

---

# The ultimate paradox of outdoor garment consumption

Authors: Lisa Johansson and Marcus Linnarsson  
Mentor: Cecilia Solér

School of Business, Economics and Law at The University of Gothenburg

## Abstract

*Outdoor enthusiasts are caught in a paradox where their consumption of outdoor garments destroys the very nature that they are dependent on for their experiences. In this article the authors aim to contribute to the on-going discussion about sustainable consumption and the intention - behavior gap by focusing on the field of outdoor garment consumption. Phenomenological interviews were conducted in order to answer the research questions: 1) How do outdoor enthusiasts experience their consumption of outdoor garments? 2) How do environmental aspects affect consumers in the purchasing process? The results show that barriers to make sustainable consumption choices when it comes to outdoor garments are price, knowledge and fashion. Furthermore, our findings question the effects of direct experience with nature, since the outdoor enthusiast does not show any evidence of being more keen to behave environmentally friendly than other consumers.*

**Key Words:** Sustainable consumption, Intention-behaviour gap, Outdoor Enthusiast, Identity.

## Introduction

The environmental concern among consumers is increasing and environmental issues have emerged as one of the most important topics of the twenty-first century (Blake, 1999). Despite the increase of environmental concerns, changes in the general public's consumption patterns remain absent. This indicates a gap between intention and behaviour of the consumers (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010). This article further investigates the *intention-behaviour gap* phenomenon by focusing on the paradox of trying to make possible the survival of our planet and the human race (United Nations, 1987) while simultaneously consuming in an increasingly unsustainable manner. This paradox is studied by exploring outdoor enthusiasts and their consumption of outdoor garments since their close relation to the environment makes them a unique group to analyse (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010).

This group of consumers are particularly interesting to focus on due to the fact that they on one hand are in need of well functioning outdoor garments and on the other hand are dependent on nature in order to perform their outdoor activities, which adds to the inherent paradox. Furthermore, this group becomes even more topical to study

since nature tourism has increased substantially during the last decades with almost 90% of the Swedish population today stating that they perform outdoor activities in some form (Government proposition 2009/10:238). Alongside the increase in nature tourism there has also been a change in activities and today more advanced activities such as skiing, kayaking, climbing and hiking are very popular (Ibid). The people who perform these types of activities rely heavily on their equipment to keep them warm, dry, clean and to help them perform. In order to make garments that are functional, durable, water resistant and stain resistant the industry of outdoor garments use a plethora of different techniques, materials and chemicals. Some chemicals are extremely harmful both to the environment and to the person in contact with them (Trudel *et al.* 2008). One example of such a chemical is perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) previously used in the production of all Gore-Tex products (Gore-Tex, 2013). Gore-Tex is a membrane often used in shell garments in order to make them water and stain resistant while still allowing the garment to breathe (Gore-tex, 2013). PFOA has been proven to be moderately toxic to mammals, bio-accumulative and very persistent to

abiotic and biotic degradation (Trudel *et al.* 2008; Kemikalieinspektionen, 2015).

Researchers have previously blamed the *intention-behavior gap* on corporations for making consumers defenceless victims of marketing (Gabriel & Lang, 2006). However, as well known within microeconomics, every consumer possess the power over their own consumption and Sanne (2002) state that it is time for us to accept the fact that consumers are actually not passive victims of marketing but rather make deliberate choices. So how is it that the outdoor enthusiast still consumes outdoor clothing in an environmentally unsustainable manner that contradicts their wish of experiencing nature non-altered by humans? A substantial amount of research has been conducted to understand why consumers consume the way they do and why they do not act according to their intentions. This research has resulted in many different explanations that each partly explains the *intention-behavior gap*, but no study has yet been able to fully explain the phenomenon. One angle of research that cannot be ignored while studying consumption and the *intention-behavior gap*, is consumer culture theory, which focus on the relationship between the consumers' identity projects and how it is influenced by the marketplace (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Researchers within this field put a lot of emphasis on how consumption culture plays an important role in all types of consumption, as consumers are constantly constructing and reconstructing their identities through consumption (*ibid.*). Other researchers (Webster, 1975; Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996; Robinson & Smith, 2002; Kollmus & Agyeman, 2010; Carrigan *et al.* 2010) have focused more upon the *intention-behavior gap* as such and this research has generated a lot of different barriers that influences the phenomenon, where one interesting barrier is direct versus indirect experience. Direct experience has been argued to have stronger influence on behavior since individuals who have seen the consequences of their consumption with their own eyes are more prone to behave environmentally friendly (Kollmus & Agyeman, 2010). Direct experience is therefore estimated to generate a smaller gap between intention and behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010). The characteristics of the outdoor enthusiasts, who possess direct experience as they spend a lot of time in the outdoors, makes them interesting to look at.

The never ending identity creation projects and the strong consumption culture in today's society, combined with the direct experience possessed by outdoor enthusiasts, makes them an interesting group to study in regards to how they perceive the paradox of sustainability and consumption. Therefore, the aim of this article is to address the inherent paradox between outdoor enthusiasts, who are dependent on nature for their experiences, and their unsustainable consumption of outdoor garments. Two research questions constitute the base of this study 1) how do outdoor enthusiasts experience their consumption of outdoor garments? 2) How do environmental aspects affect consumers in the purchasing process? This study makes a contribution to the on-going discussion on sustainable consumption and it especially deals with the before mentioned *intention-behavior gap* within the field of outdoor garments.

To explore the paradox and answer our research questions we start with constructing a theoretical framework around already existing research about the environmentally conscious consumer, the consumer identity projects, and research about the *intention-behavior gap*. Thereafter, the experiences of outdoor enthusiasts will be studied using phenomenological interviews in order to shed light upon the paradox. The empirical data gathered from the interviews will then be analysed and discussed in relation to the theoretical framework in order to present a conclusion and provide answers to the research questions.

## The chemical background of the paradox

The fact that PFOA and other chemicals affecting the environment are used in the production of outdoor garments creates a paradox for outdoor enthusiasts. Outdoor enthusiasts destroy the very nature they want to experience by consuming the outdoor garments they need to perform their activities regardless of the weather conditions. The outdoor garments need to be breathable while at the same time being able to keep the outdoor enthusiast warm and dry. To create outdoor garments meeting these requirements, companies use a lot of chemicals in the production process, chemicals that are harmful for both humans wearing the garments and for the environment.

One of the most frequently used chemicals within the industry of outdoor garments is Perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA, which is part of the perfluorinated compounds family. All perfluorinated compounds consists of a covalent bond between carbon and fluorine that creates one of the strongest chemical bindings known to man (ibid). This makes perfluorinated compounds extremely stable and resistant to biotic and abiotic degradation (ibid). In June 2008, the European Union prohibited the use of the perfluorinated compound Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, PFOS, since it was established to be cancerogenic and bio-accumulative (ibid). After the prohibition of PFOS, the industry switched to PFOA. Recently PFOA has been suspected of being cancerogenic and toxic to reproduction why ECHA (European Chemicals Agency) added it to the REACH-list (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals) under the category "Substances of very high concern" (The Swedish Chemicals Agency, 2015).

