

Being sustainable is so, oh so hard! Why ethically minded consumers consume when having decided otherwise?

**Eleni Papaoikonomou**  
University Rovira and Virgili  
**Matias Ginieis**  
University Rovira and Virgili

Cite as:

Papaoikonomou Eleni, Ginieis Matias (2020), Being sustainable is so, oh so hard! Why ethically minded consumers consume when having decided otherwise?. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (64355)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



# Being sustainable is so, oh so hard! Why ethically minded consumers consume when having decided otherwise?

## **Abstract**

Without a doubt, one of the most pressing challengers of our times is the transition towards a more sustainable paradigm of consumption and production. So, from a sustainable point of view, limiting our consumption is the way to go. Nevertheless, even ethically minded consumers, who are concerned with their impact on the environment, find themselves to participate in the market even when they have decided otherwise. This study aims to explore the inconsistencies of thirteen consumers who have engaged in consumption reduction, but cannot always keep up with this goal. Through diaries kept over a period of 12 weeks participants narrate different situations where they find themselves participating in the market. This study contributes to previous research on the well documented attitude behaviour gap and ethical consumption. Instead of focusing on the intention of consuming ethical products, we place attention on the intention of non-consuming and why this is not fulfilled. Our findings reveal that participants often link consumption with pleasure and enjoyment, whereas non-consumption is associated with a protestant ethic of sacrifice and minimalism.

**Keywords:** *non-consumption; sustainability; attitude behaviour gap*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics