



MASTER'S DISSERTATION

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MINDFULNESS, SUSTAINABLE
CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER WELL-BEING

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*And now here is my secret,
a very simple secret:
It is only with the heart that one can see rightly.
What is essential is invisible to the eye.*
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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Almost three years after the start of this master's degree, three years that flew by and taught me so much!

To my grandmother, who always told me "I'm praying for you", and who always believed in me, even when I didn't. I love you.

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To my brother. From the fights to the brotherhood. Always silently supporting me.

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ABSTRACT

Goal- The present investigation aims to explore and understand the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being in the Portuguese context.

Methodology- A qualitative investigation was conducted, consisting of semi-structured interviews with eleven participants. The interviews were subsequently transcribed, translated, and subjected to rigorous analysis.

Findings and main conclusions- This study aimed to explore the interplay between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being, making significant contributions to the literature on this topic. Drawing on Resnik's (2022) conceptual framework, this dissertation sought to replicate and expand upon the model, examining additional dimensions not previously explored. Through a comprehensive investigation of existing research categories and analysis of other authors' works, this study adds valuable insights to the limited body of literature in this field.

Limitations- Future research should consider increasing the number of participants of the study. Furthermore, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Focusing on a specific generation, such as Generation Z, could also be a fruitful avenue for future investigations. Nevertheless, the present study is limited by the relatively low number of individuals practicing mindfulness in Portugal, where the research was conducted.

Originality/ Value- This study adds to a larger body of literature on mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being and can serve as a basis for future research. Moreover, it provides valuable insights for marketing managers to understand the behavior of mindful consumers and develop tailored offerings that align with their values and needs.

Keywords- Mindfulness, Mindful Consumption, Sustainable Consumption, Consumer Well-Being; Consumer behavior.

INDEX

Acknowledgments	2
Abstract	4
1. Introduction	11
2. Literature review	17
2.1. Mindfulness: an emerging field of research	17
2.2. Mindfulness: a relevant concept for sustainable consumption research?	19
2.2.1. Mindful Consumption	22
2.2.2. Connection to nature	26
2.3. Mindfulness, sustainable consumption and consumer well-being	28
2.4. Final Considerations	33
3. Methodology	36
3.1. Research goals	36
3.2. Research Approach	37
3.3. Data Collection Techniques: Interviews	38
3.3.1. Participants of the study	39
3.3.2. Interviews	42
3.4. Data Analysis Technique : Content Analysis	43
4. Findings and discussion	46
4.1. Mindfulness Practices	47
4.1.1. Mental Health: Stress and Anxiety	47
4.1.2. Personal Development	50
4.1.3. Auto-pilot mode	51
4.1.4. Consciousness	53

4.2. Sustainable Consumption and Mindful consumption	55
4.2.1. Ecological footprint	55
4.2.2. Fashion Consumption	57
4.2.3. Recycling	59
4.2.4. Financial Sustainability	60
4.2.5. The use of plastic	62
4.2.6. Environmental Consciousness	65
4.2.7. Values and Beliefs	67
4.2.8. Desire versus Need	70
4.2.9. Food awareness and mindful eating	73
4.3. Consumer Well- Being	76
4.3.1. Quality of Products	76
4.3.2. Post-Purchase regret	78
4.3.3. Impulsive Buying	79
4.3.4. Emotional and mental well-being	81
4.3.5. Brand Relationships	83
4.3.6. Product Pricing	84
4.4. Habits of consumption and the effects of mindfulness in the habits of consumption	86
4.4.1. Health Awareness	87
4.4.2.	88
4.4.3. Shift in consumption patterns	88
4.4.4. Consistency	91
5. Conclusions	94
5.1. Answering the research problem	94
5.1.1. Consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness	95
5.1.2. Differences between Mindful Consumption and Sustainable Consumption	96

5.1.3. Consumers' values and beliefs and its effects on their approach to sustainable consumption and its results on their lives	97
5.1.4. The perception of consumers on consumer well-being and the impact of mindful consumption on it	98
5.1.5. The effects of mindfulness on consumers' consumption habits	100
5.2. Contributions of the study	102
5.2.1. Theoretical contributions	102
5.2.2. Contributions to Practitioners	103
5.3. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future investigations	105
References	106

FIGURE INDEX

Figure 1- Model representing the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being (Resnik, 2022)..... 28

TABLES INDEX

Table 1- Characterization and Codification of the Interviewees	41
Table 2- Interview Guide	42
Table 3- Content Analysis Simplified Technique	44
Table 4- Definition of Categories and Subcategories	45

1. INTRODUCTION

The "Wanderlust" festival, which promotes well-being and mindfulness, has been held in Portugal, attracting participants from various regions including Porto, as stated by Nuno Carvalho, the festival's organizer in an interview with the newspaper Público. Notably, approximately 30% of the festival's attendees originate from the northern region of Porto (Certã, 2022). This event aligns with the goals of the Associação Portuguesa para o Mindfulness, a non-profit scientific association dedicated to promoting mindfulness practice and scientific knowledge. The association aims to disseminate mindfulness in various areas of its application, facilitate scientific training, and promote activities such as training courses, conferences, and research, to advance scientific understanding of mindfulness (APM- Associação Portuguesa para o Mindfulness, s.d.).

The importance of sustainability has grown in the modern 21st century, as we face an ever-growing population and the need to meet their demands. This leads to the rapid development, use, and depletion of natural resources, creating a significant threat to the environment. As a result, competition for scarce resources among millions of consumers has increased over time, which negatively impacts both the environment and people's mental well-being. Starting with this premise, Chandra (2022) raised the question whether there is a connection between Mindfulness and Sustainable Consumption and concluded that these two notions were positively correlated. When

people have a mindful nature, they are prone to be more conscious about their needs and the needs of the environment, leading to more ethical purchasing decisions and the adoption of sustainable consumption habits among both young adults and adults. Researchers have had antagonist notions of Sustainable Consumption, bringing up numerous interpretations of this concept. Thus, they have been finding it hard to conceptualize this (Quoquab & Mohammad, 2020).

Other researchers also sought to understand the correlation between mindfulness and sustainable consumption. A systematic literature review made by Fischer et al. (2017) perused different quantitative and qualitative studies on the topic. Despite the existence of various studies on the theme, the authors pointed out the need for future research on the connection between Mindfulness and Sustainable Consumption to provide an extensive overview on the features of the topics, both individually and collectively. Notwithstanding the recent unfolding of conceptual studies to connect mindfulness and consumerism, besides the empirical searches on the subjects, the link between Mindfulness and Sustainable Consumption is still an uninvestigated area. Mindfulness is becoming an extremely active research topic and it is said to be strongly linked to consumer's attitudes and behaviors. Nevertheless, according to Leonti (2022), mindful consumption is a new rising area in consumer buying behavior literature, having a small number of findings focusing on key aspects. It aims predominantly on the variety of what is being bought with planned awareness and consideration

and enables the buyer to recognize the advantages of a certain product to make more conscious options in compliance with the values and the effects to the consumer, the community, and the environment (Leonti, 2022).

The concept of mindful consumption which is rooted in Buddhist and psychological principles of mindfulness, has gained popularity as people shift away from excessive consumerism. However, despite its potential, there is limited research that fully examines the impact of mindfulness on consumer behavior from the consumer's point of view (Milne et al., 2020).

Gupta and Verma (2019), who also researched the concept of mindful consumption, indicated that this principle is gaining importance and it requires further research and development to establish a standard scale for measuring it. Therefore, the research on mindfulness and sustainable consumer behavior is not only relevant but also necessary to understand and promote sustainable consumption in the future. There have been numerous research studies that have revealed a connection between sustainable consumption and well-being. Nevertheless, the cause-and-effect relationship between these concepts is still not definite. It is possible that well-being could be the reason for sustainable consumption or vice versa, or that there may be a mutual relationship between the two. Additionally, it is possible that both well-being and sustainable consumption could result from another underlying factor that may be obscuring the relationship between them. The results of Redondo et al. (2022) supports the third explanation for the connection between sustainable consumption and well-being, as it

highlights the idea that a certain personality trait drives an individual's inclination towards adopting sustainable practices and experiencing increased well-being.

Geiger et al. (2020) studied the impact of a sustainability-adapted mindfulness-based intervention (SMBI) on sustainable consumption behavior (SCB). The results showed that the impact was lower than expected and could be attributed to the short length of the intervention (2 months) or lack of significant changes in mindfulness. However, a slight rise in SCB was observed seven months after the training, indicating a gradual effect of mindfulness. The intervention also led to slight changes in material values, though it did not result in significant changes in behavior. The study highlights the potential of mindfulness for promoting more sustainable lifestyles, but further research is needed to improve interventions in this area (Geiger et al., 2020).

Resnik (2022) developed a qualitative study on mindfulness, sustainable consumption and consumer well-being and their interrelationships. This investigation facilitated the researcher's comprehension of the interconnections between them. The findings of this qualitative research highlight the need for continued investigation to understand more deeply the interplay between mindfulness, consumer well-being, and sustainable consumption.

Additionally, the results suggest that there may be a connection and overlap between mindfulness and well-being, which merits further exploration through more in-depth studies (Resnik, 2022).