PFOA is normally used as films (e.g. on non-stick cookware) or membranes (e.g. in outdoor garments) and it is added to consumer products in order to make them stain-, soil-, water- and grease resistant (Ibid). These functions do however come at a price since perfluorinated compounds, with PFOA in the forefront, are harmful for both humans and the environment (The Swedish Chemicals Agency, 2009). Sweden imports roughly 25 tons of perfluorinated compounds on a yearly basis, where 75% is used within the textile industry (The Swedish Chemical Agency, 2006). As perfluorinated substances are non-biodegradable they accumulate in the environment and therefore the total amount of these toxic substances is ever increasing (The Swedish Chemicals Agency, 2009). Many companies, especially producers of textiles, are aware of the harmful effects of perfluorinated compounds, why most of them now refrain from using PFOA. However, the substitutes are often other perfluorinated compounds that slowly degrade into PFOA (The Swedish Chemical Agency, 2006) and perfluorinated compounds currently occur globally in both wildlife and humans. According to the Swedish Chemicals Agency (2015), studies have indicated that the levels of perfluorinated compounds are increasing in the Arctic. Because of the compounds being bio-accumulative and non-biodegradable they accumulate in the food chain and has been found in polar bears.

## Theoretical framework

### The intention - behavior gap

There is a great body of research conducted about the attitude - behaviour gap in order to try and understand why consumers who have environmental knowledge do not walk their talk. Carrigan *et al.* (2010) argue that research has focused on the gap between attitude and behavior and their relationship and differences, but that research about the *intention-behavior gap* is limited. Since attitude is only one of the factors explaining intention, studying the *intention-behavior gap* rather than the attitude - behaviour gap provides a more holistic overview (ibid). Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2009) define the *intention-behavior gap* as "the degree of inconsistency between users' intention regarding a specific behaviour and their actual behaviour. Sheeran (2002), argue that some parts of the inconsistency (the gap) can be explained by errors connected to the measurement of intention but further argue that even the most optimistic estimates of intention - behavior consistency are far from perfect which indicates that there are more factors involved in the explanation of this *intention-behavior gap*. Carrigan *et al.* (2010) agrees with Sheeran (2002) and further argue that one part of the explanation is that ethically minded consumers are kept back by various constraints and competing demands before they reach the checkout counter. Consequently, Carrigan *et al.* (2010) constructed a conceptual model of the *intention-behavior gap* of ethically minded consumer derived from insights within the field of consumer behavior and social psychology, consisting of implementation intentions, actual behavioural control and situational context. This model takes the cognitive part into consideration but at the same time also recognizes the fact that these decisions do not occur in isolation but in fact are more complex than that (ibid).

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) mean that humans act rationally and make use of the information they have, but further highlight the fact that attitudes are not the only factor that influences the behavior of humans. Evidence from Minton and Rose's (1997) study emphasize that attitude is a good predictor of behavioural intention, however their findings also indicate that norms influence behavior to a large extent. They further argue that personal norms more likely will lead to action since people feel obliged to act a certain way (ibid). A great amount

of research has been conducted in order to identify and further understand the factors causing this intention - behavior gap in order to deepen the overall understanding of conscious consumer behavior (Webster, 1975; Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996; Robinson & Smith, 2002; Kollmus & Agyeman, 2010; Carrigan *et al.* 2010). Kollmus and Agyeman (2010) mean that the gap depends on barriers such as direct versus indirect experiences, normative influence and temporal discrepancy. Additionally, a Swedish study made by Barkman (2014) found two other barriers to why consumers does not behave in accordance with their intentions. The first barrier is that when it is difficult for consumers to see and understand the impact of their actions they experience less motivation to change their behaviour, the second barrier is the fact that consumers do not want to do things on their own but prefer it when there are others striving for the same goal and giving up the same things (*ibid*).

Whether knowledge is an important influential barrier or not has been thoroughly debated within academia and it has been established that knowledge is influential to some extent but it is not the only reason to why consumers do not walk their talk (Roberts, 1996). In addition to knowledge, other factors have been found to influence pro-environmental behaviour and in Kollmus and Agyeman's (2010) article they provide a compilation of established factors generated in other studies. These are gender, years of education, institutional factors, economic factors, social factors, motivation, environmental knowledge, values, attitudes, environmental awareness, emotional involvement, locus of control, responsibility and priorities (*ibid*). On the other hand, researchers have found that personality measures have greater impact on consumer behaviour than social demographics. (Webster, 1975; Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996 ; Robinson & Smith, 2002). Because of the variety and amount of different influential factors, Kollmus and Agyeman (2010) draw the conclusion that the question of what shapes pro-environmental behavior is too complex to visualize in one single framework or diagram.

### **Who is the environmentally conscious consumer?**

Minton and Rose (1997) summarized that people who are aware of different environmental issues, who understand the consequences of their actions,

who care about solving the problems and who are willing to sacrifice resources to behave more environmentally friendly, are more keen to behave in an environmentally friendly way. Furthermore, Minton and Rose (1997) argue that people who believe their efforts can make a difference to solve the problem, experience increased incentives to consume environmentally friendly, this also goes in line with findings by Ellen *et al.* (1991). Alongside this research, findings by various other researchers show that environmentally concerned attitudes as well as norms have effects on product choice, search for information, recycling, and the various behavioural intentions (Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996; Minton & Rose, 1997). Further Schlegelmilch *et al.* (1996) as well as Minton and Rose (1997) concluded that attitude, with good results, can be used as a predictor of intentions to behave environmentally friendly. However Minton and Rose (1997) found that personal norms more likely will lead to actions in the form of environmentally friendly product choices, search, and recycling.

According to Webster (1975) the conscious consumer takes into account the consequences of his or hers consumption and use their imbedded purchasing power to bring about change. All consumption includes positive choice behaviour, favouring certain brands or products with certain labels, and also negative choice behaviour, avoidance or boycotting of certain stores, brands or labels (Szmigin *et al.* 2009). Each consumer purchase has ethical, resource, waste and community implications (McDonald *et al.* 2006), and even though an increase in ethical consideration has entered consumer purchase decisions, a gap between consumer ethical thought processes and purchasing behaviour is evident (Belk *et al.* 2005). A purchase decision that includes choosing between an environmentally responsible product and a non-responsible product requires evaluation of the individual and environmental consequences (Follows & Jobber, 2000). Follows and Jobber (2000) argue that it all comes down to a trade-off between environmental and individual consequences. Furthermore, they argue that the positive environmental attitudes can be negated by the negative attitudes towards the individual consequences, which explains why consumers who express high levels of environmental concern do not act accordingly (*ibid*).

## The role of fashion in shaping one's identity

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is an interdisciplinary field (Sherry & Belk, 2007) that refers to a family of theoretical perspectives addressing the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. The concept's fundamental concern is to understand what shapes the consumers' experiences and identities within their everyday lives by focusing on the perspectives of cultural meanings, socio-historical influences, and social dynamics (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Consumer identity projects are a part of the CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) and all discussions of modern consumption will eventually lead to identity (Gabriel & Lang, 2006). Identity can be seen as a narrative that is continuously written and rewritten by a person about that person and nowadays identity lies in the capacity of keeping this particular narrative going (Giddens 1991; Gabriel & Lang, 2006). Gabriel and Lang (2006) argue that identities are sought through consumption and Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1998) further argue that all voluntary consumption carries symbolic meaning. To a large degree we are what we have and possess (Sartre, 1943; Tuan, 1980) and it seems to be an inescapable fact of modern life that our possessions define, learn and remind ourselves of whom we are (Belk, 1988). Furthermore, Belk (1988) argue that consumers regard their possessions as parts of themselves and that an understanding of consumer behavior starts with the knowledge and understanding of what these possessions mean to the consumers.

Sartre (1943) argues that our consumption is driven by our wish to enlarge ourselves. Furthermore Baudrillard (1988) and Rutherford (1990) argues that consumers rather than trying to keep up with the Joneses are trying to distinguish themselves by their consumption choices. In the pursuit of distinguishing oneself, consumers are forced to make consumption decisions on a daily basis. Every decision made contributes to the final identity of a certain individual (Niinimäki, 2010) and how others portray this individual. The first impression is often crucial and therefore personal style and body language becomes important in the creation of one's narrative (ibid). In the creation of identity and of keeping a certain narrative going, fashion becomes a totalizing salient marker (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

Consumers are constantly trying to develop a sense of personal identity through fashion (Thompson & Haytko, 1997) and while doing so they are forced to navigate between the too fashionable and the idiosyncratic (Schiermer, 2010). Simultaneously, today's latest styles will be in the trashcan tomorrow (Joy *et al.* 2012), forcing consumers to constantly define and redefine their personal identities through consumption of clothes (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). The term for this is planned obsolescence, which essentially means that products are planned to become obsolete due to changes in design and non-durable materials (Joy *et al.* 2012). It is not the product in itself that has gotten old but rather it has become a victim of fashion and changed society's view (Schiermer, 2010). As stated by Schiermer (2010), the objects become out-dated, vulgar, trivial, and common and they are therefore abandoned. Furthermore, Niinimäki (2010) state that as soon as the desire for a product is fulfilled, anticipation for that product will instead be transferred to another product, hence one product is not enough to create one's lifestyle. This generates a situation where fully functional garments is considered "out of date" and therefore consumers disregard these products and instead focus on new products that can help them in their constant creation of self (ibid). Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) elaborate on desire by stating that the power of desire is so strong that it overwhelms other motivational constructs such as wants. They also argue that commonalities among desire could be derived from materialistic consumer culture and mean that desire can only come alive in a social context (ibid).

Fashion is a socially acceptable and secure way to distinguish oneself from others (Gronow, 1997) and it is important for consumers to stay within fashion in order not to become out-dated themselves. This type of consumption, with new styles quickly superseding old ones creates an unsustainable consumption pattern amongst consumers (Niinimäki, 2010). However, Joergens (2006) found little evidence that consumers' fashion purchase behaviour is affected by ethical issues, hence it is no revelation that we experience an unsustainable consumption of clothing in today's society. One default explanation for this situation has been that privileged consumers refrain from taking their responsibility and continues to live the unsustainable lifestyles they have become accustomed to (Soroni, 2010). On the contrary to Joergens (2006) and Soroni (2010), researchers Birtwistle and Moore (2007) and Hill and Lee

(2012) have found low levels of knowledge concerning sustainability among consumers, which provides another explanation to the situation that we are currently experiencing. They further argue that an increase in knowledge would lead to a more sustainable consumption (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Hill & Lee, 2012). However, Joergens (2006) questions if consumers will purchase ethically produced alternatives if they are forced to forgo their self-interest in order to do so.

## Methodology

The aim of this article is to address the inherent paradox between outdoor enthusiasts who are dependent on nature for their experiences, and their environmentally unsustainable consumption of outdoor garments. Furthermore, it studies the outdoor garment category with a special focus on shell garments since these are the ones who are most exposed to chemicals and fashion. The complexity of the paradox requires an extensive and “in-depth” description of this social phenomena (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In-depth phenomenological interviews will provide the researchers with a deeper knowledge of the phenomena by allowing them to get a glimpse into the minds of the respondents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

Since the aim of this study is based on the outdoor enthusiast in general, all emphasis was placed on finding these outdoor enthusiasts and therefore no consideration has been placed on demographic factors, and for the same reason, neither was respondents sampled because of them being conscious consumers. The study has an exploratory aim and therefore the sample does not need to be representative (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The outdoor enthusiasts interviewed in this study was sampled by using a convenience sample method, since it enabled us to find suitable respondents within our surroundings. As the study is of qualitative nature and strives to understand the outdoor enthusiasts as consumers there is no need for a randomized sample, as randomized sampling is more closely connected to providing generalizable results in quantitative studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The outdoor industry association (accessed through Hyllegard *et al.* 2006) defines the group outdoor enthusiasts as active individuals that have been engaged in a given outdoor recreational activity, based on the number of times that they have

engaged in the activity on an annual basis. In our study we define outdoor enthusiasts as people who enjoys sports and activities in nature on a biannual basis, and spend at least 14 days performing one or several of the following activities: canoeing, hiking, hunting, downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing, sailing or biking. These activities were chosen because they require substantial use of equipment in general and shell garments in particular. Furthermore, these activities has been defined by the Canadian Tourism Commission (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003) and the Outdoor Industry Foundation (2007), as outdoor activities.

## Interview design

According to Thompson *et al.* (1989), existential-phenomenology seeks to be a descriptive science where the life world of the individual is central. Within phenomenology experiences are seen as patterns that emerges from a context, the worldview is contextual and the research focus is therefore on experiences and world as co-constituting (*ibid.*). In this study, the phenomenological interviews aims to attain a first-person description of consumer experience in their consumption of outdoor garments why all respondents prior to the interview was asked to bring one or more of their shell garments. Phenomenological interviews are intended to create a dialogue rather than a question and answer session, thus the dialogue is circular rather than linear (Thompson *et al.* 1989). Furthermore Thompson *et al.* (1989; 1990) argue that questions and comments should be shaped in concert with the participant's descriptions in order to make the interview a descriptive and non-judgemental dialogue. In order to create this dialogue, an interview guide with four different themes was formulated; pre-purchase, usage, recycling, and environmental aspects. This interview guide was used as a map, so that the interviewer could get back on track if side-tracked since many questions asked during the interview emerged from the conversation. Furthermore, the interview guide also facilitated smooth and efficient interviews and simultaneously made the process of analysis easier. The four themes was then divided into two subcategories where the focus of part one was to understand the respondent's life experiences with the garments in focus, and the second category focused on the respondents overall reflections and feelings towards the industry of shell garments. Therefore the questions focused more on shell garments in general why the shell garments

brought by the respondents was neglected in this part.

Kvale (1983) argue that it is crucial that the interviewer does not start an interview feeling like he or she knows more about the subject than the respondent, but rather that they are in a position of equality where the respondent is, and must be, the expert of his or her own experiences. That being the case, the interviewers informed the respondents about the purpose of the study and also carefully explained that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Furthermore, Thompson *et al.* (1989) argue that the interviewer should strive to be a non-directive listener and the optimal interview situation is when the respondent's are enabled to give lengthier and more detailed descriptions based on short openings and statements provided by the interviewer. In order to make the interviews non-directive, the interviewers used open questions and refrained from asking "why" questions and rather asked the respondents to describe, explain, and exemplify their feelings and experiences. Not asking "why" questions is something that Thompson *et al.* (1989) recommend since these often shift the focus from describing the experience to a more abstract discussion where the respondent's seeks to find a likely explanation for their actions.

### Data collection

The ten participants in this investigation shares a common interest of spending time in nature and devotes more than 14 days to being in the outdoors over a two year period. Out of the ten participants, five were women and five were men and all of them perform at least two out of the eight activities

included in the definition of the outdoor enthusiast. All respondents was, prior to the interview, assured about their anonymity and they all agreed to their answers being audiotaped. Furthermore, they were all instructed to bring at least one shell garment to the interview in order to facilitate a conversation around their own outdoor garments. Each interview began with the question, "Could you tell us more about the (outdoor) garment that you brought with you?". The purpose of the opening question was to initiate a dialogue where the respondent felt comfortable enough to talk freely about their experiences. Therefore, the brought outdoor garment was used as a familiarizing requisite with the sole purpose of making the respondents open up and thereby enable a deeper discussion about outdoor garments in general. Following the initial question, a semi-structured interview was conducted where spontaneous questions were mixed with question from the interview guide. In the last part of the interview, the respondents were asked to tell the interviewers, what they know about Gore-Tex. This question aimed to understand how knowledgeable the respondents were about Gore-Tex since this brand is well-known within the outdoor garment industry. Later, the interviewers presented the respondents with studies made about Gore-Tex and the harmful effects that the material has for both humans and the environment. After these studies was presented, the respondents was asked to explain how they now felt towards Gore-Tex, this was made in order to enable the authors to see how the respondents reacted to the information. The interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes depending on how many garments the respondent brought and also how talkative they were.

Name	Gender	Downhill skiing/snow-boarding	Sailing	Hunting	Kayaking	Hiking	Cross-Country skiing	Biking	Days in the outdoors
Alexander	M	X		X		X	X	X	100
Helena	F	X	X			X	X		42
Claes	M	X				X		X	75
Louise	F	X	X				X		14
Bruno	M	X				X			14
David	M	X				X	X		40
Stina	F	X				X	X		14
Peter	M	X			X	X			50
Rebecca	F	X				X	X		100
Clara	F	X					X	X	90

## Analysis

With respect to the present investigation, the relevant texts were verbatim transcripts of audiotaped interview sessions. Each interview was interpreted according to the iterative process, which according to Thompson *et al.* (1989) is characteristic for phenomenological consumer research. After each interview was interpreted ideographically, the interpretive context was broadened as researchers identified common patterns among interview transcripts. These commonalities were then referred to as themes or what Thompson *et al.* (1989) calls global themes. It is important for the researcher to remember that these global themes can present themselves in many different ways and as argued by Thompson *et al.* (1989) "different" situations may be experienced in the same way, or the "same" situation may be experienced differently. Hence, researchers normally use a type of "seeing as" where the importance lies in identifying situations where respondent's intentionality are the same (ibid).

## Quality discussion

For qualitative studies, Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggest that trustworthiness should be assessed by evaluating the concept of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Therefore the aim is to assess this study's trustworthiness based on these four concepts. In this study, *credibility* was assured by interviewing ten different outdoor enthusiasts who all voluntarily choose to participate in the study and give their view on the subject. Furthermore, by emphasizing the empirical data within the analysis, credibility is increased since the reader is closely connected to the respondents and hence can evaluate whether the results are logical and credible or not. The credibility is further increased as the majority of findings are supported by citations directly from respondents. By providing the reader with a detailed description of how the study was carried out, *transferability* was increased. Lincoln and Guba (1986) argues that transferability is increased by describing the context and the assumptions central to the research, why the researchers, in the methodology chapter, present all details about the conducted phenomenological interviews e.g. amount of interviewees, length of the interviews and the restrictions in regards to the people who contributed with data. Furthermore the methodology chapter offers the reader a thorough

description of how the interview guide were prepared in beforehand, how the interviews were conducted, and in the end how the interviews were interpreted and analysed. This thorough description of how the study was carried enhance the *dependability* of the study, since dependability according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2013), is about being transparent with information about the research. In order to achieve *conformability*, the researchers must ensure as far as possible that the findings of their work are in line with the information provided by the respondents rather than subjective characteristics or preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). In order to increase conformability in this study, the researchers present all data gathered by incorporating verbatim transcripts from all interviews. Furthermore, the analysis is first and foremost based on information from respondents combined with findings by the researchers that enables for other researchers to evaluate whether findings are logical in regards to the provided information.

## Findings

### The consumption of outdoor garments

When the respondents talk about their consumption of outdoor garments many of them mentions that their purchasing processes are long, for some respondents it takes years from the initial thought to replace an old item, to the actual purchase of the new one. When it comes to the purchase, it is often not planned beforehand, but rather happens because of a sudden drop in price, which could be connected, to the expensive nature of outdoor garments. Most respondents also acknowledges the fact that these types of products are expensive and talk about it as an investment which also to some extent makes them refrain from impulse purchases. In the process of purchasing new garments many respondents talk about how they are influenced by their parents, friends, online reviews and forums. Some respondents mention how their parents, who themselves are outdoor active, have taught them to have durable clothes on while performing outdoor activities, others mention how their family's economic situation has affected their consumption patterns. This indicates that all respondents are heavily affected by their upbringing but at the same time, friends and online sources still play an important role in the purchasing process. Personal norms as explained by Minton and Rose (1997) are often important predictors of behaviour, and in this case it is obvious that the norms of the respondents

affect their consumption to a large degree. For example Bruno mentioned that his family believes that it is important to have a nice looking outfit and be prepared for the afterski. When analysing his interview we can tell that he is very cautious of what he wears, which could be connected to the social norms that have been established within his family, now affecting his consumption.

*“When it comes to skiing, both me and my family feel that you need a nice outfit, with Peak Performance jackets, nice goggles, helmets and boots. You want to be ready for the afterski and you want to feel that you look good”. Bruno*

### The embedded excitement of consumption

All respondents describe a feeling of excitement when in the process of purchasing new garments. Claes states that purchasing a new garment is connected with new possibilities as the new garment will keep him both dry and warm, which makes it possible for him to do even more activities than before. This example of being able to do more activities than before only by purchasing a new garment is close to what Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) explains as imaginations of a better life. Claes cannot be sure that his new garment definitely will lead to more activities but it is his imagination and thereby his desire that drives him to consume in order to flesh out this imagination. Other respondents mention how they can change their identity by purchasing new garments. For example Louise talks about how the purchase of her latest jacket made her move from being kind of an outdoors nerd into becoming more of a laid back skier. Peter provides another example when he talks about how the brand of the garment puts him in a certain segment and shows that he is serious about his outdoor activities. Louise and Peter's stories are examples of how consumption can be used as an identity maker. Peter said that he strives to be seen as a professional skier and by consuming the right brands, he reinforces the desired identity. Louise on the other hand is dissatisfied with her current identity and uses the purchase of her new jacket as a way of totally rewriting her identity as described by Gabriel and Lang (2006).

*“I did a season in the Alps with my old jacket and it just feels so proper. It worked during that time but now I feel like I have left that behind, I have completed my season and this new jacket feels less serious”. Louise*

Alongside with the excitement surrounding the purchase, respondents also talk about a constant desired consumption of new garments. Alexander exemplifies this by talking about his dream jacket, which is both wind resistant, super warm and super thin. The interesting aspect here is that the notion of this imaginary jacket exists even though Alexander already owns about ten jackets with different purposes, hinting that there is no actual need for another jacket. Helena exemplifies this by explaining that she, for about two years has had an idea of the next jacket that she wishes to purchase, and that this jacket is from Haglöfs and it is blue and purple. It is clear that there is an overall desire to consume as almost all respondents talk about what garment they would like to own or purchase. Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) argue that desire overwhelms all other motivational constructs and it is therefore a good explanation to why respondents purchase new garments even though they already have a sufficient wardrobe. Sartre (1943) once said that our consumption is driven by our wish to enlarge ourselves, and Gabriel and Lang (2006) mean that our identities are projects that demand constant work. Identity could be a possible reason for this constant desire for consuming new outdoor garments. Niinimäki (2010) argue that desire for products travel, once a desire for a specific product is fulfilled it will be transferred to another product, and she further conclude this argument by stating that due to that desire is transferred to another product, one product is never enough to create a lifestyle. The never-ending desire for new garments is evident among our respondents and generates a situation where they have more garments than they can use.

Although there exists a desire for new garments, many respondents state that the longer their products lasts the more satisfied they are with their purchase. In order to make their garments last longer, multiple respondents talk about how they take care of their garments. Most of them use some sort of special detergent to increase the level of water resistance, others talk about how they impregnate their garments as a mean of increasing the functionality of the garment. Further, they talk about repairing their old garments when these are torn and one respondent, Peter describes how he

saves old garments just in order to cut them into small repair patches. David takes this a bit further and describes how his mother helped him to make alterations to his jacket in order to improve its functionality. He showed us that his mother had sewn on a zipper on the jacket and on the pants, making it function as a snow lock.

*“... Since this is such a good fabric I would have cut it into small repair patches that I could use to mend other garments. That is what I do with jeans and stuff like that”. Peter*

### The size of the outdoor wardrobe

From the interviews we have been able to distinguish two consumption types, the largest group consists of seven respondents who all possess a large amount of outdoor garments whereas the other group of three respondents, own less garments and really wear them out. The first group that we call the hoarders, purchase new garments in a faster pace than they wear out their old ones. This creates a situation where their wardrobes are constantly increasing and as mentioned by one of the respondents, Alexander who has about ten jackets, this is only due to the fact that he never disposes a jacket if it is not unusable. Multiple respondents provide one possible explanation for this tendency when they state being taught not to discard products that are fully functional. All respondents are careful during the interviews to highlight the fact that they would never do this, and once again the importance of personal norms is evident as argued by Minton and Rose (1997). Furthermore, the respondents find use of the old garments as spare sets for activities when they do not want to worry about damaging their primary set of outdoor garments. However, most respondents also state that they almost never use their spare garments, even though these are fully functional, showing us that this is simply a prevarication allowing them to consume more products. As argued by Joy *et al.* (2012), styles are constantly changing and it creates a situation where consumers must consume new products in order not to fall behind and become out-dated. This is one possible explanation to why fully functional garments are rendered not good enough and relegated to become spare garments. Another possible explanation provided by Niinimäki (2010) would be that their desires has travelled from one outdoor garment to the next, rendering the old garment out of date. The notion of spare sets, indicates that our respondents do not walk their talk as they state using the garment until it is

unusable, but the reality tells us a different story since they all have bought new garments without the old ones being unusable. This is a great example of the *intention-behavior gap*, described by Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2009) as the respondents talk about how their intention is to wear out their garments but their behaviour is the complete opposite since they often own multiple garments that are not even close to being worn out.

*“Well, it is a lot of jackets for only one person. But then again I have never disposed of any jackets because they are still fully functional”. Alexander*

### The importance of function

Throughout the interviews the importance of function becomes evident. All respondents talk about the functions of their garments in one way or another, and it is clear that the functions of a garment is a crucial aspect that needs to be fulfilled before a purchase can be made. Respondents talk about multiple different types of function with water repellence and breathability being the most recurring. Furthermore, some of the respondents talk about the function of colour, that is how colour plays an important role in their activities. It is exemplified through the use of natural colours when hunting in order not to stand out, bright colours when sailing if one would fall into the water, and bright colours when skiing if one would end up in an avalanche. This proves that colours are multifaceted as they are both a mean of fashion and also as function. Some of the respondents talk about how multifunction is important to them since they want to be able to use the same garment in multiple activities. Many state that multifunction is an important aspect when purchasing a new garment but when asked about how many garments they actually own, the answers provides evidence that they in fact often have more than one garment per activity. Once again this proves the *intention-behavior gap* (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2009), since they have the intention to buy multifunctional garments but still their wardrobes speaks of another truth. For example Louise mentions that multifunction is important to her while making a purchase decision, but at the same time she also say that she has two full outfits for sailing and one separate jacket, four to five jackets for skiing and a couple of jackets for cross country skiing and long distance skating. This proves that her intentions do not translate into behavior since her wardrobe is filled with garments fulfilling different requirements for different activities. If the intention had influenced the behavior to a larger degree, the

variety of garments in her wardrobe would had been much smaller since multifunctional garments can be used across different activities making the need for variety of garments absent.

*“I wanted a new jacket that I could use in multiple different settings, like when skiing, hiking, sailing etc. I do not really like black but once again, black works in many different situations and it is easy to match with other colours”.* Louise

## The aspect of fashion

Although all respondents talk about function aspects, two separate groups could be distinguished based on how they prioritize between function and fashion, the first group being those who put fashion first and the second group being those who prioritize function. Out of our ten respondents, five focused on function and five focused on fashion.

*“The most important aspect of this jacket is its breathable material.... second comes functions such as a well functioning snow lock and a large enough hood to fit my helmet. Third come the looks of the jacket”.* David

One aspect of fashion that was discussed in all interviews is colour as it plays an important role both in the purchasing process and in the overall satisfaction with the garment. Many meant that it is important to have the garments colour in mind while making a purchase since the colour needs to match with their other garments, both already owned garments and future garments. Furthermore, many talked about the benefits of choosing a neutral colored garment, since it is easy to match with other colours as well as being immune to changes in fashion. Therefore some of the respondents had either neutral colored pants or a neutral colored jacket in order to enable them to choose colour on the other garment more freely.

Furthermore, brands are discussed in terms of fashion and quality and the respondents mention brands such as Peak Performance, Haglöfs, Norrøna and Arcteryx. One respondent mentions that the brand is important since it shows other outdoor enthusiasts that it is an expensive jacket and other respondents place a lot of faith upon the brand to have a certain standard and to endure more than a budget alternative would endure. Another interesting aspects brought up by the respondents is that fashion becomes more important as the amount of people in close

proximity increases. They state that when out hiking, a long way from civilisation and other individuals, they feel free to wear clothes that are comfortable, ugly and absolutely out of fashion, but when skiing and being close to other individuals they suddenly feel that they have to use the right garments in order not be the person with the weird clothes. As argued by Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) desire can only exist in a social context and when respondents are missing this social context, e.g. when hiking, they also lack the desire of being fashionable as explained by the respondents above. At the Afterski the social context is present and so is the desire of being fashionable, which is also explained by Bruno.

*“For me it is definitely function before appearance when out hiking, but it is the other way around when skiing. It is more important for me to look good when I'm skiing, it's like in the city, I want to look good in the slopes and also on the afterski”.*  
Bruno

Even though all respondents does not directly talk about the fact that garments go out of style and becomes old, it shines through in several of the interviews. When describing why they bought a new jacket or pair of pants, most of the respondents stated that their current garment was getting old and worn out, and that it has served its time. However, they all have different definitions of what worn out means and the fact is that almost none of the respondents actually bought a new garment because the old one no longer fulfilled its purpose but rather because it felt old.

*“It is a fashion thing, I feel that this jacket is out-dated and I want a nice looking jacket, I want a new jacket because of fashion. That I could say since there is absolutely nothing wrong with this blue jacket, but in terms of fashion it is out-dated”.*  
Louise

Louise provides us with a good description of how she experiences the feeling of a jacket being out-dated. This feeling is according to Schiermer (2010) not dependent on the jacket actually being old but rather a change in societal views rendering the garment out-dated. The jacket has become a victim of fashion and therefore the consumer feels a need to update herself in order to feel approved by others. This is similar to planned obsolescence as changes in fashion renders the old garment unusable and it is the producers of outdoor garments that speeds up this process by creating

new clothing lines for each year. As consumers are what they possess (Belk, 1988), they become out-dated as soon as their outdoor garments become out-dated and with new trends, the consumers need to renew their wardrobe in order to stay within fashion.

