study refers specifically to those who own and drive an automobile (car).

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Although the following is not an established academic theory per se, in consultation with the researcher's supervisor it was deemed that the parameters for ethical consumption laid out by the following academic will present the most appropriate lens to view the research findings through. The aptness of which will be justified below.

Mark Peacock's (2015) parameters of ethical consumption will be used as the theoretical lens for this research. According to Peacock (2015), an unethical commodity is a commodity which, through its production process, causes harm to innocent parties, which includes:

- i) fellow humans, such as children working in sweatshops and farm workers working in unsafe environments where they are exposed to pesticides;
- ii) future humans, such as those that will be born into a world depleted of essential resources, such as fresh drinking water, necessary for human survival;
- iii) other sentient beings, such as livestock kept under atrocious conditions to be eventually turned into food for humans.

Even though consumers are not always directly responsible for the harms caused further down the supply-chain, they are still culpable for perpetuating the cycle of harm through purchasing unethical goods, which provides the business directly responsible for the injustice with profit to continue their operations (Peacock, 2015). Consumers may be ignorant of these unethical practices that happen in the supply-chain and the purpose of Peacock's (2015) paper is to discuss at which point the customer's ignorance absolves them

of any culpability. The author does not ignore that business, industry and government should not be held accountable, but for the purpose of this research Peacock focuses specifically on the culpability of the consumer, and how consumers can possibly change their purchasing behaviour as to not perpetuate the harm caused by business.

Peacock classifies two types of ignorance found in ethical consumption. The first of which is factual ignorance where the information on which to assess a situation is factually incorrect (2015). An example could be a scientist administering a new medicinal cure today, but later scientific evidence emerges stating that the specific vaccine actually causes cancer. Even though it turned out the medicine caused harm, the scientist who initially developed the medicine cannot be held morally responsible, because they did not know of this adverse effect. The second type of ignorance is moral ignorance, in which case a person cannot differentiate between that which is morally right and wrong (Peacock, 2015). For example, a person claiming that breaking a promise is fine, is morally ignorant about the appropriate way of response.

A consumer who buys a product with a suspicion that they might be contributing to an unjust practice but does not follow up or investigate deeper into their suspicion will be considered culpable, because they purposefully chose to remain uninformed. There are different levels of moral responsibility that one holds different consumers to. For instance, someone living in poverty buys a coat to keep warm and chooses to buy the cheaper one that comes from an unethical source because they need the rest of their money to feed their children. Given their circumstances this person would not be deemed to have made a wrongful decision. However, the higher the income of a person (relative to their responsibilities) the stricter these moral standards should be applied, because if someone chooses to buy the cheaper and more unethical version of a product but can realistically afford the ethical version without going into a financially stressful situation, they must be held culpable for their actions.

Peacock's parameters of ethical consumption will be useful as a theoretical foundation because it provides a useful framework of ethical consumption, consumer culpability and types of ignorance. All of which is useful to use as a guideline while gathering primary data, analysing themes, and reporting on findings.

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 Motivators of Consumption

In *How to SHIFT Consumer Behaviors to be More Sustainable*, authors White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) found that among other areas of concern for sustainability, choice of transport and energy use is often habitual. In this text, the authors found that breaking the habit and making the sustainable option accessible and easy to use is important, since there is a popular perception that sustainable options take more time and effort to use (White et al, 2019). Consumers are more likely to consider a sustainable option when their actions will make a difference.

If the consumer feels as if the impact of their actions is unclear, especially when the product comes from geographically faraway places, they are less likely to act since the situation seems less obvious and threatening (White et al, 2019). On the other hand, when the fear in the consumer is too big it might make the consumer deny the problem which also leads to inaction. Therefore, it is important to find a healthy balance between informing and scaring the customer. Interestingly, consumers that are told that their nation's consumption behaviour has a certain negative impact in a distant country are more likely to consider changing their behaviour in response to feeling a collective guilt for the nation.

The participants in Montgomery, Wolske and Lyon's (2020) sustainability study, titled *The Millennial 'Meh': Correlated Groups as Collective Agents in the Automobile Field*, regularly mentioned their concern for the environment and the general impact their consumption habits may have. This made them more likely to be interested in consuming less, living more minimally, recycling, and practicing ethical consumption. The higher levels of ethical concerns regarding the environment among millennials also suggests that they might be more open to adopting electric cars (Montgomery et al, 2020).

In Eberhart and Naderer's (2017) study, *Quantitative and qualitative insights into consumers' sustainable purchasing behaviour: a segmentation approach based on motives and heuristic cues*, it became evident that when consumers were doing in-store shopping they were reluctant to spend much time contemplating buying products that are purchased often and that carry relatively little importance. For instance, buying bread from the supermarket is a quick decision often based on ingrained habits. Based on their research

findings, they identified three key groups of consumers on the sustainability purchasing spectrum:

- 1) Unreflecting customers, who do not connect a link between personal care products and sustainability issues;
- 2) Limited consumers, who are aware that there is a link but do not investigate more or necessarily act on the information they have;
- 3) Responsible consumers, who are very much aware of sustainability issues, put in effort to educate themselves, and choose sustainable products accordingly.

Interestingly, limited consumers mostly associate sustainability to environmental preservation and protection, and not the social side of sustainability (Eberhart and Naderer, 2017). In contrast to this, responsible consumers are concerned with each link in the 'eco-system' that produces a product, from environmental impact to the working conditions in the factory bottling the personal care products.

The unreflecting and limited consumers feel sceptical of the efficacy of consuming in a more sustainable manner, citing that it is difficult to notice real world differences, as well as that they might not be alive anymore by the time all resources have been depleted (Eberhart and Naderer, 2017). These two groups also feel that sustainable products are a subsection of products, meaning that they cannot completely switch to sustainable consumption because there are not enough options. Struggling to identify sustainable options is another reason limited consumers provide as to why they do not buy sustainable products; in this regard, clearer product-labelling could be useful.

In considering these three studies, the researcher is able to consider a number of varying motivators of consumption; this allows for greater depth of understanding around the impacts and influences of how and why we consume products today, and provides a framework to examine consumption ethics and the way this relates to millennials and their driving habits.

2.3.2 Challenges Combatting Unethical Supply Chains

When considering the challenges in combatting unethical supply chains, the researcher refers to David Doorey's (2011) text, *The Transparent Supply Chain: from Resistance to Implementation at Nike and Levi-Strauss*. In today's globalised world, where supply-chains

are endlessly long and entangled, it becomes ever more difficult to consume ethically due to the lack of supply-chain transparency. A reoccurring suggestion is one of 'information disclosure' so that consumers can make informed consumption decisions. This recurring theme is evident in the work of Doorey (2011), Peacock (2015), and Finn (2019).

Peacock (2015) suggests that once consumers are armed with the right information, they must then order the options on a scale of most to least harm caused. This hierarchy can then be referenced to weigh up one's options when attempting to consume ethically. Peacock sums up the challenge for those who wish to consume ethically, stating that "the technical details of production, the source of raw materials, the modes of transport involved in conveying goods to retailers, or to the activities of the corporations in whose name commodities are produced" (2015:2) must all be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, in referring to Delistavrou, Krystallis and Tilikidou's (2020) text, *Consumers' decision to boycott "unethical" products: the role of materialism/post materialism*, the researcher has established that boycotting products from a business or country is one of the most effective strategies implemented by consumers who are dissatisfied with the lack of ethical consideration used in the supply-chain that brings the product to the consumer (Delistavrou et al, 2020). The ethical consideration includes issues surrounding poor labour laws, animal cruelty, child labour, environmental destructive practices. The act of the boycotting is done in the hope that the business changes its ways and reverses the damage done (Delistavrou et al, 2020).

There is a discrepancy between consumer intention and action when it comes to sustainability. Therefore, even though the number of people (globally, 73% of millennials say they are willing to pay more for a sustainable option) that consider ethical issues when buying a product is rising, there is lots of work to be done to prompt them into acting on their intentions (White et al, 2019), as is outlined in *How to SHIFT Consumer Behaviours to be More Sustainable*.

