

# Motivations and barriers to the adoption of ecological behaviours: An exploratory study in Cameroon

ANABA Valery Armel<sup>1</sup> and ANABA Arence Danièle<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ENSET-University of Douala, Cameroon.

<sup>2</sup>Iut-University of Douala, Cameroon.

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the numerous research that has focused on the motives and barriers that underlie or hinder the adoption of ecological behavior, the application of this issue to African countries is almost non-existent. The objective of this research is to identify motivations and barriers to the adoption of ecological behaviors. Based on a series of semi-structured interviews on a sample of 18 individuals, the results reveal that the ecological consumer in Cameroon is perceived as the one who takes care of its environment by limiting the negative effects of his consumption acts. Several motivations and barriers emerge from our study.

**Keywords:** Ecological consumer, ecological behaviour, developing countries, motivations for ecological behaviour, barriers to ecological behaviour.

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\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [anaba.daniele@univ-douala.com](mailto:anaba.daniele@univ-douala.com).

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## INTRODUCTION

Ecological behaviour is defined by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002: 240) as "behaviour adopted by an individual who consciously decides to minimize his or her negative impacts on the natural and built environments". However, while the will of the individual seems to be at the heart of environmental protection actions, it must be noted that in most cases, the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviours is most often a matter of government policy and not the volitional control of individuals. The problem is therefore how to encourage individuals to change their behaviour towards the environment in a positive way. To do so, it is necessary to identify the forces that push them to act and those that constitute an obstacle.

The importance of environmental protection issues is well established and the growing interest shown by countries is reflected in the implementation or adoption of resolutions taken at the global level. However, the implementation of these resolutions seems to be a failure in some countries, particularly in developing countries where the adoption of ecological behaviour meets some resistance from citizens. In developing countries the limited resources, high population structure, lack of

proper knowledge and other socio-economic factors are the constraints for the adoption of the new technologies or resolutions (Bargali et al., 2007; 2009a, b).

In Cameroon several initiatives have been tried, with little success, however, to encourage citizens to adopt ecological behaviour such as the use of biodegradable packaging or sanitation. To this end, on 24th of October 2012, a Cameroonian government directive banned the manufacture, import and marketing of non-biodegradable plastic packaging commonly used for household packaging. This packaging was made responsible for pollution, flooding and in part responsible for climate change. However, more than 5 years later, there is resistance from consumers who show their low interest in environmental issues. Indeed, only customers who accept to pay the price get their purchases packaged, the others judging the reusable fabric bags and recyclable plastic bags offered for sale too expensive.

The issue of the motives inciting individuals to adopt ecological behaviours has been widely discussed in the literature with an orientation towards the identification of the factors explaining these behaviours, which may be cognitive, affective and situational (Hwang et al., 2000).

The theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) have also been much in demand.

While the issue of sustainable development has been one of the most important problems in recent years in developed countries (Dekhili and Ashabou, 2014), this is not the case in developing countries in general and in Africa, where works are marginal or almost non-existent. This general trend is moreover underlined by Lages et al. (2015) who state that there is a limited amount of research in management sciences and marketing, in particular, focusing on African markets and consumers. Thus, the thinking on perceptions of the concept and the motives or barriers that encourage or hinder the adoption of ecological behavior in developing countries remains marginal (Pandey et al., 2006). The contexts studied are mainly those of developed countries where environmental issues are socially accepted norms (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003).

The present study, therefore, aims to contribute to filling this gap. The objective of this research is to identify perceptions of the concept of the ecological consumer in the context of developing countries and to identify the motives that may underlie the adoption of such behaviours as well as the factors that may hinder them. The first part of this work is devoted to the literature review. We then present the methodology and results of the field survey and end with a conclusion and discussion of the results.

## **FROM THE ECOLOGICAL CONSUMER TO ECO-RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR**

### **Definition of ecological consumer**

Over the past thirty years, the "green" consumer has been defined in a number of ways, such as the socially conscious consumer (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Webster, 1975), the consumer concerned with environmental issues (Henion and Wilson, 1976). The "green" consumer (Shrum et al., 1995), the environmentally-conscious consumer (Roberts, 1996).