### Intention to purchase sustainably

Findings from the interviews show that the respondents often make conscious consumption decisions, they like the thought of using a garment for a long period of time and they also try to take good care of their garments. Furthermore, several respondents state that sustainable aspects are important to them but also explain that they up until now has not taken these aspects into consideration when purchasing outdoor garments. This indicates that respondents have an interest and an intention to purchase more sustainable products, but they also state not following up on this interest or intention which once again highlights the existing gap between intention and behaviour as described by Bhattacharjee and Sanford (2009). The reasons behind not purchasing sustainable products are many and as argued by Carrigan *et al.* (2010) ethically minded consumers are often kept back by various constraints and competing demands. Knowledge has been established to influence the behaviour of consumers (Roberts, 1996) but in this study some of the respondents claimed being knowledgeable about the harmful effects and still purchased unsustainable garments adding to the on-going discussion whether knowledge is influential or not. Many describe a wish to consume more sustainable garments and also that purchasing a sustainable garment adds something extra. However, they also explain that when purchasing a normal product, without sustainable aspects, they feel indifferent to this purchase. In accordance with these findings, the sustainable aspect can only add value but the absence of sustainable aspects cannot reduce the value.

*“Now that I know how dangerous Gore-Tex is I feel kind of a distaste, but I will still use the garments I have already bought and to be honest I will probably buy new ones as well”.* Rebecca

### Information deficiency

A common barrier for sustainable consumption mentioned by the respondents is money but the absence of information also plays an important role for the majority of the respondents. One example of this information deficiency occurred when the respondents were asked to describe their overall impression of the brand Gore-Tex. Initially they all described Gore-Tex as great, and they furthermore associated the brand with good quality and superior functionality when it comes to water resistance and breathable materials. When informed about the fact that Gore-Tex up until 2013 was suspected of being carcinogenic, endocrine disrupting and very persistent to abiotic and biotic degradation because of the use of the chemical PFOA, many felt misled.

*“I'm quite fascinated over the lack of information, it is kind of scary actually, not only when it comes to Gore-Tex but in society overall.”* David

Most respondents mention the ambiguity described by Rebecca when they discuss the likeliness of purchasing Gore-Tex in the future, some other examples brought up are smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol even though they are fully aware of the harmful effects. Some of the respondents say they want to boycott Gore-Tex when they hear about its harmful effects and according to Szmigin *et al.* (2009), boycotting is part of a negative choice behaviour conducted by consumers in order to bring about change. However, these respondents also talk about how they probably will fail to boycott Gore-Tex since it is the only product able to keep them both dry and warm. This is a perfect example of the trade-off described by Follows and Jobber (2000) where environmental and individual consequences are opposites and where individual consequences more often overcome environmental aspects than vice versa. Furthermore, the example of ambiguity provided by Rebecca can also be related to the debate surrounding the influential effect that knowledge has on sustainable behavior. The answers provided by the respondents show that the knowledge seems to have some kind of effect, but since the future actions of the respondents are uncertain, it is not possible for us to draw a conclusion about whether the knowledge actually will influence the behavior or not, but it still adds to the on-going debate mentioned by Carrigan *et al.* (2010).

## Disclaiming responsibility

None of the respondents talk about the fact that Gore-Tex is harmful to the environment but focus only on the health issues that can befall them. This is an egocentric way of dealing with the newly received information about the effects of Gore-Tex. When asked about what they do with the garments they no longer use and what they know about the recycling process of shell garments, the lack of information is evident among the respondents. As discussed before it is difficult to determine whether lack of information and knowledge is the underlying reason behind their unsustainable consumption or not. However, many of the respondents highlights their lack of knowledge during their interviews and seem to exert little effort to gain the necessary information for their consumption to become sustainable. By stating that they do not have the necessary knowledge the respondents disclaim responsibility over the recycling of their used garments and justify their lack of knowledge regarding recycling by stating that they always donate clothes they no longer use, since this enables others less fortunate to keep themselves warm and dry. Some of the respondents also mentioned that they sometimes leave old garments at their parents' house and then their parents "takes care" of the garments either by saving them or by donating them. These stories show that the respondent's hand over the recycling problem to someone else and once again they disclaim the responsibility of their consumption. This all comes down to the trade-off mentioned by Follows and Jobber (2000) where the individual consequence of having to gather information about recycling and the actual activity of recycling generates a negative individual consequence that cannot be overcome by the positive environmental consequence.

The notion of trying to disclaim oneself is obvious throughout all interviews and all respondents have found some way to disclaim themselves from responsibility when it comes to their unsustainable consumption of outdoor garments. Alexander justifies the fact that he do not consider the aspects by stating that he eat mostly bush meat, tries to bicycle everywhere, choose train before plane and recycle his household garbage. He further explains that the sustainable aspects of outdoor garments therefore has become something that has a lower priority in his life, since he rather make other choices which have a larger effect on the environment. David disclaim the fact that he do not consider the sustainable aspects while purchasing

garments by arguing that his outdoor garment is just a drop in the ocean. He further argue that even if he would purchase a sustainable alternative instead this would lead only to a very small improvement of his total ecological footprint. Peter talks about the same thing when he mentions that his outdoor activities in total represents only a fraction of his overall consumption and that there are more important areas to work with in order to minimize his ecological footprint. The argumentation by David And Peter is completely in line with arguments presented by Ellen et al (1991), Minton and Rose (1997), and Barkman (2014) who argue that consumers who believe in the fact that their efforts can make a difference are more likely to consume in a sustainable manner.

*"I focus on my total ecological footprint and when doing that, this jacket becomes only a drop in the ocean when compared to other things. Even if I buy a more sustainable jacket it is only a small part of my total consumption and it is therefore neglectable". David*

## Trust in companies

Another theme that comes up in many of the interviews is that the respondents trust the companies to be sustainable since they are dependent on nature for their survival. Claes describes this by saying that it would be like the company shooting itself in the foot if it is not sustainable, and Louise explains that she thinks the producers of outdoor garments carry some of the responsibility as well. However, none of the respondents claim to know anything about how sustainable or unsustainable these companies actually are. Some respondents mention Fjällräven, Patagonia and Klättermusen as leaders within sustainability, they do however not hold any proof of this. By handing over the responsibility of sustainability on the producing companies, respondents are once again disclaiming their own responsibility. Another way to disclaim from responsibility is by blaming it on the distance between the production and the store. One respondent, Claes argue that if he could see that the production of the garments disturb the societies where it is produced this would make him more keen on taking the responsibility, since he then feel a sort of moral responsibility to play his part. Closeness to the problem which here was described by Claes, is by Kollmus and Agyeman (2010) argued to be a barrier that influences the *intention-behavior gap*, they call the factor direct versus indirect experience. They further argue that direct

experience is more influential since the consumer herself can experience the consequences (ibid), which is exactly what Claes said himself. He would care more if he could see the harmful effects but now that he has only indirect experience of the effects, he is less likely to take action.

*“I believe that these companies have some sort of idea regarding sustainability, it would be like shooting yourself in the foot if they destroyed the environment by their production”.* Claes

## Discussion

The aim of this article was to address the inherent paradox between outdoor enthusiasts, who are dependent on nature for their experience, and their unsustainable consumption of outdoor garments. One could assume that outdoor enthusiasts should be more aware of their own environmental footprint since they engage in activities in nature and therefore is dependent on it. However, findings in this study clearly shows that consumers are not aware of this particular paradox as they have not reflected upon how their consumption of outdoor garments affects the environment. Still there is evidence of environmental consciousness among the consumers in other areas than outdoor garments, examples articulated in this study are; organic food consumption, travelling, recycling etcetera. The environmentally conscious consumer needs to be willing to make personal sacrifices for the environment as there is a trade-off between negative individual consequences and positive environmental consequences as argued by Minton and Rose (1997) and Follows and Jobber (2000). Findings in this study show that consumers are making these sacrifices within other areas of consumption but has not yet started making them when it comes to the consumption of outdoor garments where function, fashion, desire and money are more important than the environment. An important incentive for environmentally conscious behaviour is the feeling of contributing to change (Ellen *et al.* 1991; Minton & Rose, 1997; Barkman, 2014). This study has been able to show that when it comes to the consumption of outdoor garments, consumers feel powerless as if their choices of outdoor garments are simply a drop in the ocean compared to their overall consumption, therefore environmental aspects are neglected.

The gap between intention and behaviour, which has been established in multiple other studies (Webster, 1975; Schlegelmilch *et al.* 1996; Robinson & Smith, 2002; Kollmus & Agyeman, 2010; Carrigan *et al.* 2010) , is obvious in this study as well. Even though the gap is a complex one to explain, this study manages to find some barriers to sustainable consumption and the most evident are price, knowledge and fashion. Price has previously been argued to be an important barrier (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010) and it is therefore not sensational that also this study has established price to play an important role when discussing the gap. Whether or not knowledge affects the gap has been thoroughly debated (Roberts, 1996; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010; Carrigan *et al.* 2010) and our contribution to this on-going debate is that knowledge is important to some extent when purchasing outdoor garments. Interestingly, we also found that those who state lacking knowledge do not make any attempts to attain the knowledge that is needed to make well informed decisions, whether or not this is due to a lack of environmental interest is not covered within this article.

Life is a constant writing and rewriting of one's identity (Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Niinimäki, 2010), and according to Sartre (1943) each individual is only the sum of his or hers possessions. Evidence of these identity projects are found within this study as the consumers appear to be aware of their ability to alter or switch their identity through consumption. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that desire is often born out of fashion and therefore desire changes with new trends, which in turn affects the consumers imaginative identities and desire for consumption of new outdoor garments. As stated by Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003), desire overwhelms all other motivational constructs, which leads to a situation where intentions and personal norms are often neglected so that imaginations can be fleshed out. This is exemplified by the fact that everyone explained how he or she were taught not to discard fully functional clothing which is an example of personal norms. However, they all state having more than one set of outdoor garments and blaming the previously owned garment of being old or out of date, which is an example of the affects of fashion. This study has been able to show that the intentions to be an environmentally friendly consumer exists within some areas of consumption even if it is not yet visible on the market for outdoor garments. There is a will among

consumers to behave in an environmentally friendly way but at the same they are battling the existing consumption culture where desire is a centrepiece, making it difficult for consumers to make sustainable choices. The paradox of outdoor enthusiast destroying nature most definitely exist but outdoor enthusiast needs to be enlightened in order for them to see how their consumption can bring about change.

The reason for choosing to study the outdoor enthusiast was the idea that their direct experience of nature would make them more aware of how their own consumption affects the environment. Direct experience has been argued to reduce the gap between intention and behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010), but this study provides no further evidence of the gap being reduced due to the nature of outdoor enthusiasts being more closely connected to nature. Findings from this study shows that outdoor enthusiasts follow the same unsustainable consumption patterns as other consumers, and the gap between intention and behavior is evident among them. These findings does however not render direct experience irrelevant but rather the question becomes whether the outdoor enthusiast's experience reflects the environmental problems of reality. One possible reason behind this could be that the outdoor enthusiast experience only a polished part of nature and does not see the parts that are destroyed by human consumption.

## Conclusion

This article contributes to the already existing theory of sustainable consumption by studying the *intention-behavior gap* in the context of outdoor garments. By studying the paradox between outdoor enthusiasts, who are dependent on nature for their experiences, and their unsustainable consumption of outdoor garments, this article has been able to conclude that outdoor enthusiasts, only to a small degree, reflect upon environmental aspects when it comes to outdoor garment consumption. However, a general engagement in sustainable consumption within other areas such as organic food, travelling and recycling were found among the consumers, unfortunately findings show that this engagement has not yet spread to their consumption of outdoor garments. This study contributes to the existing theory about the *intention-behavior gap* (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2009) by showing that already established barriers; price and knowledge are influential barriers to

sustainable consumption (Roberts, 1996; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2010; Carrigan *et al.* 2010). These findings can however not be generalized across other areas, but holds true for consumption of outdoor garments. Direct experience, which initially was the base for this study, cannot within the boundaries of this article be proven to affect the *intention-behavior gap* of the outdoor enthusiast. The close connection to nature does not appear to create a desire for sustainable consumption of outdoor garments.

Findings within this study reinforce the already existing theory of identity and desire as important factors within consumption (Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Niinimäki, 2010; Soron, 2010). The results indicate that desire, as born from fashion, and identity are the barriers that affects the outdoor enthusiasts the most in their purchasing decisions of outdoor garments. We therefore agree with Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) when they state that desire overwhelms all other motivational constructs. In 1943, Sartre stated that we are what we have and possess, and this holds true even today. Perfluorinated compounds do however take this one step further as they enter our bodies, are stored in our livers and never degrade. It has come to the point where even new-borns are born with these toxics in their bodies without ever having made a conscious consumption choice. The perfluorinated substances will forever be in the ecosystem of our planet, the question is only how long it will take before humans actually become water resistant.

## Future research

This study has shown that a general engagement for sustainable consumption exists in today's society but that it has not yet reached the industry of outdoor garments. It would therefore be interesting to conduct research on what makes consumers value sustainability within certain areas higher than in other areas. Furthermore, research conducted on what makes certain industries implement sustainability faster than others is another idea for future research.

## Managerial Implications

This study has established that an information deficiency exists among consumers which means that the producing companies need to become better at putting the right information at the right place. The outdoor enthusiast look for overall information before purchasing an outdoor garment, they do however not exhibit a need or an interest to

look for information about the environmental aspects of a particular garment. Therefore, producing companies need to incorporate the environmental aspects of each product in the overall product description in order to force this information on the consumer. Furthermore findings within this study show that egoistic positive aspects of sustainable consumption are more important to the outdoor enthusiast than altruistic motives. Producing companies are therefore recommended to focus on those positive egoistic aspects in their product descriptions since these are more likely to lead to change. This is not to say that all environmental problems does not need to be highlighted but altruistic motives are regarded second.

## References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall.
- Arnould, E.J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research. *Journal of consumer research*. 31(4), 868-882.
- Barkman, H. (2014). Barriärer och broar för hållbar konsumtion: fyra typer av medborgarkonsumenter och möjligheterna för deras engagemang. US-AB, Stockholm.
- Baudrillard, J. (1988 [1970]). Consumer society, in M.Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Belk, R.W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *The Journal of Consumer Research*. 15(2), 139-168.
- Belk, R.W., Devinney, T., & Giana Eckhardt. (2005). Consumer Ethics Across Cultures. *Consumption Markets & Culture*. 8(3), 275-289.
- Belk, R.W., Ger, G., & Askegaard, S. (2003). The fire of desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion. *Journal of consumer research*. 30(3), 326- 351.
- Bhattacharjee, A., & Sanford, C. (2009). The intention-behaviour gap in technology usage: the moderating role of attitude strength. *Behaviour & Information Technology*. 28(4), 389-401.
- Birtwistle, G., & Moore, C.M. (2007). Fashion clothing – where does it all end up?. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*. 35 (3), 210 - 216.
- Blake, J. (1999). Overcoming the “value-action gap” in environmental policy: Tensions between national policy and local experience. *The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*. 4(3), 257-278.
- Carrigan, M.J., Neville, B.A., & Whitwell, G.J. (2010). Why Ethical Consumers Don't Walk Their Talk: Towards a Framework for Understanding the Gap Between the Ethical Purchase Intentions and Actual Buying Behaviour of Ethically Minded Consumers. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97, 139–158.
- Elliott, R., & Wattanasuwan, K. (1998). Brands as symbolic resources for the construction of identity. *International Journal of Advertising*. 17, 131-144.
- Ellen, P.S., Wiener, J.L., & Cobb-Walgren, C. (1991). The Role of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness in Motivating Environmentally Conscious Behaviors. *Journal Of Public Policy & Marketing*. 10(2), 102-117.

- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research*. Sage Publications, London
- Follows, S.B., & Jobber, D. (2000). Environmentally responsible purchase behaviour: a test of a consumer model. *European Journal of Marketing*. 34 (5), 723-746.
- Gabriel, Y. & Lang, T. (2006). *The Unmanageable Consumer*. 2:ed, Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity - Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford University Press, California.
- Gronow, J. (1997). *The Sociology of Taste*, Routledge, London and New York, NY.
- Hill, J., & Lee, H.H. (2012). Young Generation Y consumers' perceptions of sustainability in the apparel industry. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*. 16(4), 477-491.
- Hyllegard, K.H., Paff Ogle, J., & Dunbar, B.H. (2006). The Influence of Consumer Identity on Perceptions of Store Atmospherics and Store Patronage at a Spectacular and Sustainable Retail Site. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*. 24(4), 316-334.
- Joergens, C. (2006). Ethical fashion: myth or future trend?. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*. 10(3), 360-371.
- Joy, A., Sherry, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands. *Fashion Theory*. 16(1), 273-296
- Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman, J. (2010). Mind the Gap: Why people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro environmental behavior? *Environmental Education Research*. 8(3), 239-260.
- Kvale, S. (1983) The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*. 14(2), 171-196
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2014). *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjun*. Studentlitteratur. Lund
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New direction for program evaluation*. 30, 73-84
- McDonald, S., Oates, C.J., Young, C.W., & Hwang, K. (2006). Toward sustainable consumption: researching voluntary simplifiers. *Psychology and Marketing*. 23, 515-534.
- Minton, A.P., & Rose, R.L. (1997). The Effects of Environmental Concern on Environmentally Friendly Consumer Behavior: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Business Research*. 40, 37-48.
- Niinimäki, K. (2010). Eco-Clothing, Consumer Identity and Ideology. *Sustainable Development*. 18, 150-162.
- Roberts, J.A. (1996).. Will the real socially responsible consumer please step forward. *Business horizons*. 39(1), 79-83.
- Robinson, R., & C. Smith (2002). Psychosocial and Demographic Variables Associated with Consumer Intention to Purchase Sustainable Produced Foods as Defined by the Midwest Food Alliance. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 34(6), 316-325.
- Rutherford, J. (1990). A place called home: Identity and the cultural politics of difference, in j. Rutherford (ed), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Lawrence and Wishart. London.
- Sanne, C. (2002). Willing Consumers - or locked in? Policies for a sustainable consumption. *Ecological Economics*. 42, .273-287.
- Sartre, J.P. (1943). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, New York: Philosophical Library.

Schiermer, B. (2010). Fashion Victims: On the Individualizing and De-individualizing Powers of Fashion. *Fashion Theory*. 14(1), 83-104.

Schlegelmilch, B.B., Bohlen, G.M., & Diamantopoulos, A. (1996). The link between green purchasing decisions and measures of environmental consciousness. *European Journal of Marketing*. 30 (5), 35-55.

Sheeran, P. (2002). Intention - Behavior Relations: A Conceptual and Empirical Review. *European Review of Social Psychology*. 12(1), 1-36.

Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*. 22. 63-75.

Sherry, J.F., & Belk, R. (2007). Introduction. In *Consumer Culture Theory*. Published online: xiii-xiv.

Soron, D. (2010). Sustainability, Self-Identity and the Sociology of Consumption. *Sustainable Development* 18:172–181.

Szmigin, I., Carrigan, M., & McEachern, M.G. (2009). The conscious consumer: taking a flexible approach to ethical behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. 33, 224–231.

Thompson, C.J., Locander, W.B., & Polli, H.R. (1990). The Lived Meaning of Free Choice: An Existential-Phenomenological Description of Everyday Consumer Experiences of Contemporary Married Women. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 17(3), 346-361.

Thompson, C.J., & Haytko, D.L. (1997). Speaking of Fashion: Consumers' Uses of Fashion Discourses and the Appropriation of Countervailing Cultural Meanings. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 24 (1), 15-42.

Thompson, C.J., Locander, W.B., & Pollio, H. R. (1989). Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. *Journal of consumer research*. 133-146.

Trudel, D., Horowitz, L., Wormuth, M., Scheringer, M., Cousins, I., & Hungerbühler, K., (2008). Estimating Consumer Exposure to PFOS and PFOA. *Risk Analysis*. 28(2), 251-269.

Tuan, Y. (1980). The Significance of the Artifact. *Geographical Review*. 70 (4), 462-472.

Webster, F.E. (1975). Determining the characteristics of the socially conscious consumer. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 2(3), 188-196.

## **Websites**

Kemikalieinspektionen, 2015, Perflourerade ämnen (PFOS,PFOA med flera) [accessed 2015-04-28]  
<http://www.kemi.se/sv/Innehall/Fragor-i-fokus/Perflourerade-amnen-PFOS-PFOA-med-flera/>

Regeringens proposition 2009/10:238 (Naturturismen ökar) [Retrieved 2015-01-26]  
<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/14/97/49/d9188947.pdf>

## **Brochures and other published or unpublished documents**

The Swedish Chemical Agency (2006) Perfluorinated substances and their uses in Sweden [Report].  
[http://www.kemi.se/Documents/Publikationer/Trycksaker/Rapporter/Report7\\_06.pdf](http://www.kemi.se/Documents/Publikationer/Trycksaker/Rapporter/Report7_06.pdf)

Canadian Soft Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts (2003) Special Analysis of the Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS) [Report].  
[https://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/Product-knowledge/TAMS/Canadian%20Travellers%20Outdoor%20Activity/tams\\_Canadian\\_soft\\_adventure.pdf](https://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/Product-knowledge/TAMS/Canadian%20Travellers%20Outdoor%20Activity/tams_Canadian_soft_adventure.pdf)

Canadian Hard Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts (2003) Special Analysis of the Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS) [Report].

[https://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/Product-knowledge/TAMS/US%20Outdoor%20Activity/tams\\_report\\_U.S.\\_hard\\_outdoor\\_adventure.pdf](https://en-corporate.canada.travel/sites/default/files/pdf/Research/Product-knowledge/TAMS/US%20Outdoor%20Activity/tams_report_U.S._hard_outdoor_adventure.pdf)

Gore-Tex (2013) Faktablad om PFAS. [Brochure]. W. L. Gore & Associates.

United Nations (1987) Our Common Future [Report].  
<http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

The outdoor industry foundation (2007) The next generation of outdoor participants [Report].  
<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchNextGeneration.pdf>

The Swedish Chemicals Agency (2009) PM 4/09 Höglourerade ämnen i kläder, skor och kemiska produkter. [Report]. [http://www.kemi.se/Documents/Publikationer/Trycksaker/PM/PM4\\_09\\_Hogfluorerade.pdf](http://www.kemi.se/Documents/Publikationer/Trycksaker/PM/PM4_09_Hogfluorerade.pdf)