2.3.3 Socio-Economic Background and Ethical Consumption

When looking at the potential impact of an individual's socio-economic background on either ethical or unethical consumption, the researcher refers again to Delistavrou et al's (2020) text. This study found that those who are in the higher stages of Maslow's hierarchy of

needs, with concerns for self-actualisation and quality of life, had more intention of boycotting unethical products, as opposed to those lower down the hierarchy who wanted to achieve basic comfort and security (Delistavrou et al, 2020). This is affirmation that doing the research on upper-class individuals is appropriate because they are more likely to have their basic needs met and have the economic and emotional opportunity to engage in ethical consumption.

2.3.4 Millennials' Driving Behaviour

According to the research done by Montgomery, Wolske and Lyon (2020), millennials are driving less than previous generations and it is due to attitudinal differences, and not socio-economic issues as one might have expected. Concerns for the environmental impact, as well as general safety and lack of pleasure derived from the activity, are all attitudinal contributors to the decline in total trips by car (Montgomery et al, 2020).

For generations before millennials, owning a car was seen as a rite of passage that signified freedom, adulthood and agency. However, millennials view the car as more of a tool to get a job done, with less emotional attachment - so much so that a car is actually seen as a source of anxiety, caused by a fear of driving and the liability of owning a car. There is also significant concern around the unnecessary expenditure of owning a car, which is seen as wasteful (such as paying for fuel, parking, licensing and insurance) (Montgomery et al, 2020).

Millennials are not only travelling less by car, they are travelling less in general; this is largely due to the advent of new technological advancements that make working, shopping, and consuming entertainment at home more viable. Public transport, e-hailing apps (Uber), and car sharing schemes have also made it easier to live without owning a car and using those services only when necessary. This trend is seen particularly among millennials who are more likely to adopt new technology than older generations (Montgomery et al, 2020).

'Wasting time' is another theme that surfaced throughout the study, where it was illustrated that millennials travel less where possible and therefore do not spend valuable time driving and being stuck in traffic). For millennials, if travel is not avoidable, they save time by checking emails, reading or catching up on social media while in an Uber taxi or public

transport network. This is seen as a huge advantage and is considered to be less of a time-wasting, stress-inducing experience.

2.3.5 Ethical Impact Of Fuel Consumption

When considering whether Capetonian millennials should be aware of the ethical impact of their fuel consumption, the researcher has reviewed literature that outlines the source of South Africa's oil, as well as the effects this natural resource has on those implicated, willingly or not, in its supply-chain.

South Africa gets most of its oil from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Iran (Statistical Review of World Energy, 2020). In research conducted by De Merit and Young (2013), titled *A Political Economy of Human Rights: Oil, Natural Gas, and State Incentives to Repress*, the authors found that mining and selling oil have negative unintended consequences, such as an increased likelihood of civil war, the formation of dictatorships and autocratic ways of state rule and a higher chance of terrorism. They find that there is also more opportunity for repression to be used by the state, specifically for countries that rely mostly on natural resource extraction and selling as their main source of state income, as opposed to relying on taxation of its citizens. The study shows that there is a substantive link between states who depend on oil as the main source of revenue and human rights violations perpetrated by those state leaders (De Merit & Young, 2013).

In a text by Egorov, Guriev and Sonin (2009), titled *Why resource-poor dictators allow freer media: A theory and evidence from panel data*, it is highlighted that signs of repression, such as reduced freedom of speech in the media, has been noted as a tool used by countries economically dependent on oil reserves. This allows the leaders to maintain power by getting rid of and/or preventing the formation of political opposition parties, rebel groups, and mass uprisings (Egorov et al, 2009).

According to Ross (2006), in his text *A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War*, Nations with mineral rich - and specifically oil - natural reserves are prone to civil wars because the state becomes an attractive target for different factions in the country who want to overthrow the current government and take control of the capital gains derived from oil.

Nations with oil reserves are also prone to attacks from rebel organisations who want to use the profits from the oil to fund their activities. Interestingly, mineral resources (and agriculture) are more likely than other industries to be targeted by rebel organisations because mineral resources are tied to a specific geographical location (where the oil is mined) and cannot be relocated to a safer area less likely to be reached by rebels (Ross, 2006). Unlike say manufacturing equipment that can be relocated to another district if there is a risk of rebel insurgency. Ross (2006) suggests that this is another reason countries with offshore oil supply are less likely to have these issues than ones with onshore reserves.

The impact of illegal oil smuggling runs wide, as is outlined in Crystal Flinn's (2016) article, *Black Gold in the Black Market: Tackling the Issue of International Oil Smuggling Through Technology, Public Policy, and Internal Corporate Controls*. From funding organised crime groups to government corruption because of bribery, illegal oil smuggling prevents countries from growing their economies at more gradual and sustainable rates (Flinn, 2016). Due to a lack of regulation the actual supply-chain becomes a danger to innocent bystanders because the right safety protocols are not followed for extraction and even the transportation of the oil. This can (and has) resulted in fatal explosions and oil spillage - contaminating the environment and causing detrimental consequences on things such as fresh water for drinking or the soil that food is grown in (Flinn, 2016).

Oil smuggling in Nigeria has been specifically difficult to trace because of alleged government corruption that covers up the supply chain trail. This is especially concerning since there have been links between the revenue generated from oil smuggling and human rights violations under the rule of the Nigerian government and other political organisations (Flinn, 2016).

According to Majbouri's (2017) study, *Oil, Laws, and Female Labor Force Participation*, although the average number of years that the average woman in Middle Eastern petro-states receive education has increased significantly since the 1970s, the number of women in the labour force has not increased by much when compared to the rise in education percentage. Majbouri (2017) shows that this is due to both discriminatory laws and that oil profits are still heavily skewed towards men. This has an impact on the power dynamics in households where men still make decisions about who joins the labour market and who does not. This strange but adverse effect of income inequality due to profits from oil, can perpetuate historic gender inequality (Majbouri, 2017).

In Piazza's (2016) *Oil and terrorism: an investigation of mediators*, he writes that Nations that are heavily dependent on the profits of national oil reserves have a higher likelihood of experiencing terrorist insurgencies. Countries with onshore oil reserves face more terrorist activity than those who have offshore reserves. Countries that rely heavily on the sale of their oil reserves have been linked with having worse human rights standards, which is a key variable for increased terrorism. When new oil reserves are discovered, it often has adverse effects on the local communities in the area. From land seizure, forced removals to repressive government tactics and mistreatment of the local people, which could lead to the destruction of the community fabric (Piazza, 2016).

Interestingly countries that rely on oil profits are found to have more socioeconomic inequality than countries who rely on other natural resources such as timber, diamonds and coffee (Piazza, 2016). This phenomenon has been shown to arise due to the high capital investment and skilled labour required to mine oil, meaning that only those who already have money or are highly qualified can mine for oil - not similar to the timber or coffee industry, which can be started on a smaller scale with less skilled labour required. This income inequality, rather than poverty *per se*, has also been found to be a key instigator of terrorism (Piazza, 2016).

Through these sources, one can see that the negative impact of the oil industry is something to consider. From instigating civil wars, fuelling terrorism, increasing economic inequality, to entrenching old discriminatory gender roles, oil has the potential to cause serious harm. From which one can suggest that South Africans - who get most of their oil from countries infamous for several of these issues - should be ethically considerate when consuming fuel.

2.3.6 Literature Review Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review has examined current literature surrounding the ethics of oil, consumption ethics, and how this relates to millennials and their driving habits. The research seeks to consider whether the socio-political and ethical issues of the fuel supply-chain is a consideration for consumers, specifically millennial drivers living in Cape Town, and in developing this review, the researcher has outlined the socio-political and ethical issues of where and how the fuel used by Capetonian consumers reaches them. Through the highlighted literature, it is evident that the negative impact of the oil industry is something to reflect on – as are motivators of consumption, unethical supply-chains, and socio-

economic backgrounds – when considering fuel consumption. In analysing the selected literature in relation to these topics, the researcher has built a foundation for the argument of whether Capetonian millennial drivers might consider the ethical impact of their fuel consumption.

3 Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

3.1 Research Paradigm

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the ethical considerations different drivers make when refuelling their vehicle. Therefore, interpretivism is the chosen paradigm, with a qualitative research method, to see to what extent (if any) consumers think about ethical consumption criteria (Peacock, 2015) when refuelling their vehicles. This research question relies on meaning based (in the form of words) data analysis in a hermeneutic fashion instead of analysing numerical data (Maree, 2021).

