

Est.  
1841

YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

Johnson, Emma (2024) Lifting the Lid on Cruelty-Free Cosmetics: Analysing the Emotions behind Ethical Consumerism. In: Postgraduate Research School Conference 2024, 9 October 2024, York St John University. (Submitted)

Downloaded from: <https://ray.yorksjs.ac.uk/id/eprint/14825/>

Research at York St John (RaY) is an institutional repository. It supports the principles of open access by making the research outputs of the University available in digital form. Copyright of the items stored in RaY reside with the authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full text items free of charge, and may download a copy for private study or non-commercial research. For further reuse terms, see licence terms governing individual outputs. [Institutional Repository Policy Statement](#)

# RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at [ray@yorksjs.ac.uk](mailto:ray@yorksjs.ac.uk)

# Lifting the Lid on Cruelty-Free Cosmetics: Analysing the Emotions behind Ethical Consumerism



Emma Johnson BA (hons), MSc, SFHEA.  
School for Business & Society, University of York  
E: e.johnson@yorks.ac.uk. E: emj513@york.ac.uk.  
York St John University.  
9th October 2024.  
Postgraduate Research School Conference 2024.



Est. 1841  
YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY



Emma Johnson BA (Hons), MSc, SFHEA.

## 01. ABSTRACT

Ethical consumerism has emerged as a social pressure that companies must respond to (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). As consumers are becoming more aware of their role and potential effect of changing the products they buy (Gillani and Kutaula, 2018).

Movement towards cruelty-free products has gained traction, with many brands changing strategy to alter their core operations towards 'cruelty-free' (Chitrakorn, 2016; Cruelty Free International, 2020).

There remains scope to understand why consumers continue to purchase brands that test on animals. Thus, the underlying aims of this study are to examine trends, increasing awareness and acceptability of cruelty-free products within society, and examine views that have contributed towards ethical consumerism.

## 02. RESEARCH AIM:

To investigate the role of emotions in ethical consumerism of cosmetic products in the UK.



Figure 1: Cruelty-Free Logos (Adapted by Owens, 2022).

## 03. LITERATURE

### Ethical Consumerism

- Ethical consumerism can be defined as a voluntary decision by a consumer to buy goods and services, aiming to positively affect certain social and/or environmental issues (Doane, 2001; Jones, 2017).
- Muncy and Vitell (1992) developed the Consumer Ethics Scale (CES) that examined consumer ethical beliefs regarding various questionable behaviours.
- Consumers report positive attitudes towards ethical goods, but their intentions and behaviour often do not follow suit (White, MacDonnell and Ellard, 2012).
- In 2020 ethical consumer spending hit a new record of £100bn, reaching a new high and showing a clear increase. The market for ethical personal products has only slightly increased (Ethical Consumer, 2023).