Given the calls for future research discussed above, this study aims at contributing to further explore the topic. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore and understand the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being in the Portuguese context. With the aim of approaching this broader objective of research, four specific research objectives were established:

1. Identify consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness.
2. Explore consumers' perceptions on the differences between mindful consumption and sustainable consumption.
3. Infer how consumers' values and beliefs affect their approach to sustainable consumption and their lifestyles.
4. Explore consumers' perceptions on the relationship between consumer well-being and mindful consumption.
5. Explore if the practice of mindfulness leads consumers to change their consumption habits.

This thesis will be comprised of three significant sections, the literature review, the methodology, and the findings of the study. The first section will examine the evolution of mindfulness as a field of research, then will delve into the significance of mindfulness as a concept in sustainable consumption research, and, at the end, will contemplate the relationship

between consumer mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being.

The second section will present the research methodology employed in this study, based on a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews as technique of data collection. The third section of this study will present the findings derived from the analysis of the conducted interviews, as well as the conclusions drawn from the data.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter, which will encompass an analysis of the relevant literature for the study, is comprised of three segments. The first segment will explain the evolution of mindfulness as a field of research, the second will investigate the significance of mindfulness in sustainable consumption research, and the third will explore the relationship between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being.

2.1.MINDFULNESS: AN EMERGING FIELD OF RESEARCH

The definition of Mindfulness, which origins are Buddhist, alludes to purposeful, impartial, and genuine knowledge of noticeable understanding in the present instant (Fischer et al., 2017). Different definitions have been discussed on the subject, either in a social psychology placement, or in accordance with the Buddhist approach (Chiesa, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Over two decades ago, the field of sociology saw the establishment of the conceptualization of mindfulness and its associated notion of mindlessness (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Over the last few years, the empirical investigation on the perception and purposes of mindfulness, have had a grown interest. On one hand, an expanding proof regarding the clinical advantages psychological and neurobiological, connected with

mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been considered. On the other hand, it is astonishing that modern Western psychology is making such a poorer effort in achieving an agreement regarding an unambiguous application of mindfulness (Chiesa, 2013)

Mindfulness has been progressively integrated into psychological health mediations, and academic perceptions related with it have motivated fundamental investigation on psychopathology (Wielgosz et al., 2018) and even though the mindfulness area is having reliable results and progress, it is still an emerging field (Davidson & Kaszniak, 2015). Mindfulness can be developed through training, allowing individuals to have a better understanding of their thoughts, emotions, feelings, and sensations. This can help them to control and manage them, leading to an enhancement in their overall well-being (Park & Dhandra, 2017).

The concepts presented in this section are rooted in existing literature on a diverse range of disciplines including psychology, health, and other related fields. However, it is crucial to examine these concepts within the context of consumer behavior, as will be demonstrated in the subsequent section.

2.2. MINDFULNESS: A RELEVANT CONCEPT FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION RESEARCH?

Consumption, which plays a significant role in driving economic activity in the global economy, heavily relies on the use of natural resources to provide satisfaction to consumers. While consumers strive to attain the highest level of satisfaction, it has also led to increased damage to the environment due to irrational consumption habits, thereby putting at risk the systems on which current and future generations depend (Joseph et al., 2022). According to extensive research on the topic, mindfulness, which refers to the practice of paying attention to the present moment, has been shown to have a positive impact on sustainable behavior. This includes fostering a greater connection with nature and promoting engagement in pro-environmental actions (Barbaro & Pickett, 2016).

Ericson et al. (2014) proposed that mindfulness could play a significant role in promoting sustainability, while a recent study by Kumar & Panda (2021) highlights the importance of adopting sustainable consumption practices considering the current excessive consumption patterns that threaten to have severe consequences for the planet, including in emerging markets. The researchers suggest that a shift towards sustainable living and consumption may be the most effective way to mitigate the damaging effects of overconsumption.

Fischer et al. (2017) synthesized the ongoing debates within the field on how mindfulness practices could alter consumption behaviors. They

identified four key areas for further research in sustainable consumption: the disruption of established routines, the alignment of attitudes and behaviors, the promotion of non-material values and well-being, and the enhancement of prosocial behavior.

The results of the study conducted by Apaolaza et al. (2022) supports the findings of Geiger et al. (2020) that the relationship between mindfulness practices and sustainable behavior is complex and may not result in direct changes in behavior. The study by Apaolaza et al. (2022) adds to the literature by demonstrating that the level of individual commitment to mindfulness as a way of life may impact the effectiveness of mindfulness based sustainability training programs. The study found that beginner-level meditation programs produced less than satisfactory results, highlighting the importance of considering individual characteristics when designing and implementing mindfulness-based sustainability interventions.