The subjective ontology and a relativist epistemology of interpretivism helps the researcher explore the different ways people respond to the 'objective reality' (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014) of the social ethical issues associated with fuel. Rather than looking for overarching laws that explain the consumption habits of the respondents, an interpretivist paradigm guides the researcher to an in-depth understanding of different people's responses (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). This paradigm is relevant to the research in terms of establishing to what extent the individual is aware of the supply chain ethics of fuel, and whether it influences their consumption habits.

What a participant considers ethical is subjective, and so are their opinions, views, and experiences. For instance, some participants might think that because they are geographically far away from the problem, that they cannot be held responsible (Peacock, 2015); others might say they do not have the emotional capacity to consider said ethical issues. This is because each individual's lived experience is unique/subjective. Therefore, the researcher interprets the findings instead of giving black and white explanations in a positivist manner (Maree, 2021).

3.2 Research Design and Approach

The research design was done using a qualitative approach, because this allowed the researcher to use the relevant instruments to explore the subjective 'how and why' of the participants consumption behaviour (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Another advantage of using a qualitative research design was the ability for the researcher to gather in-depth *meaningful* data, with the added advantage of its small sampling size (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014) which suited the research topic and time constraints of this academic course. Using a qualitative approach also helped the researcher explore the multifaceted and personal/subjective implications (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014) that ethical issues of fuel might have on the consumption habits of Capetonian millennials.

As pointed out in the research problem and literature review, the researcher was unable to find substantial research in the fields of ethical consumption of fuel and particularly in relation to Capetonian millennials. Therefore, the research was exploratory which, according to Maree (2021), is useful in cases where key issues and variables are not well documented by previous research and helps lead the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon, situation, process and/or group. The research was inductive, anticipating themes to reveal themselves during the interpretation of the findings (Maree, 2021).

3.3 Population

Defining the population helps define the parameters or scope of the research study, and the more detailed the characteristics of the population the better the accuracy and validity of the study (Maree, 2021). Population parameters include nature, size and characteristics of the population (Maree, 2021). In an ideal world the researcher would be able to research and gather data from the entire defined population; unfortunately, most of the time, this is not possible, so the population only partially represents the potential audience (Maree, 2021). This is where sampling is necessary, which will be discussed in the following section.

The unit of analysis for this study's population was people, and specifically those who shared the following characteristics with the research question: age, geographic location, and income bracket.

The population parameters for the target population of the study were: all high-income millennials living in the City of Cape Town who own a car. Their unique characteristics included being between the ages 26 - 40 (millennials), owning a car, and living in Cape Town. Their car had to be powered by petrol or diesel as fuel (no electric or hybrid cars) because the purpose of this study focused on the specific ethical consumption considerations relating to the fuel (crude oil) supply chain, and not that of the electricity supply chain. The accessible population had the same unique characteristics and, additionally, had to be willing to participate in the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

This population was chosen because those in the age bracket can legally drive; high income individuals can afford cars and could hypothetically afford more sustainable options; and living in the City of Cape Town made the data collection more accessible for the researcher who had limited time and resources. The pre-requisite that a participant had to own a car was to ensure that the participant had the autonomy of refuelling the car themselves, as opposed to borrowing another person's or company's car where the participant might have had less considerations/feelings of responsibility for their actions (Montgomery et al, 2020), which was likely to skew the research data towards the notion that Capetonian millennials *did not* take ethical consumption into consideration when consuming fuel.

3.4 Sampling

The size of the total population mentioned above was too large for the scope of this study, so a more manageable number of elements, who were as representative of the population as possible, had to be selected through a sampling process (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

The sample was chosen using non-probability snowball sampling. The sample was non-probability because the qualitative nature of the research did not require generalisable findings (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Furthermore, it was near impossible to gather a list of the entire population of Capetonian millennial drivers, which would have been a requirement for a probability sample because each person on the list had to have an equal chance of being selected (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Snowball sampling was deemed the most appropriate sampling method because the researcher was able to locate a few respondents who fit the sampling criteria who then referred the researcher to other potential respondents who also suit the sampling criteria (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Given the budget and time limitations, as well as the lack of access to a larger research team by the researcher, and the purpose of the study (which is not necessary to be generalisable) this sampling method together with a small sampling size (15-30 participants) was appropriate for the study.

Many of the researcher's peers fell within the population parameters, so the first five participants were chosen from different communities the researcher was involved in. In an attempt to make the selection less biased, a concerted effort was made by the researcher to choose a socially diverse set of individuals, who at the very least, did not know one another. Participants were selected from each of the following communities: Cape Town cycling community, University of Cape Town alumni, Cape Town visual arts community, engineer colleague of the researcher's relative, and a member of the researcher's partner's book club. Once the five participants accepted the invite to participate, the researcher then asked them for referrals for potential leads who also fitted the population parameters. This process was followed until the researcher had reached the sample size goal of 15-30 participants, which is a sufficient number of participants for a qualitative study (Maree, 2021).

3.5 Data-collection Method

Data collection took place via a questionnaire in a Google Forms format. The major advantage of a questionnaire for this particular study was its time-efficiency (which suits the researcher's time constraints), cost effectiveness (which suits the researcher's financial constraints), and lastly, questionnaires are completed by participants in private which can produce candid responses, which suits the in-depth meaning-seeking nature of qualitative research very well (Maree, 2021). The researcher's aim was to get a minimum of 15-30 participants to do the questionnaire. However, the researcher was open to a higher number of participants in the case that more voluntarily engaged with the questionnaire.

The online and uncostly nature of Google Forms makes it cost effective, and easy to distribute via email or social media to those selected for the snowball sample. It is also more time-efficient, especially in relation to other qualitative data-collection methods such as focus groups or in-depth interviews (Maree, 2021).

The researcher designed a questionnaire in Google Forms which was then sent to his supervisor and lecturer for ethical clearance. He received feedback and suggestions for improvements, which he acted on and then re-submitted. Upon re-submission, ethical clearance was received. The researcher then ran a pilot study of the questionnaire to ensure the structure and digital components worked and that the format was user-friendly, that the data the researcher will receive back would be analysable, and to get an estimate of the time required to complete the questionnaire. Some edits were made after the pilot study, and now the questionnaire was ready to be sent to the relevant parties.

The questionnaire contained ten open-ended questions in order to receive responses that contain longer pieces of text, in an attempt to gain deeper insight into the varying views of the participants. However, the questionnaire also had fourteen close-ended questions to gather some of the basic demographic data such as age bracket, place of residence, which was necessary to ensure that the participant complies with the population parameters (being a millennial, living in Cape Town, and owns a car), and to not make the length and effort required from the participant too intimidating, leading to a high non-completion rate (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

3.5.1 Application of data-collection method

A pilot run indicated that the questionnaire would take between 20 to 30 minutes to complete comprehensively. However, the researcher gave the participants three weeks to partake in the questionnaire, to ensure that they are not placed under pressure timewise and could complete the questionnaire when they had time for it and were in the right mindset. This was in the hope that the participants meaningfully consider the questions and provide insightful answers to the best of their ability that are accurate and representative of their views, which would assist the trustworthiness and richness of the research study (Maree, 2021).

On the 28th of July 2021 the Google Form link was sent via email to the five participants identified in the sample size. Once the participants completed the questionnaire, the researcher then asked them for referrals to other individuals that met the population parameters: those living in the City of Cape Town, aged 26 - 40, and who owned a car. In some cases, the Google Form link was forwarded directly by the participant to the referred participant, in other instances the researcher was provided with the cell phone number or email address of the referred participant, in which case the link was either sent via WhatsApp or emailed to the new participant by the researcher himself. In total the researcher received 33 responses, which exceeded the initial expectation of 15-30 participants, however some of the raw data had to be omitted from the study, reasons for which will be discussed next.