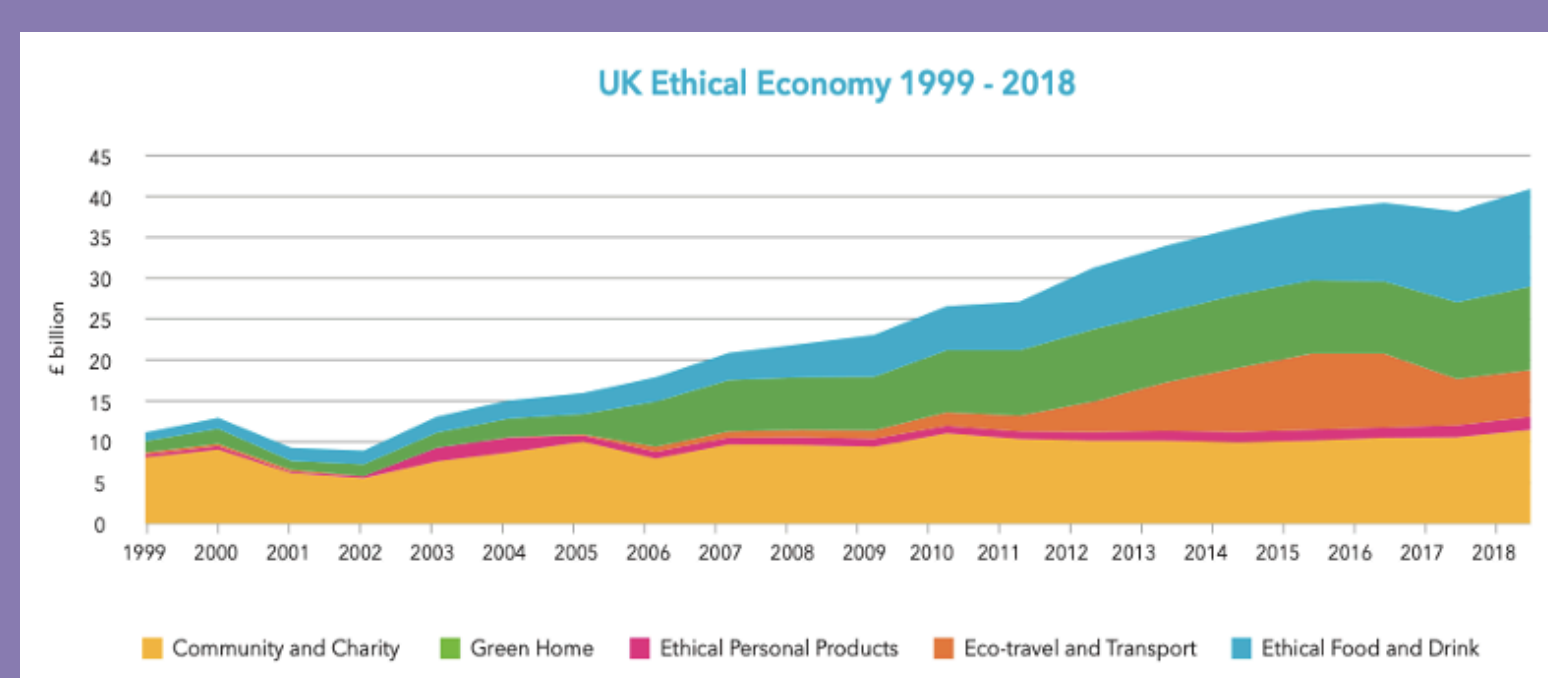


Figure 2: UK Ethical Economy (Ethical Consumer, 2019, p.2).



### Beauty Industry

In 2022, the global cosmetics market experienced a growth of over 16%, compared to the previous year. Skincare, haircare, make-up, perfumes, toiletries, and oral cosmetics are the main product categories of the cosmetic market (Statista, 2023).  
·The UK beauty and personal care industry is projected to reach £12.96bn in 2024 (Statista, 2024a).  
·The UK is eight-largest cosmetics market, with the USA and China taking the two top positions (Statista, 2024b).