The environmentally conscious consumer is defined as follows by some authors:

- They attach real importance to the need to preserve the environment (global as well as close to it) and take the problem of environmental degradation very seriously (Giannelloni, 1998);
- They have a good knowledge of environmental issues and in particular of the consequences of various behaviours or of environmental degradation itself. They are personally concerned and affected by these issues [importance of the problem, concern, sensitivity] (Stone et al., 1995; Roozen and De Pelsmacker, 2000);

- They consider it necessary for citizens and the community (public authorities, associations) to be concerned about environmental preservation and sustainability, and shows support for public awareness actions (Kinnear et al., 1974; Kilbourne and Pickett, 2008);
- They considers individual action, especially his own, to be both necessary and useful (Ellen et al., 1991);
- Finally, they have an intention to act individually (or within the household) in such a way as to limit his or her negative impact on the environment and/or have a positive influence on it, and a willingness to make sacrifices if this is the case. They take this impact into account and show a willingness to adopt responsible practices (Antil, 1984).

### **Eco-responsible behaviour**

Behaviour is considered as green "when it directly or indirectly avoids degrading the natural environment, or contributes to its protection and/or rehabilitation" (Giannelloni, 1998 : 66). For Steg and Vlek (2009), ecological behaviour refers to behaviour that has a positive impact on the environment or at least does not damage the environment.

Several typologies of ecoresponsible behavior have been proposed in the literature. Although they have different names, they all refer to the same reality. Stern's work (2000) identifies three types of behaviour covering different activities: green purchasing, citizen behaviour and environmental activist behaviour. Daniel and Sirieix (2012) highlight the sustainable practices of individuals in three spheres, namely the purchasing sphere, which includes all the actions that involve choosing a product when shopping; the sphere of uses, which represents the privileged space for the misappropriations and tricks of everyday life, in favour of respect for the environment, or in favour of one's "wallet" for the least committed individuals; and finally the transmission sphere, which aims to transmit ethical values through speech in the private or public sphere. Robert-Demontrond and Joyeau (2006) also propose a typology of socially responsible behaviours, particularly those related to consumption (purchase and/or use of products that respect the environment and the social rights of employees); socially responsible individual behaviours and finally social behaviours.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF ECO-RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS**

### **Variables derived from the theory of planned behaviour**

Behaviour change theories propose factors that are likely

to influence the adoption of environmental behaviours. Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action and Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour have been applied to several types of fields, including the environment (Armitage and Conner, 2001). These theories were developed with the explicit goal of predicting and explaining social behaviour using a small number of psychological constructs such as attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention. Also, according to Ajzen (1991), three factors underlie behavioural intentions: attitude toward behaviour (a favourable or unfavourable assessment of the behaviour), subjective norms (the perception of social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour), and perceived behavioural control (the ability to perform the behaviour). Each of these determinants has its importance depending on the behaviour and the target population. Thus, the behaviour is influenced directly by intention and indirectly by the individual's perception of control over whether or not to perform the behaviour. Intention, in turn, is directly influenced by attitude, subjective norm and perception of control. Thus, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm and the greater the perceived control, the greater the individual's intention to carry out the behaviour. The more positive these three components are, the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour has been shown to be effective in explaining different types of environmental behaviours (Steg and Vlek, 2009).

### **Cognitive, affective and situational factors**

Pruneau et al. (2006) draw on the typology of Hwang et al. (2000) and divide the factors that influence environmental behaviour into three categories: cognitive, affective and situational factors.

Cognitive factors relate to individuals' level of awareness of environmental problems, their knowledge of the environment and key ecological concepts, including personal skills and knowledge of action strategies. Cognitive factors include knowledge (Hwang et al., 2000); although Kempton et al. (1995) identified low levels of environmental knowledge among individuals who are highly engaged in the field and concluded that knowledge per se was not a prerequisite for environmental action. Hungerford and Volk (1990) cite the level of environmental awareness, knowledge of the environment and ecological concepts, knowledge of action strategies in response to an environmental problem, and personal skills or abilities that facilitate the application of action strategies. Pruneau et al talk about skills.

Emotional factors refer to attitudes and emotions associated with environmental issues and ecological

phenomena. Several effective factors are identified in the literature and are considered to strongly influence the intention to act. These include the impression of the ease of the task at hand (Pruneau et al., 2000), the feeling of responsibility towards the environment (Hines et al., 1986-1987; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), the personal rewards expected as a result of the action (saving money, improved health, etc.), the feeling of responsibility towards the environment (Hines et al., 1986-1987; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), and the personal rewards expected as a result of the action (saving money, improved health, etc.). (Fietkau and Kessell, 1981, cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Maiteny, 2002), altruism (Borden and Francis, 1978), empathy (Berenguer, 2007), orientation towards egocentric, altruistic and biospheric values (Stern, 2000); Stern and Dietz, 1994; Stern et al., 1993), an individual's habits are another important affective factor, the centre of internal control (Hungerford and Volk, 1990), perceived social norms (Ajzen, 1991).

Situational factors are related to the situation of an individual or a group and can have a reinforcing or inhibiting impact on cognitive and affective factors. For Ajzen (1991), a situational variable refers to the perception that individuals have of the ease or difficulty of carrying out a behaviour. These are elements that determine whether or not a consumer will adopt ecological behaviours. Several situational factors can facilitate or inhibit the adoption of ecological behaviours. As situational variables. We distinguish: gender, socio-economic status, attitudes towards the environment (Chawla and Cushing, 2007), experiences of significant contact with nature, involvement in environmental actions, level of education, political context and services offered to facilitate the accomplishment of tasks, social norms (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), cultural context cultural traditions (e.g. religions), family habits (Rajecki, 1982, cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002), the desire for environmental action (Preuss, 1991, cited in Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002).

In the context of responsible consumption, particularly the purchase of organic products, the motivations of buyers are multiple. The main motivations for buying these products are ethical (Daniel, 2013), selfish (Aertsens et al., 2009), altruistic, selfish and hedonistic (De Ferran and Grunert, 2007).

### **Identifying obstacles to the adoption of ecological behaviour**

The literature identifies several types of barriers that prevent the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviour.

Among the factors that hinder the adoption of environmental behaviours, Maiteny (2002) identifies, for example, the lack of material resources in the community to carry out an action, as well as social pressures exerted

by a non-conservative resource environment. Pruneau et al. (2006) add the difficulty for some individuals to make the link between their behaviours and environmental degradation, the overload of daily activities, forgetfulness and the difficulty of feeling different from the rest of the community.

Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) enumerate a list of factors that can affect environmental behaviour. These are:

- Certain values that can prevent the learning of new behaviours;
- Certain prior knowledge that conflicts with environmental values;
- Insufficient knowledge;
- Emotional blockage in relation to pro-environmental values and attitudes or in relation to certain environmental problems;
- Values that impede emotional engagement;
- Low environmental awareness;
- Lack of internal and external incentives or opportunities for action;
- Negative or insufficient feedback from others about the behaviour being practised.

Blake (1999) mentions three main barriers:

- Attitudes or temperament (e.g., lack of interest or laziness),
- a sense of responsibility can be associated with the psychological control centre. Blake points out that people who do not practice environmental lifestyles often don't feel able to influence the situation significantly, or do not feel they should be responsible for a problem created by

the general population.