Even though the qualifying criteria of the population parameters was made clear to the participants who referrals were asked from, some of the participants reached through referrals had to be removed from the Google Form dataset as their characteristics did not qualify them to take part in the study. Three participants selected 'no' to the close-ended question "Do you own a petrol or diesel car?". Following the guidelines of well-established research methods their entire response had to be deleted as it would have muddled the credibility of this study (Maree, 2021), as those who answered 'no' were not representative of the chosen population. One participant also mentioned they lived in George, so their response was deleted for similar reasons.

Another participant indicated that they reside in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town, although this area is technically part of the City of Cape Town, out of the 33 participants responses to the 'Where do you reside?' question, this one appeared as an anomaly. Compared to the city bowl, the Northern Suburbs on average is more middleclass, so using data from a participant who lives there would not adhere to the researcher's population

parameters which specified high-income (upper-class) as one of the populations unique characteristics. Their response was deleted for similar credibility concerns raised prior. Lastly, there was one duplicate response, where it was obvious that a digital malfunction led to two submissions with the exact same responses to the entire questionnaire. These two entries also had the exact same time stamp, which gave the researcher enough evidence to assume that this was a technical glitch and not two individual participants with the exact same responses, therefore the duplication was deleted.

3.6 Data Analysis Method

Qualitative content analysis was used for the exploration of the transcripts collected from the questionnaires in Google Forms, which was an appropriate method considering the interpretivist paradigm followed by the researcher and the purpose of the study, which was to subjectively interpret the textual data submitted by the participants (Maree, 2021). In an iterative process to isolate and refine the meaning of the text, the transcripts were analysed, and themes demarcated to the essence-capturing sections that reappear throughout (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Qualitative data collection methods summarised in *Research Matters* (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014) was to be used, which will be discussed more in-depth in the following section on the implementation of the data analysis method.

Although the design of this research was not deductive, the researcher looked out for signs of Peacock's (2015) framework of Ethical Consumption. To analyse if and to what extent participants considered ethical consumption with regards to fuel consumption. If themes relating to ethical consumption were to appear in the transcripts, the researcher would have reported on those, even if they did not necessarily fit neatly into Peacock's framework, due to the qualitative and inductive approach of the research where all views/opinions are considered.

3.6.1 Application of Data Analysis Method

As mentioned in the previous section, eight steps summarised in *Research Matters* (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014) were followed. Step one entailed preparing the data so that it is manageable, but as predicted the raw data gathered from the 30 participants answers were manageable for the researcher without the need to discard some of the participants and their data. Therefore, besides those removed for not meeting the population parameters (those who do not own cars, or do not live in the City of Cape Town) the data could be analysed as it was captured without the need to remove or edit the raw data.

For step two the coding unit to be analysed had to be defined. After examining the text, relevant phrases and words that relate to the following concepts and/or ideas had to be identified and grouped as follows: awareness of ethical fuel consumption, awareness of ethical consumption in general, awareness of fuel sources, awareness of human rights and labour law violations, which benefits of using a car outweighs both the negative ethical issues associated with fuel consumption (for example, the car is convenient, quick, safe) and the feelings of the participants in response to all the information, or lack thereof, that surround fuel consumption.

Step three involved grouping all the codes into larger categories that formed a conceptual framework. This process was done through a combination of inductive and deductive methods. For instance, there were new themes that arose organically through the qualitative nature of the open-ended questions, but some deductive reasoning was also possible by making use of the key concepts and themes gathered in the literature review, such as frameworks for looking at ethical consumption or whether people care more for the environment or other people. The main categories related to perceptions and behaviours linked to ethical consumption, fuel consumption, ethical liability, economic boycott efficacy, possible solutions and behavioural changes that could lessen the ethical impact involved with fuel consumption.

Step four involved the testing of the coding scheme on a sample of raw data gathered through the questionnaire, to ensure the consistency and usefulness of the chosen coding framework for the purpose of answering the research question and satisfying the chosen objectives.

Step five had the researcher coding all the text gathered in the data collection process line-by-line. Although line-by-line coding can be very time consuming, as mentioned before, the small sample size and the questionnaire structure ensured that the raw data was manageable. Overcoming the major drawback of line-by-line coding, the researcher was able to reap the benefits of the method which includes ensuring consistency throughout the analysis and that no participants views/responses were missed. Once this was done, step six required the researcher to assess the consistency of the coding.

Step seven required the researcher to draw conclusions from the gathered data. Lastly, step eight tied the data analysis method together by reporting on the methods and findings of the research study (which is presented in section 4 and 5 of this document) in a combination of text and diagrams to make the findings clear and concise for the reader.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Since this is a qualitative study, emphasis is placed on trustworthiness (and the four layers: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) instead of validity and reliability, which is generally used for a quantitative approach that seeks to find causal relationships and reapply/generalise findings to an extended population (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Using a combination of research methods, such as questionnaires and focus groups to gather data, increases the credibility of a study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Therefore, the credibility of this study is not likely to be very high, because only one research method was used (questionnaire) due to time and financial constraints of the researcher. These same constraints also prevented the researcher from spending long periods of time with the participants, which would have increased the credibility due to the immersion that would have provided the researcher with a more in-depth understanding of the participants' views (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). To increase the credibility of future studies on this topic, the researcher can use multiple data collection tools and spend more time with participants (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

The transferability of this study is largely speculative at this stage, since to apply the results and analysis of this study to another research project (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014) one first needs to see the results and analysis of this study, which has not taken place yet. Yet the researcher anticipates that some of the study will be transferable to other geographic

locations that share identical population parameters (except sharing the same geographic location) identified in this study.

Dependability of the study should be high, since the relationship between the chosen data collection method (questionnaire), the analysis of said data (qualitative content analysis), and the anticipated theory found from the data (ethical consumption) are all appropriate given the qualitative nature of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). For those familiar with the best practice for academic research, an overview of the data collection and analysis should increase their trust of this study.

Confirmability depends on how accurately the researcher translates the raw research data into research findings (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The researcher can increase trustworthiness of the study by supplying the raw data to those who wish to scrutinise the findings to determine the confirmability of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

4 Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretation of Findings

4.1 Presentation of findings

4.1.1 Participant demographics

In line with the population parameters of this study, the 24 participants were all millennials who live in Cape Town, South Africa. 20 of the participants live in the City Bowl, and four along the Atlantic Seaboard or extended peninsula. All participants have higher education qualifications, of which four have a diploma and 20 have a bachelor's degree or higher. All respondents own a fuel (petrol or diesel) powered car.

4.1.2 Transportation habits

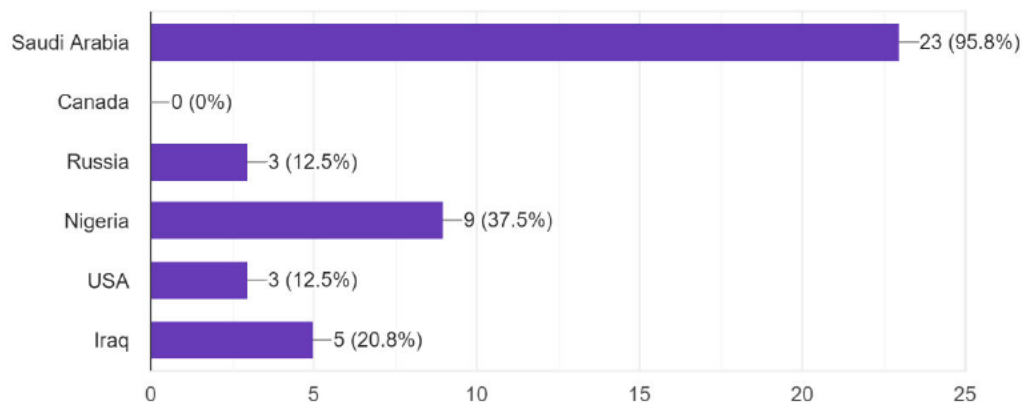
Six participants stated that they use their cars 'all the time', 12 said they use their cars 'often', four said they use their cars 'less often' and two said they use their cars 'rarely'. Getting to work and buying groceries were the two main activities participants used their car for. This was followed by more leisurely and 'less necessary' orientated activities – such as going on holiday and scenic drives on the weekend. Besides using their car as a mode of transport, four participants said they do not make use of any other transportation, eight said they sometimes use a bicycle for transport, three participants said they also use Uber, and one participant said they use a motorcycle as well as their car.

4.1.3 Origin of fuel – awareness

Participants were asked who they thought supplies most of the fuel available in South Africa in a multiple-choice format – as seen in the figure below. Saudi Arabia was selected 23 out of 24 times, Nigeria was selected nine times, Iraq five times, both Russia and the United States of America were selected three times respectively, and Canada zero times.

14. Which 2 countries do you think supplies most of the fuel available in South Africa?

24 responses

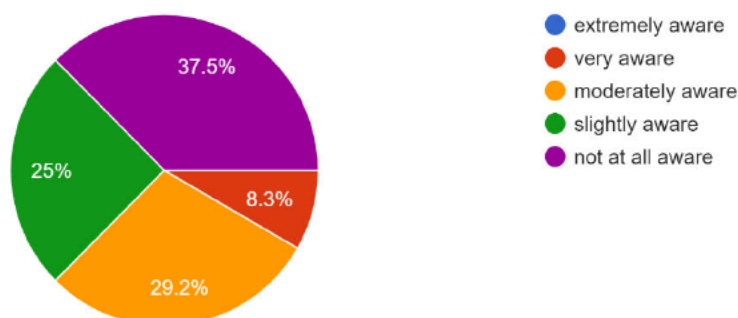


4.1.4 Monetary value of Saudi Arabian fuel imports

Majority of participants were not very aware of the large monetary amounts South Africa spends buying crude oil from Saudi Arabia. Only two participants were very aware that South Africa buys crude oil to the value of R30 Billion from Saudi Arabia each year. Eight participants were moderately aware, six were slightly aware, and 12 were not aware at all.

17. How aware are you that South Africa buys crude oil valued at over R30 Billion every year from Saudi Arabia?

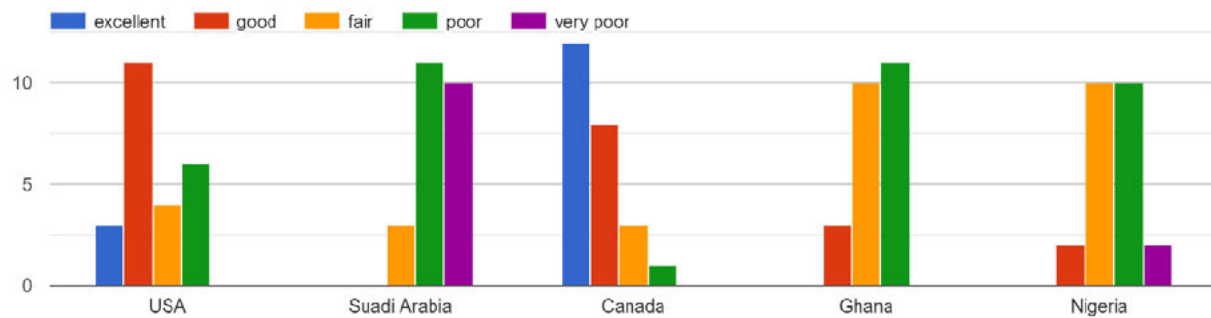
24 responses



4.1.5 Perception of human rights according to country

In the study, Saudi Arabia is perceived by the participants as having the lowest rating according to human rights and labour law violations, with 10 participants rating the country as 'very poor' and 11 as 'poor'.

22. How well do you think the following countries adhere to human rights policies and laws?



When asked how they feel about the amount of money that goes to Saudi Arabia for oil, nine participants were *not bothered* or *neutral*, while six of the participants were *shocked* and *not excited by the thought*. More than one person mentioned the ethical concerns, voiced by the following participants:

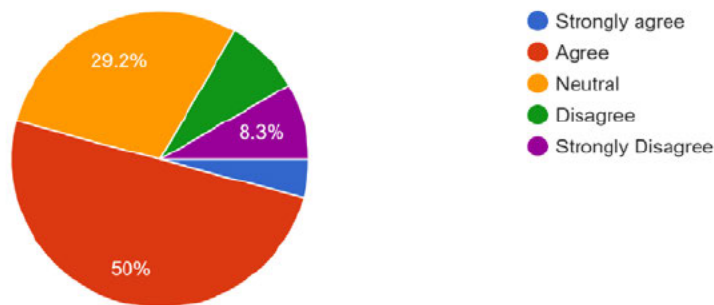
*"[It] makes me feel **uncomfortable**. I'm aware that Saudi Arabia is ranked quite high on Human Rights Watch ... because of their **human rights violations**, and it would be much preferable to know that I am driving around using 'clean' oil - and not oil that is implicated in the subjugation of human lives."*

*"in terms of **unethical treatment of people and human rights abuses** I think Saudi Arabia is very close to number one, if not number 1. For SA to be **supporting the country of that type of government** isn't great."*

4.1.6 Economic boycott of unethical products

If a product is from a country infamous for bad labour laws or human rights violations, *all* participants said it would influence their purchase decision. The bulk of participants said such information was 'moderately' to 'very likely' to affect their purchase decision. 13 participants agreed (or strongly agreed) that consumer spending habits make consumers complicit in the harm caused during the manufacturing or supply of a product; nine participants were 'neutral', four 'disagreed', and one 'strongly disagreed'.

15. Do you think consumer spending habits hold consumers complicit in ethical issues ? for example: if we buy Nike shoes produced by a child i...tly responsible for the child's illegal employment.
24 responses



Elaborating on this topic, seven participants questioned the efficacy of consumer economic boycotts saying that they feel economic boycotting of unethical parties would affect the wrong stakeholders such as the *working class* or *already vulnerable citizens*; four others believed it should rather happen on a governmental/legislative level for the boycott to have a true impact, echoed by the following participants:

*“**governments** should also be **taking a much bigger responsibility** in terms of regulations and either **imposing big fines on unethical companies** or **banning imports all together.**”*

*“I think this should happen on a higher **legislative/governmental level** for it to have a true **impact**”*

Another said that to boycott something is difficult:

*“because for some people they are just trying to get through day and feed their family and if that means buy cheap clothes made by kids in a sweat shop then that's what they have to do. They **can't necessarily afford to take a stand** or really have time to think about that **when they're just trying to get by**”*

While three participants said consumer boycotts is a good idea in order to:

“Shift the power dynamic of submissive consumer to an active one”

“it's really one of the only ways to **send a message to these companies**”

“In contributing to the economic 'crippling' of a country - I'm certain **it will force the country to rethink its practices.**”

4.1.7 Changing fuel consumption habits

Four out of the 24 participants said that they would ‘not’ change their consumption behaviour if they were to become aware of the harm caused by consuming fuel; three said they were ‘slightly likely’; ten said ‘moderately’, and seven said they were ‘very likely’ to change their consumption habits.

One participant said being aware and seeing the direct impact of fuel consumption will encourage them to change their fuel consumption habits, because:

“purchasing fuel, once a month, is **completely habitual** and I **very rarely stop to think about the process** I’m taking part in”

Another participant said they would try their best to reduce their fuel consumption where possible by means of alternative transport such as the MyCiti bus service, cycling and/or carpooling because:

“as a consumer, [they’d] **prefer not to contribute to the financial stability** of a country that engages in **human rights violations**”

4.1.8 Constraints to changing fuel consumption

While the above-mentioned participants seemed driven to lessen their fuel consumption habits, most participants raised concerns about challenges that have and could continue to deter them from considering to consume less fuel. These were:

1. Alternative transport methods were not deemed ideal.
 - 1.1. Public transport was considered unsafe due to crime, and unreliable due to mismanagement and vandalism, large distances between cities make taking public transport more cumbersome, and the public transport network in South Africa is limited to mostly just big cities.
 - 1.2. Commuting by bicycle, which uses no fuel, was seen as inconvenient because of the 'hilly' nature of the City of Cape Town – which requires more physical effort than commuting in a flatter city. Also, the lack of bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle lanes makes it unsafe to cycle.
2. Economic reasons included participants' dependency on a car to make a living (either to get to work or use it for work activities). As well as the expensive nature of a non-fuel using car such as an electric car.