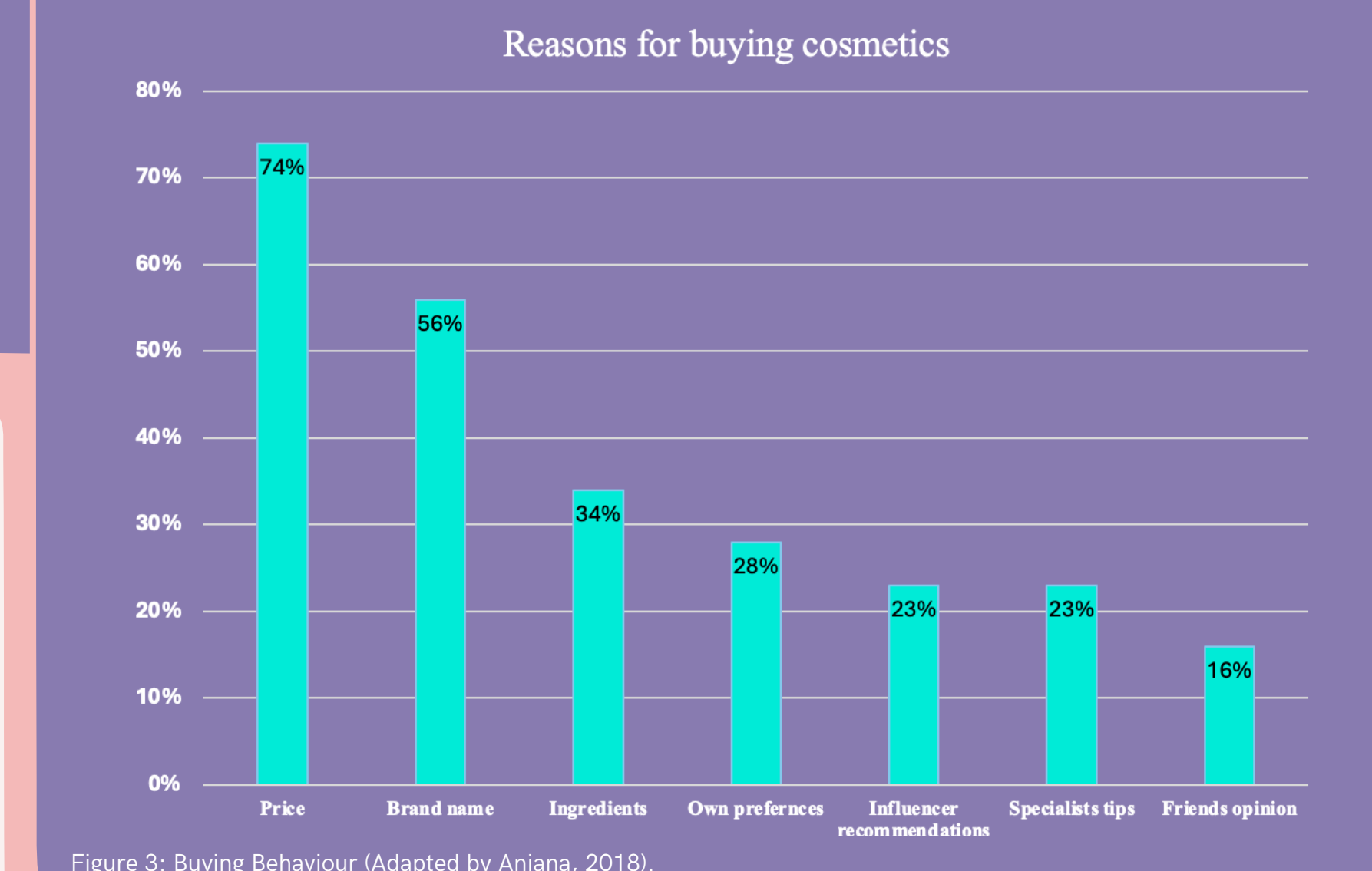


Figure 3: Buying Behaviour (Adapted by Anjana, 2018).

## 03. LITERATURE

### Cruelty-Free

Cruelty-free means that no animals were harmed by the companies or suppliers in the creation of the final product (Cruelty Free International, 2023a).  
Due to legislation, companies also must declare whether they test on animals, given demand from the public and increased political momentum relating to such issues (Chitrakorn, 2016).  
A total of 3.06 million procedures were completed on animals in Great Britain in 2021 (UK Government, 2022; PETA, 2023).  
Out of the total number of procedures only 10% were required by law, the rest were conducted voluntarily (Cruelty Free International, 2023c).  
The animals typically used for the procedures are rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, rats, and mice (De Pauliny, 2021).  
It has been shown that non-animal methods in cosmetic testing have shown better results in predicting human responses in the real-world than the animal tests they replace (Humane Society International, 2023).

## 04. METHODS

Qualitative semi-structured interviews will be conducted with female participants. As British women spend on average £400 annually on cosmetics (Read, 2020), and £1.36bn in 2023 on facial skincare (Capecchi, 2018); The highest in Europe (Statista, 2020) with 60% of women wearing makeup on a weekly basis (Walderssee, 2019).

It is proposed that 15-30 interviews are conducted or until saturation is reached on this topic, to ensure accurate findings.

The data analysis will utilise thematic analysis. In the aim of providing an in-depth insight into ethical consumerism, to understand participants buying behaviour and views of cruelty-free products.

## 05. SUMMARY

As such, there remains scope to further investigate gradual movements towards the increasing development of cruelty-free products.

Determining and understanding why consumers continue to purchase brands that test on animals.

Thus, the underlying aims of this study are to examine gradual trends towards cruelty-free products, increasing awareness and acceptability of cruelty-free products within society, and to examine emotions that have contributed towards ethical consumerism amongst some people and groups.

Important!  
Much more to come, I am only in my first year of part-time PhD.

## 06. REFERENCE LIST

Anjana, S.S. (2018) A study on factors influencing cosmetic buying behaviour of consumer. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics*. 118 (9), p. 453-459.

Capecchi, S. (2018) Britain's women spend a beautiful £1.36 billion on facial skincare. *Mintel*. 10 August. Available at: <https://www.mintel.com/press-centre/britains-women-spend-a-beautiful-1-15-billion-on-facial-skincare/#:~:text=Cleaning%20up%20the%20market%2C%20on.proving%20a%20a%20star%20performer.> [Accessed: 10 March 2020].

Carrigan, M. and Attalla, A. (2001). The myth of the ethical consumer - Do ethics matter in purchase behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 18(7), 560-577.

Chitrakorn, N. (2016) Is the global cosmetics market moving towards a cruelty-free future?. *Business of Fashion*. Inside Beauty, 15 January. Available at: <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/inside-beauty/is-the-global-cosmetics-market-moving-towards-a-cruelty-free-future> [Accessed: 25 November 2019].

Cohen, J. and Areni, C.S. (1991) Affect and Consumer Behaviour. In: A. Robertson and N. Kasarian (eds) *Handbook of Consumer Behaviour*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, pp. 183-240.

Cruelty Free International (2020) About Cruelty Free International. Available at: <https://crueltyfreeinternational.org/about-cruelty-free-international> [Accessed: 2nd July 2020].

Cruelty Free International (2023c) End the Trade in Primates. Available at: <https://crueltyfreeinternational.org/end-the-trade-in-primates> [Accessed: 17 January 2023].

Cruelty Free International. (2020) Leasing Bunny Programme. Available at: <https://www.crueltyfreeinternational.org/what-we-do/corporate-partnerships/leasing-bunny-programme> [Accessed: 2nd July 2020].

Cruelty Free International. (2023c) Facts and Figures on Animal Testing. Available at: <https://crueltyfreeinternational.org/about-animal-testing/facts-and-figures-animal-testing> [Accessed: 20 January 2023].

De Pauliny, C. (2021) Animal Testing for Cosmetics: What is animal testing and what are the alternatives? *Impakter*, 19 November. Pp. 1-8. [Online] Available at: <https://impakter.com/what-is-animal-testing-in-cosmetics/> [Accessed: 20 January 2023].

Doane, D. (2001). Taking flight: The rapid growth of ethical consumerism: The ethical purchasing index 2001. *New Economics Foundation*.

Ethical Consumer (2023) UK Ethical Consumer Markets Report. Available at: <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/research-hub/uk-ethical-consumer-markets-report> [Accessed: 30 January 2023].

Gillani, A. and Kutaula, S. (2018) An introduction to special issues: sustainability and ethical consumerism. *Management Decision*, 56(3), pp. 511-516.

Humane Society International. (2023) Be Cruelty-Free Campaign. Available at: <https://www.hsi.org/issues/be-cruelty-free/> [Accessed: 20 January 2023].

Jones, E. (2017). Bridging the gap between ethical consumers and corporate social responsibility: An international comparison of consumer-oriented CSR rating systems. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 65 (3), pp. 30-55.

Levinson, J.C. and Horowitz, J. (2016) *Guerrilla Marketing to Heal the World*. New York: Morgan James Publishing.

Miller, M.K., Clark, J.D. and Jahke, A. (2015) Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger). In: *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*. Chapter: Cognitive Dissonance Theory. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.

Muncy, J. A. and Vitell, S. J. (1992) Consumer Ethics: An Investigation of the Ethical Beliefs of the Final Consumer. *Journal of Business Research*, 24(6), pp. 297-311.

Owens, J. (2022) A guide to cruelty-free and animal testing certification. *Ethical Consumer*, 20 July. Pp. 1-6. Available at: <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/health-beauty/guide-cruelty-free-animal-testing-certification> [Accessed: 17 January 2023].

PETA. (2023) Facts and Statistics About Animal Testing. Available at: <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-experimentation/animals-used-for-experimentation-factsheets/animal-experiments-overview/> [Accessed: 20 January 2023].

Piccioni, I. (1993) Muriel Dowdling. *The Independent*. 2 December. Pp. 3-5. [Online] Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-muriel-dowdling-1464815.html> [Accessed: 17 January 2023].

Read, K. (2020) Brits spend on average £400 on beauty products each year. *Professional Beauty*, 23 July. Pp. 1-4. [Online] Available at: <https://professionalbeauty.co.uk/site/newsdetails/brits-spend-400-pounds-on-beauty-products> [Accessed: 17 January 2023].

Statista. (2023) Cosmetics industry - Statistics & facts. Available at: <https://www-statista-com.yorksj.idm.oclc.org/topics/3137/cosmetics-industry> [Accessed from: 30 January 2023].

Statista. (2020) Average annual spend on cosmetic products among female consumers in selected countries worldwide in 2020. Available at: <https://www-statista-com.yorksj.idm.oclc.org/forecasts/758635/revenue-of-the-cosmetics-and-personal-care-market-worldwide-by-country> [Accessed: 18 January 2023].

Statista (2024a) Beauty & Personal Care - United Kingdom. [Online] Available at: <https://www-statista-com.yorksj.idm.oclc.org/forecasts/758635/revenue-of-the-cosmetics-and-personal-care-market-worldwide-by-country> [Accessed: 29 February 2024].

UK Government. (2022) Home Office: Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2021. House of Commons. [Online] 30 June. Pp. 1-36. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1118195/annual-statistics-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals-2021-161122\\_v5.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1118195/annual-statistics-scientific-procedures-on-living-animals-2021-161122_v5.pdf) [Accessed: 20 November 2022].

Walderssee, V. (2019) 'One in six women wear makeup at the gym'. *YouGov*, 14 March. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2019/03/14/one-six-women-wear-makeup-gym> [Accessed: 4 August 2020].

White, K., MacDonnell, R. and Ellard, J. H. (2012) 'Belief in a Just World: Consumer Intentions and Behaviours Towards Ethical Products'. *Journal of Marketing*, 76 (1), pp. 103-118.