- The practicality of environmental behaviour discourages a person from adopting it despite their good intentions. For example, lack of time, money, information and encouragement would potentially prevent an intention from materializing.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve our research objectives, we conducted a qualitative study through semi-structured questionnaires with a convenience sample of 18 individuals all residing in the city of Douala. Attention was paid to the diversity of the situations of the interviewees in terms of age (which varies between 22 and 60 years), level of education (which varies between secondary school and PhD) and occupation. Toffoli and Lazaric (2013) assert that there is an educational effect in the adoption of ecological behaviour. Not having or having only a low level of education tends to be one of the "incentives" for adopting sustainable consumption behaviours. Interviews lasted from 10 minutes to 45 minutes for the most voluble. They were conducted using an interview guide. Three themes were addressed during our interviews: the perception of the notion of ecological consumer, the motivations and the barriers to the adoption of ecological behaviours. Thematic content analysis was used. It consisted of highlighting the different themes addressed by the respondents from the transcripts of the interviews. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the respondents.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents.

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Education level</b>
1	F	30	Contractor	A' level
2	F	27	Housewife	Secondary level
3	F	30	Seamstress	O' level
4	F	40	Shopkeeper	Primary level
5	F	24	Receptionist	A level
6	f	22	Hairdresser	Secondary level
7	F	50	Teacher	Master degree
8	f	45	Nurse	Bachelor
9	F	34	Housewife	Secondary level
10	F	52	Social Affairs Assistant	Bachelor
11	F	48	Medical Doctor	Phd
12	H	24	Student	Bachelor
13	H	28	Unemployed	A' Level
14	H	35	Civil Engineer	Master degree
15	H	25	Street vendor	Secondary level
16	H	45	Teacher	Bachelor
17	H	60	Retired	A' level
18	H	39	computer scientist	Master degree

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are structured around the topics covered in the interview guide.

### Perceptions of the ecological consumer

When asked what an ecological consumer is, for the majority of respondents, it is an individual who consumes natural products and who protects his environment by taking into account the consequences of his consumption acts on the environment and by keeping it clean: *"I take care not to dirty around me, to put my garbage in the trash can to keep my environment clean"* (Respondent 9).

Protection of the environment appears in terms of actions aimed at *"avoiding the destruction of the ozone layer through pollution and the destruction of the plant species"* (Respondent 14), in particular by *"avoid leaving plastics and bottles lying around on the ground"* (Respondent 2) or *"making an effort to limit the negative effects of one's consumption acts on the environment"* (Respondent 8); and by keeping it clean.

Taking into account the consequences of consumption act also characterizes this type of consumer. Also, it is someone who *"opts for products that do not have harmful effects on the environment and who recycles waste or packaging"* (Respondent 18).

Furthermore, they pay attention to the state of the planet by moderately using ecological resources and buy products with a low environmental impact.

*"To be ecological would consist in taking the environment into account in its consumption. Like when we go shopping we use biodegradable plastics or we go with reusable bags... and also in the consumption of more natural than manufactured products because most of the manufactured products have already lost all their nutrients and sometimes are not very good for health"* (Respondent 4).

*"It is the one who consumes 100% natural products with no added artificial elements, no GMOs"* (Respondent 12).

These perceptions are consistent with the definitions of several authors who describe the ecological responsible consumer as one who takes into account the consequences that his or her purchases may have on society and the environment (Webster, 1975), or who acts beyond their interest by taking into account the impact of their consumption on the environment (François-Lecompte, 2009). It is therefore an individual who is aware of social problems (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Webster, 1975), who feels

concerned by ecological problems (Henion and Wilson, 1976) or at least who is aware of them (Roberts, 1996).

Our results support those of the literature and highlight a broad and committed vision of socially responsible consumption, particularly the fact of favouring local products or small businesses (François-Lecompte, 2009).

### Motivations for the adoption of ecological behaviour by consumers in developing countries

The results show that the adoption of ecological behaviours is influenced by egocentric, biospheric, altruistic motivations, social norms and finally the need for social recognition.

#### Biospheric motivations

Biospheric motivations are mentioned by almost half of the respondents. For example, they seek to *"prevent environmental pollution and repel global warming"* (Respondent 9), *"preserve certain endangered species"* (Respondent 12), *"safeguard the environment for sustainable development so that everyone can benefit from it"* (Respondent 11). Others are concerned about the *"present and future well-being of planet"* (Respondent 6), which appears to be an obligation for some: *"As a human being and as the environment is our natural habitat we have an obligation to protect it, therefore a duty for us to do so, because if we do not do so the negative consequences will follow"* (Respondent 10).

#### Self-serving motives

Regarding egocentric motivations, nearly 80% of respondents said that their main concern was their health: *"The main reason for me is health. By adopting an ecological attitude you take more care of your health"* (Respondent 10). Well-being is also mentioned, *"I do it for my well-being, my health"* (Respondent 12). For some, this health motive conditions the need to leave a healthy environment for future generations: *"Immediately it's my health. If I'm not healthy, can I leave a healthy environment for future generations? My immediate environment must be healthy for my health to be better so that I can take other actions for future generations"* (Respondent 18).

#### Altruistic motivations

Altruistic motivations are mentioned by 38% of the sample. Individuals act ecologically because they care about future generations in particular and human beings

in general. As this interviewee says, "*When we look at how we are doing here every day, we ask ourselves, what are we going to leave our children? What are we going to leave to them? If we don't preserve the little there is, will they have the chance in 30, 40, 50 years to have this nature, to have trees, to have this fertile soil without waste? So I think about future generations*" (Respondent 16). Others seek to "*preserve our environment so that future generations (and ourselves) can live in a healthy and less polluted environment*" (Respondent 3), or "*preserve the future of mankind so that we can live in the best climatic and environmental conditions*" (Respondent 4).

These results are consistent with the literature that emphasizes that three types of values can be useful in understanding environmental behaviour: Selfish, altruistic and biospheric values (De Groot and Steg, 2008). Most research shows that individuals with an altruistic or biospheric orientation are more likely to engage in ecological behaviours compared to those with a selfish orientation (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003). De Groot and Steg (2008) established a significant link between behaviour change and individuals' values. They recognize three types of ethical values that have more or less an impact on environmental behaviour. The orientation towards altruistic values means that individuals consider the costs and benefits of environmental action in relation to its impact on other human beings. The orientation towards egocentric values reflects the fact that individuals consider the costs and benefits of environmental action in relation to their well-being. Orientation towards biospheric values refers to the fact that individuals assess the costs and benefits of environmental action in terms of the well-being of ecosystems or the biosphere.

### **The social norm**

The influence of the entourage is cited but seems to be marginal: "*What pushes me to behave is my entourage and the place where I am*" (Respondent 6). Some people will therefore adopt a behaviour if they feel that their entourage values the behaviour. Ajzen (1991) speaks of a subjective norm that refers to the social pressure felt in order to express the behaviour or not.

### **The need for personal valorization**

In the context of responsible consumption, some consumers use their purchases or actions as a way of asserting themselves, valuing themselves personally, of differentiating themselves from others (Kozinets and Handelman, 1998). This need is rarely mentioned. For example, this respondent says that she "*participated in*

*the Journées Citoyennes de Propreté because it was a way for me to stand out and show that I am an ecological woman*" (Respondent 5).

In conclusion, the adoption of ecological behaviours is therefore mainly motivated in our context by a great concern for the future state of the planet, concern for future generations, personal well-being, better health, subjective norm and the need for personal valorization. However, there are some obstacles to the adoption of such behaviours in this context.

### **Obstacles to the adoption of ecological behaviour**

Several barriers to the adoption of green behaviour emerge from the analysis. These are the feelings of inefficiency, the lack of infrastructure, mentalities, lack of knowledge of environmental issues and time.

#### **Lack of municipal services**

Individuals who wish to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours are slowed down by the glaring lack of infrastructures such as garbage bins and public toilets. 27% of respondents address this theme. The absence or insufficiency of garbage bins is the first brake. Also, despite their goodwill, some people are obliged to misbehave:

*"If there are no garbage bins, what am I going to do? Sometimes I want to do the right thing but the first garbage bin is miles away"* (Respondent 10)

*"There are times when we want to throw the garbage in the bins we can't find it, or when we do find it it is so full that the garbage is on the ground and there we have to throw it on the ground"* (Respondent 12).

Others accuse the public authorities of being at the origin of these abuses:

*"By the way, it's the system that prevents this kind of non-ecological behavior. We don't have public toilets! I'm not going to keep urine at the risk of blowing up my bladder!"* (Respondent 13), *"It is not easy in our environment to be ecological. In my opinion the public authorities do not put enough means for that"* (Respondent 4).

This result is in line with the literature, which suggests that the lack or absence of facilities (Vining and Ebreo, 1990), the location of these facilities and their ease of access (Berger, 1997) have a negative influence on the intention to adopt ecological behaviour.

### **The feeling of inefficiency**

One of the main barriers to adopting green behaviour in our environment seems to be a sense of inefficiency. Many respondents believe that the isolated action of one individual would not add anything to the whole, which creates a doubt as to the effectiveness of his or her actions:

For example, *"I don't want to buy canned tomatoes anymore, I want to buy the fruit. But when I go to buy the fruit, you see a greenish or blue powder and you know that they put this on to kill insects and everything, you know it's chemical fertilizer. It's discouraging. You tell yourself what's the point of doing all this, it won't make much of a difference"* (Respondent 9).

*"The environment doesn't make it any easier in that sense or if you're the only person working to protect the environment and others don't make any effort it can be discouraging"* (Respondent 8).

*"When you're trying to do better, others don't consider it. For example, you do your best to keep a public place clean individuals will come and sit down and still throw garbage on the ground when there are bins near them. When you see yourself making efforts that are not seen by others and taken into consideration it brings discouragement. It takes strength and courage to continue making these efforts"* (Respondent 17).

*"(...) Because no matter how clean you clean, there will always be people who will be there to make things dirty. Yes! When you see people eating and throwing garbage everywhere it discourages. Inside the taxis, they throw banana and peanut skins. It hurts to see that because they are moms and dads."* (Respondent 7).

This result is echoed in the literature. Indeed, according to Roberts (1996), perceived consumer efficacy is the only predictor of pro-environmental behaviour compared to other psychographic variables.

### **Mentalities**

Cited by 44% of respondents, mentalities appear to be the main obstacle in addition to the lack of infrastructure. Some say that Africans are not ready because they are under the impression that ecology is a deception:

*"The adoption of ecological gestures seems difficult because Africa does not yet have this mentality and thinks that environmental degradation is deception"* (Respondent 11).

For others it is "incivism", "laziness", "laziness", "letting

go", "lack of habit". They are part of the brakes associated with the individual in the sense of Blake (1999), particularly laziness.

*"It is incivism because to protect the environment we must be civilized. It is acquired from an early age. I think that the most difficult thing is the mentality of our brothers! It's very difficult to instill environmental values in them."* (Respondent 18).

*"I tell myself that what makes things difficult is first of all we have the mentality of the Cameroonians. Because here it's everyone who does as he wants... I would say that the mentality at the base is not good because if the citizens had this desire to respect Mother Nature we would not be at this level of pollution".* (Respondent 10).

### **Lack of knowledge of environmental issues**

Lack of knowledge of environmental issues also seems to be an obstacle to the adoption of ecological behaviours, as stated by 33% of the interviewees. Consequently, "ignorance" and "unconsciousness" appear as barriers.

*"It's the awareness of the thing. Many of us are not aware of the issues involved in protecting the environment"* (Respondent 10).

*"We need to have a culture of sorting waste because we know at home that we don't have that culture"* (Respondent 14).

*"It's a lack of awareness on the part of some people who throw waste away anyhow"* (Respondent 2).

Several works stipulate that knowledge of environmental issues is an antecedent to favourable ecological behaviour (Chan, 2001). Indeed, individuals with a high level of environmental knowledge are more likely to pay a premium price for environmentally friendly products (Amyx et al., 1994). According to Hungerford and Volk (1990), good information leads to an increased awareness of environmental problems and therefore a motivation to act responsibly towards the environment.

### **The high cost of organic products**

Lack of money is one of the barrier to the adoption of ecological behaviours, particularly those related to responsible consumption. However, they are cited by 16% of respondents. Some cite: *"The high cost of biodegradable products"* (Respondent 6); *The lack of financial means: "I can say the means, the means do not allow me to behave ecologically. Ecological products are*

*not easily accessible" (Respondent 4).*

Overall, the literature states that the surplus price of ecological products hinders the adoption of ecological behaviours (Roberts, 1996; Bouquet and Hénault, 1998).

### **Lack of time**

Lack of time justifies for some people the non-adoption of ecological behaviours:

*"I would like to get involved in the fight against plastics and to join associations but it takes a lot of time and it is not easy to juggle with time" (Respondent 17).*

Lack of time is also one of the barriers to adopting ecological behaviours. Time constraints have a negative influence on the intention to adopt pro-environmental behaviour. Similarly, according to Blake (1999), the practicality of environmental behaviour deters people from adopting it despite their good intentions. For example, a lack of time or money would potentially prevent an intention from materializing.

### **CONCLUSION**

The objective of this research was to understand the meaning that consumers in African countries especially in Cameroon attribute to the concept of the ecological consumer and to identify the motivations and barriers they encounter in adopting this type of behaviour. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted in the Cameroonian context.

The results of the analysis show that the notion of ecological consumer among Cameroonian citizens has two dimensions: The first being the protection of the environment through the limitation of the negative effects of one's acts of consumption on the environment, and the reduction of one's environmental impact through healthiness. The ecological consumption dimension appears here through the consumption of natural products. The ideas put forward agrees with certain definitions of the ecological consumer found in the literature. Our work thus reinforces the idea of an ecological consumer in developing countries with the same concerns as in developed countries but perhaps not the same characteristics. Future studies should focus on characterizing this type of consumer.

The results on motivations are identical in part to those found in the literature. Despite contextual and even cultural differences, it can be noted that the motivations identified in the literature also appear in this study. They are mainly biospheric, egocentric and altruistic motivations. Several researchers have stated that three

types of values can be useful in understanding environmental behaviours: Selfish, altruistic and biospheric (De Groot and Steg, 2008; Schwartz, 1994). The findings on the social norm and the need for valuation are consistent with the literature. Our findings on disincentives also support those in the literature.

At the end of this research, we can propose possible solutions to encourage individuals to adopt ecological behaviours on the one hand, and on the other hand to reduce the obstacles to the adoption of these behaviours.

Thus, instead of "enacting" behavioural changes, the government (and municipalities) must set up efficient household waste collection structures and improve the infrastructure for collection. Failing this, encourage the development of actions such as composting and recycling by demonstrating their interest in individuals through communication that emphasises egocentric motivations. This would help to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.

Awareness-raising and education for sustainable development would help to reduce the obstacles linked to the feeling of inefficiency, mentalities and the perception of environmental issues. This should be done from primary school onwards to instill notions of social responsibility and environmentally friendly behaviour at an early age and eventually increasing the number of green consumers. The government must facilitate access to organic products by promoting their traceability through labels, guaranteeing the "GMO-free" character. Indeed, not everything that is not manufactured is necessarily organic. However, this study does have limitations that are notably linked to the size of the sample, its exploratory nature and the fact that the survey is confined to a single country.

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## **MAINTENANCE GUIDE**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

We hear more and more about ecology. What do you think about it?

### **THEME 1: THE PERCEPTION OF THE ECOLOGICAL CONSUMER**

What does it mean to you to be an eco-consumer?  
What do you think it means to protect your environment?

### **THEME 2. ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR**

What behaviours do you adopt as an ecological consumer?  
What are you doing to protect your environment?

### **THEME 3. THE MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS TO THE ADOPTION OF ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR.**

- Are you aware of the Citizens' Cleanliness Days?
- Have you ever participated in Citizens' Cleanliness Days? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Organize your human investments in your neighbourhood? If yes, do you take part in them?
- What are your reasons for behaving in an ecological way?
- What can prevent you from behaving in an ecological way?
- What makes it difficult to adopt these behaviours?