*"If there were viable, **cost effective alternatives** I'm sure many people would go that route. **If I could afford an electric car I'd get one** but I can't afford to do so."*

3. The overwhelming and complex nature of the 'wicked problem' (Bauman, 2017) that is the socio-political ethical issues of fuel: requires participants to make large changes to their current lifestyle to change their consumption habits. There is no easy solution, because *"fuel is too heavily ingrained as a part of our daily"* and there are multiple stakeholders involved along the supply-chain. There was also a sense that participants found it intimidating/daunting to attempt to find ethical alternatives. As well as having to deal with several such ethical decisions on a daily basis.

*"It's kind of like the choice of what you eat, where it becomes [...] more about ethics, which is **just so difficult** for actually living your life without **massive amounts of guilt for every item you buy/support** to just go about a normal day. Sign that things have become **too complex for us to understand** in a 'normal' sense. **Sigh**"*

4. Convenience: it is inconvenient to use public transport if you have access to a car. It was also considered inconvenient to look for, and find alternatives to, unethically sourced fuel.

*"it's difficult with something like fuel, because **we don't have an alternative option.**"*

*"I happen to own a petrol-powered car so the **ease-of-use and access** is hugely **convenient.**"*

4.2 Interpretation of findings

In this section the researcher will interpret the findings and discuss the findings in context of the literature review, whereafter in the conclusion the research question and objectives will be addressed.

4.2.1 Origin of fuel awareness

When asked which two countries supplies the majority of South Africa's fuel, 23 participants selected Saudi Arabia as one of their two choices, with Nigeria coming in second highest with nine votes. As mentioned before, Saudi Arabia followed by Nigeria are the two countries South Africa gets most of its fuel from. Therefore, these responses led the researcher to believe that an overwhelming majority of the participants (23/24) had at least some idea of the origin of their fuel, because they were able to select the two main suppliers of South African fuel from a list of six options.

4.2.2 Those unlikely to consider (group 1)

The first group of participants, containing 11 out of the 24 participants, are those unlikely to consider the socio-political ethical issues of fuel when refueling – such as those who “*never think about it*” and those who do not believe it is up to the individual consumer to consider the socio-political ethical issues of fuel. They suggest that large corporations must take responsibility for the harms caused, and if the corporations do not, then government should curb the unethical practice from continuing by implementing laws and policies that restrict unethical practice.

4.2.3 Those likely to consider (group 2)

The findings showed that there were 13 out of the 24 participants who have awareness/agreement of the following statements:

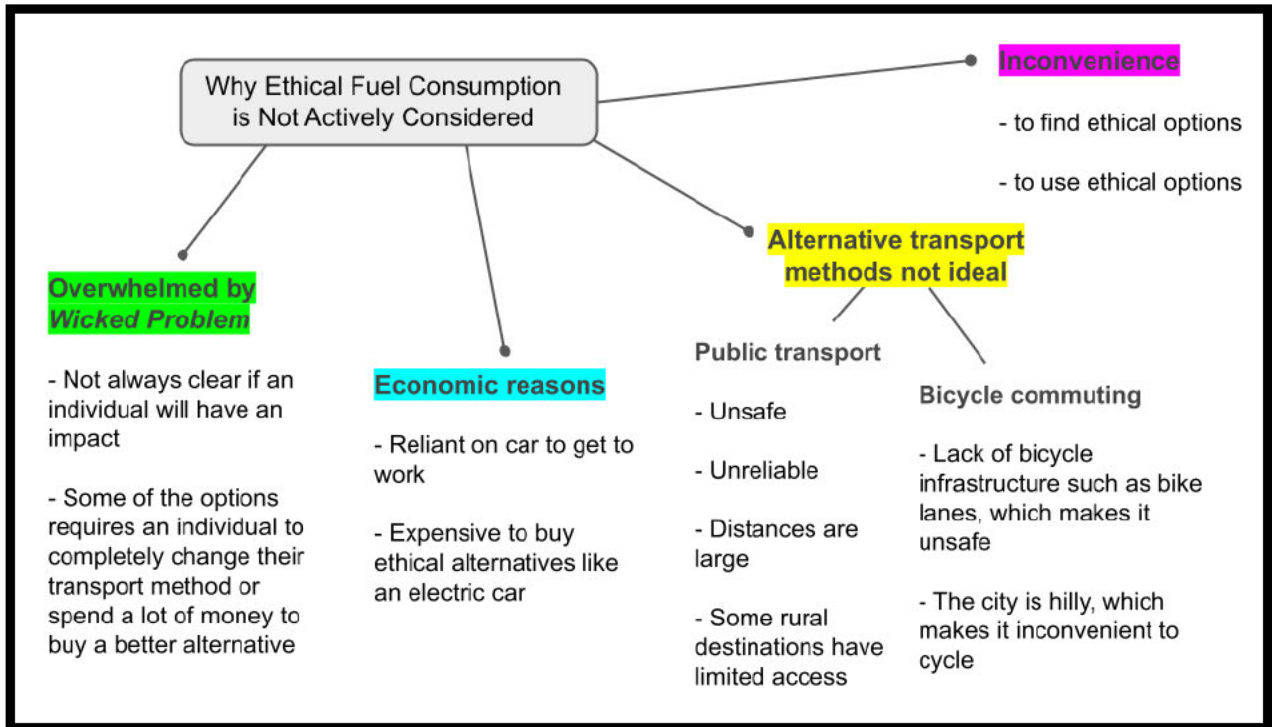
1. that South Africa gets majority of its fuel from Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria (section 4.1.3);
2. that both countries have a poor track record of human rights abuses and labour law violations (section 4.1.3);
3. If a product causes harm to those down the supply chain, that consumers of that product are (to a degree) accountable for the harm caused (section 4.1.5);
4. that boycotting or using less of a product can force change from the supplier (section 4.1.5);
5. that if participants were aware of unethically produced products, they would try to avoid it (section 4.1.5).

When one combines these five findings, one would assume that boycotting or using less fuel would be a consideration for participants. This assumption is made because if fuel is from an unethical source (such as a petrostate known for human rights abuses), then boycotting fuel could force the supplier to change their ways – all beliefs the participants in this ‘group’ agreed with. However, it did not appear that any of the participants actively considered these socio-political ethical issues when refueling their car due to many possible deterrents. Some of which is discussed in-depth in section 4.2.4.

4.2.4 Why participants do not consider ethical issues of fuel

As the findings show, it appears that the lack of active consideration is not due to a lack of compassion or responsibility, where many participants state that if a product came from an unethical source/business or country, that they would consider boycotting the product. So why do they not act on their beliefs when it comes to finding ethical alternatives for the fuel they use? As seen in section 4.1.6, four prominent challenges are faced when actually changing fuel consumption habits to an ethical alternative. These are: lack of alternative

transport that meet the requirements (safety, reliability, and timeliness) of the participants; economic reasons; convenience; and the overwhelming nature of the ‘wicked problem’ (Bauman, 2017). The following graph presents a recap of the findings:



4.2.4.1 Alternative transport is not safe

It seems that many participants placed their personal safety above the ethical issues of fuel consumption specifically, a finding that could resemble Maslow’s hierarchy of needs which is an argument the researcher came across in the literature review. That those who are in the higher stages of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, with concerns for self-actualisation and quality of life, had more intention of boycotting unethical products, as opposed to those lower down the hierarchy who wanted to achieve basic comfort and security (Delistavrou et al, 2020)

So, although the participants were upper-class (place of residence, education, car ownership), in the local context of Cape Town (and maybe South Africa in general) that does not necessarily mean that all their basic safety/security needs have been met when it comes to public transport – as opposed to upper-class individuals in other ‘safer’ countries where wealthier individuals also use public transport. Bogota’s former mayor Enrique Peñalosa (2013) argues that “an advanced city is not one where even the poor use cars, but rather one where even the rich use public transport”.

4.2.4.2 *Economic reasons*

Participants' dependency on a car to make a living (either to get to work or use it for work activities), as well as the expensive nature of a non-fuel using car such as an electric car, are both challenges that prevent participants from considering ethical fuel. An unexpected finding, however, was that although the participants were all upper class, several mentioned the economic implications of changing their fuel consumption. Therefore, although the researcher expected that upper-class individuals will have the economic freedom to choose an ethical alternative (Delistavrou et al, 2020), the findings show otherwise. This could be because of any of the following reasons or combination of:

1. although they are upper-class it does not necessarily mean that they all have enough money. Voiced by a participant: *"If I could afford an electric car I'd get one but I can't afford to do so."*
2. Although it is usually the case that people from an upper-class economic bracket can sometimes afford an ethical equivalent if they wanted to, perhaps the ethical equivalent of a fuel powered car – an electric car for instance – is much more expensive, for example, than for someone who buys plant-based milk instead of cow's milk.
3. Since 22 out of the 24 participants were in the 26-32 age bracket, it might be that they do not have as much capital as someone who fits similar criteria but are in the 32-40 age bracket and further along in their career.
4. Perhaps the researcher's population parameters were not rigorous enough to ensure that all participants are truly upper-class.

4.2.4.3 *Inconvenience*

Participants mentioned the inconvenience of finding ethical alternatives to fuel. Once again, this would be different in different parts of the world. For example, America has electric car charging facilities all over the country to ensure the convenience of an ethical alternative to fuel (Nilsen, 2021).

4.2.4.4 Daunting nature of a Wicked Problem

As discussed in the literature review, attempting to negate all unethical aspects of fuel consumption can be viewed as a Wicked Problem. A Wicked Problem “is a social or cultural problem that’s difficult or impossible to solve – normally because of its complex and interconnected nature” (Wong, 2020). Such problems demand “more complex thinking than many of our ethical problem-solving traditions are equipped to deal with” (Bauman, 2017). Therefore, a Wicked Problem is overwhelming for all who seeks solutions to it and may be even more daunting for an individual who is not heavily invested in the sphere of the particular field, to make sense of and ‘solve’ such a problem. The daunting and complex nature of considering the socio-political ethical issues of fuel, is alluded to by the following participants:

*“It’s kind of like the choice of what you eat, where it becomes [...] more about ethics, which is **just so difficult** for actually living your life without **massive amounts of guilt for every item you buy/support** to just go about a normal day. Sign that things have become **too complex for us to understand** in a ‘normal’ sense. **Sigh**”*

*“these issues form a part of **complex structures** - and so although the consumer may boycott products from implicated countries, it is **not always so easily done as said.**”*

4.3 Findings in context

4.3.1 On ethical consumption

Looking at the findings through the lens of Peacock's (2015) parameters of ethical consumption, while talking about fuel, all three categories considered unethical by Peacock was observed in the findings. Which shows that collectively the participants had a real sense of what ethical consumption is. Peacock considers a product unethical if any of the following happens anywhere along the supply chain:

1. Harm caused to fellow humans – mentioned by several participants who believed it important to boycott goods that causes harm to fellow humans;
2. harm caused to future humans – as the participant who considered it wrong to bring a child (which is a future human) into this “*catastrophic global situation*”;
3. other sentient beings – referred to by participants who were concerned about climate change and its effect on animals.

4.3.2 On convenience, accessibility, and impact

As mentioned by White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) choice of transport and energy use is often habitual and therefore the ethical alternative must be readily available and easy to access. They also found that if people feel like they would not make a difference they are unlikely to change (White et al, 2019). The unwillingness to change based on an individual's perception of having no impact was mentioned in this research study by the following participant who said “*I wonder if one person's spending habits can really make such a big difference*”. Several participants mentioned that they would not consider changing their consumption habits because it would be inconvenient as well as not being aware of better alternatives or petrol stations that sell ethically sourced fuel.

4.3.3 On collective guilt

Consumers that are told that their nation's consumption behaviour has a certain negative impact in a distant country are more likely to consider changing their behaviour in response

to feeling a collective guilt for the nation (White et al, 2019). This was echoed by a participant in this study:

*"It's more of a concern that **other countries have** managed to curb their fuel consumption by accessible public transport efforts **and we have not**"*

This gives the impression that the participant is mainly concerned/motivated by the fact that *other countries* have found a solution and *our country* has not.

4.3.4 Efficacy of an economic boycott

According to Delistavrou et al (2020), boycotting products from a business or country is one of the most effective strategies implemented by consumers who are dissatisfied with the lack of ethical consideration used in the supply-chain that brings the product to the consumer. A thought shared by some of the participants, such as the following quote, shows:

*"As consumers, I believe **we have a certain 'power'** to destabilise the supply chain [...] should we become aware of unethical labour laws and human rights violations. In contributing to the economic 'crippling' of a country - **I'm certain it will force the country to rethink its practices.**"*

4.3.5 Technologies' impact on driving habits

Millennials are not only travelling less by car, they are travelling less in general; this is largely due to the advent of new technological advancements that make working, shopping, and consuming entertainment at home more viable (Montgomery et al, 2020). This was not entirely the case with most participants saying they use their cars to go to work and buying groceries. Work, but more specifically groceries, can be done on a variety of mobile apps that deliver your groceries to your home without you having to drive to the shops. The fact that participants had not adopted certain new technologies with the aim of driving less could be due to a multitude of reasons and could warrant another research study.

5 Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Answering the research question

Research question: Is the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers?

After the various interpretations discussed from section 4.2, the researcher believes that although some participants might intend to consider going forward, due to certain deterrents, none of the participants actively considered the socio-political ethical issues of fuel when refuelling their car. At least not up until the point when data collection for this research study took place. While many have the intention of doing so, the multitude of barriers mentioned in section 4.2.4 seem to be too large.

5.1.1 Answering research objectives

Objective one: To explore whether upper-class millennial Capetonians are aware of the socio-political ethical issues of the fuel supply chain.

- While some had no real knowledge of the ethical implications of the South African fuel supply chain, there were some participants that had a degree of awareness of the socio-political ethical issues of the fuel supply chain. Such as the quotes in the table below:

*"[Saudi Arabia] is the closest source that supplies the quality of oil that our refineries can handle so it makes sense economically. **Ethically it can be questioned yes**"*

*"I do know though that in terms of unethical treatment of people and human rights abuses I think Saudi Arabia is very close to number one, if not number 1. **For SA to be supporting** the country of **that type of government isn't great.**"*

*"I'm aware that **Saudi Arabia is ranked quite high on Human Rights Watch** (a negative thing) because of their human rights violations, and it would be much preferable to know that I am driving around using 'clean' oil - and not **oil that is implicated in the subjugation of human lives.**"*

Objective two: To find out if this impacts their consumption habits of fuel.

- As discovered when answering the research question – participants did not consider the socio-political ethical issues of fuel when refueling. Therefore, the researcher believes that: no, socio-political ethical issues do not have an impact on consumption habits because participants did not think about/consider the issues when refueling, and thus disenable socio-political issues from having an impact.

Objective three: If it does impact their consumption habits, the next objective will be to explore how and why it impacts their consumption habits.

- It was not possible to explore how and why it impacts their fuel consumption habits because it did not impact their habits – as mentioned under objective two.

5.2 Anticipated Contribution

Academically the researcher anticipates making a modest contribution to the fields of ethical fuel consumption and consumption considerations of millennials, all within a South African context.

Furthermore, the researcher is anticipating that the study could be a catalyst for other studies in the field. A larger quantitative study could be embarked upon to determine if this consideration of ethical fuel consumption can be generalised to larger research populations in the world – establishing whether this is a phenomenon among Capetonian millennial drivers, or if this is perhaps a widespread global phenomenon among other millennials too.

If such a correlation is found, commercial sellers of fuel like Shell or British Petroleum, for instance, would notice an incentive to market and sell ethically sourced fuel while also disclosing their supply chain to consumers. This in turn will make a positive contribution to society, by reducing current unethical consumption of fuel that causes harm to others.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

Stakeholders of this research study includes participants, the researcher (Bert Pauw), research community, academic institution (Vega School), as well as the communities who benefit (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Participants were informed that: they were participating in a research study; that their participation was voluntary; they could withdraw from participating at any point; that their participation is confidential; and that the data collected would only be used for the purpose of this specific study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). There are no children in the population parameters, since the study is about millennials who are aged 26 - 40. The researcher avoided causing emotional harm to participants by: not asking questions that expected the participant to recall painful experiences; asking questions in front of others (all data was collected using an online questionnaire, so there was no risk for potentially being overheard by others); and by not making the participants feel like their answers were unintelligent or irrelevant (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

The researcher did not falsify any findings or make use of any inappropriate methods to gather data and attempted to be as unbiased as possible (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The research community do not want to be discredited by being associated with unethical researchers, so the researcher has a responsibility to not discredit the larger research community in the research fields they are operating in. The same can be said for the academic institution where the researcher is enrolled, Vega School.

Furthermore, the researcher has an ethical responsibility towards those who suffer due to the harms caused by unethical fuel consumption, because they could benefit from the study, but also fail to benefit if the research is not successful (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). However, given the limitations of the study, the researcher does not anticipate that the affected parties will in fact benefit from the study.

5.4 Limitations

To accurately contextualise the findings of the study, it is important to note the limitations that the researcher might face, as to not overextend the relevance and scope of the research (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). As noted above, time and financial access is a limitation for this study. The period given to the Vega School students for fieldwork is not enough to give the study credibility, because the researcher cannot spend a long time with participants to get an in-depth understanding of the participants' views (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Neither is it enough time to use several data collection tools, which would have also increased the credibility of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

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7 Annexure A – Ethical clearance letter



Date 6 July 2021

Student name: Berthold David Pauw

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega School – Cape Town

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.

4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Monika Edwards



Signature:

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Carol Affleck



Signature:

8 Annexure B – Consent form

Section 1 of 2

Research Questionnaire: Fuel Consumption

This is a research study intended to investigate consumers' fuel consumption habits and explore the ethical consumption of fuel among Capetonian millennials. This is an anonymous questionnaire, and your responses will not be shared. All fields are required for data collection purposes, but feel free to opt out of the questionnaire at any time – your participation is completely voluntary. Please answer honestly and in as much detail as possible.

All information will be presented anonymously, and your identity will not be disclosed. The results of this study will be presented in an aggregated format.

Please note that this research study forms part of the requirements for the completion of a BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication.

By proceeding with this questionnaire, you agree that:

- You have read the information above and understand it.
- You voluntarily agree to participate in the research study.
- You understand that your data cannot be withdrawn once submitted.

Thank you for your participation!

I have read the above and consent to participation in the study 

☐ I agree

9 Annexure C – Questionnaire

1. What is your age? *

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-32
- ☐ 32-40
- ☐ older than 40

2. What is your highest qualification? *

- ☐ none
- ☐ Grade 10
- ☐ Grade 12
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ bachelor degree or higher

3. Do you own a petrol or diesel car? *

- ☐ yes
- ☐ No

4. Where do you reside? *

- ☐ City Bowl
- ☐ Southern Suburbs
- ☐ Northern Suburbs
- ☐ Cape Town Peninsula
- ☐ Other...

5. How often do you use your vehicle? *

...

- ☐ never
- ☐ rarely
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ often
- ☐ always

6. Please specify what you use your vehicle for. You can tick multiple options *

- ☐ transport to work
- ☐ going on holiday
- ☐ buying groceries
- ☐ going to the gym
- ☐ scenic weekend drives
- ☐ Other...

7. Do you use any other means of transportation? If so what? *

Long answer text

.....

8. Are you aware of the origin of the fuel you use? *

- ☐ extremely aware
- ☐ very aware
- ☐ moderately aware
- ☐ slightly aware
- ☐ not at all aware

9. Please can you share more on your understanding of the above? *

Long answer text

10. How concerned are you about impact of fuel consumption on the environment? *

- ☐ extremely concerned
- ☐ very concerned
- ☐ moderately concerned
- ☐ slightly concerned
- ☐ not at all concerned

11. Can you please share these concerns (if any?) *

Long answer text

12. Would you say you are more concerned for the environment or other people? *

- ☐ environment
- ☐ other people
- ☐ both equally

13. If a product is from a country infamous for bad labour laws or human rights violations, would this have an affect on whether you buy a product? *

- ☐ extremely likely
- ☐ very likely
- ☐ moderately likely
- ☐ slightly likely
- ☐ not at all likely

14. Which 2 countries do you think supplies most of the fuel available in South Africa?

- ☐ Saudi Arabia

14. Which 2 countries do you think supplies most of the fuel available in South Africa?

- ☐ Saudi Arabia
- ☐ Canada
- ☐ Russia
- ☐ Nigeria
- ☐ USA
- ☐ Iraq

15. Do you think consumer spending habits hold consumers complicit in ethical issues ? for example: if we buy Nike shoes produced by a child in a sweatshop in a distant country, are we partly responsible for the child's illegal employment. *

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

16. If a country is infamous for it's human rights violations and problematic labour laws, should consumers boycott products from that country? and why? *

Long answer text

17. How aware are you that South Africa buys crude oil valued at over R30 Billion every year from Saudi Arabia? *

- ☐ extremely aware
- ☐ very aware
- ☐ moderately aware
- ☐ slightly aware
- ☐ not at all aware

18. How do you personally feel that South Africa buys crude oil valued at over R30 Billion every year from Saudi Arabia? *

Long answer text

19. If you are aware of harm caused by consuming fuel, would you change your consumption habits of fuel? for example, would you drive less? *

- ☐ extremely likely
- ☐ very likely
- ☐ moderately
- ☐ slightly
- ☐ not at all likely

20. Can you share your reasons for your answer to the above? *

Long answer text

21. Can you share any constraints or factors that could contribute to you not changing fuel consumption habits? *

Long answer text

21. Can you share any constraints or factors that could contribute to you not changing fuel consumption habits? *

Long answer text

22. How well do you think the following countries adhere to human rights policies and laws? *

	excellent	good	fair	poor	very poor
USA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Saudi Arabia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Canada	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ghana	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nigeria	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. Is there anything else you would like to add on the topic related to fuel consumption?

Long answer text

10 Annexure D - Concept Document:

title: Ethical Fuel Consumption Amongst Capetonian Millennial Drivers. A Qualitative Study.

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources
The purpose of this research is to discover whether ethical consumption of fuel is a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennials. After the initial question is answered, the researcher will explore the reasoning (the 'why') behind the participants' answers.	Is the socio-political ethical consumption of fuel a consideration among upper-class Capetonian millennial drivers?	The researcher has not found other sources that explore whether ethical consumption of fuel is considered by upper-class Capetonian millennials. The lack of local exploration into the proposed research, together with the fact that it is an appropriate topic (under ethics and sustainability) for the project brief given to the researcher at Vega School, suggests that it is a worthwhile research problem to explore.	Peacock (2015) Montgomery, Wolske and Lyon (2020) Ross (2006) Finn (2019)
Research problems	Conceptual Framework	Key concepts	Key Theory
Fuel has an ethically contentious supply-chain, both from an ecological and socio-political point of view. From funding wars and terrorism (Le Billon, 2021), to being extracted in countries infamous for their human rights violations and poor labour laws (DeMerit & Young, 2013). This research will focus on whether the socio-political and ethical issues of the petroleum supply chain is a consideration for the consumer/end user of the product.	Theme 1: unethical consumption Theme 2: ethics of fuel consumption Theme 3: Supply chains in a globalised world Theme 4: Millennials driving behaviour	Ethical consumption Fuel consumption Supply chain Supply chain transparency Millennials Drivers	Model of Ethical Consumption (Peacock, 2015)
Approach	Data collection method	Ethics	Anticipated Findings
Qualitative Population: The population of the study is all upper-class millennials living in the City of Cape Town who own a car. Their unique characteristics include being between the ages 25 - 40 (millennials), owning a car, and living in Cape Town.	Data collection will take place via a questionnaire in a Google Forms format. The aim of the researcher will be to get a minimum of 15-30 respondents to do the questionnaire. However, the researcher will welcome more respondents in the case that more voluntarily engage with the questionnaire Unit of Analysis: people Data Analysis Method: Qualitative content analysis	The main ethical concerns the researcher will have to deal with is telling the participants that their participation is confidential, voluntary, and that the collected data will only be used for the purpose of this specific study.	That the participants are not highly informed about the ethical issues of the fuel supply chain, and that it would become a consideration once they are aware of it.
Paradigm	Sampling	Limitations	Anticipated contribution
Interpretivism	Sampling: Non-probability Sampling method: Snowball sampling	Time and financial constraints of the researcher The size of the sample group	Creating a modest amount of awareness of the social ethical issues of the fuel supply chain.