Helm and Subramaniam (2019) study shows that sustainable consumption practices are influenced by individual values and beliefs. Their research, based on an online survey of 546 American consumers, indicates that mindfulness has a direct and indirect positive impact on sustainable consumption behaviors, as well as environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness, through the mediation of values and beliefs. The study also suggests that materialism is negatively associated with mindfulness, although certain sustainable consumption practices may provide a means for materialistic consumers to engage in sustainable

consumption. Therefore, the findings highlight the potential efficacy of promoting mindfulness to encourage more responsible consumption patterns and mitigate the negative environmental effects of overconsumption, particularly among those with heightened environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness. Specifically, the study shows that individuals who exhibit socio-cognitive mindfulness are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption behaviors, such as resource conservation and responsible buying.

Böhme et al. (2018) conducted research on sustainable consumption in education, positing that educating students about sustainable consumption is essential for socio-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development. Accordingly, interventions based on mindfulness, which promote consciousness, introspection, and moral values, may have a positive impact on learning processes in education for sustainable consumption (Böhme et al., 2018).

Upon gaining a more thorough comprehension of the significance of mindfulness in the realm of sustainable consumption, it has become intriguing to explore the notion of mindful consumption. As such, in the ensuing two sections, we several studies were referred on the topic of mindful consumption, including its connection to nature, which has proven to be a compelling subject in the discourse on sustainable consumption within the academic literature.

2.2.1. Mindful Consumption

In today's rapidly evolving society, the practice of mindful consumption can enable individuals to prioritize their most essential concerns and subsequently make decisions that align with these priorities. To achieve mastery of mindful consumption techniques, consumers are encouraged to acquire fundamental mindfulness proficiencies, including attention, awareness, and acceptance, via formal group or individual training. In the absence of training specifically focused on consumption contexts, consumers may benefit from mindfulness-based stress reduction programs facilitated by trained instructors. Although there exist initiatives aimed at mindful eating and combating addictions, there is potential for developing evidence-based programs that cultivate consumers' ability to integrate mindfulness into consumption activities across various domains of well-being (Bahl et al., 2016). Mindful consumption, when practiced by consumers, holds significant implications across multiple domains, such as those pertaining to health, addiction, family dynamics, financial well-being, and materialistic tendencies (Bahl et al., 2016).

The current sustainability strategies suffer from three significant drawbacks: a lack of emphasis on the consumer, inadequate recognition of the dangers posed by the global trend of overconsumption, and the absence of a holistic approach (Sheth et al., 2011). In response to these shortcomings, Sheth et al. (2011) introduced a framework that links sustainability to a consumer-centric

methodology. This method redirects the focus of sustainability measures to the overall impact of a business's actions on the environmental, personal, and economic well-being of the consumer. The concept of "mindful consumption" serves as the central principle in this approach. Mindful Consumption (MC) is based on the belief that consumers should be conscious of the outcomes of their actions on themselves, their community, and the environment. It promotes responsible consumption and encourages people to consume less. Additionally, this method highlights how businesses can foster mindful consumption and how marketing can be used to effectively implement a customer-centric approach to sustainability.

In a study conducted by Joseph et al. (2022) the authors sought to explore the relationship between mindfulness and self-transcendence, as well as the impact of these constructs on sustainable consumer behavior. They investigated whether self-transcendence served as a mediator in the connection between mindfulness and sustainable consumer behavior. The results of the study revealed a strong association between mindfulness and self-transcendence, which was further found to extend to sustainable consumer behavior. Additionally, the study found that self-transcendence plays a mediating role in the relationship between mindfulness and sustainable consumer behavior. The findings of this research support the notion that mindfulness is a crucial factor in promoting sustainable consumption habits. This is becoming increasingly relevant as the impact of consumption on the environment and society is gaining recognition.

The integration of mindfulness into consumption habits may cause consumers to acquire a different perspective on the price-quality tradeoffs and economic considerations. Mindful consumption has long been a part of consumer behavior, but when paired with mindfulness practices, it can lead to a broader focus and change in habits, not only in economic terms but also, in terms of community and environmental well-being (Milne et al., 2020).

Gupta and Verma (2020) have found that the practice of mindfulness through meditation can lead to a significant improvement in both mindful consumption behavior and life satisfaction. Additionally, guided short sessions of mindfulness meditation have been found to be effective in enhancing state mindfulness, even when conducted in a classroom setting. This study's further contribution is experimental validation of the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation training based solely on guided five-minute sessions in augmenting state mindfulness. The findings of this research carry significant implications for various stakeholders in the field of higher education, including students, faculty members, and policymakers. For instance, mindfulness meditation has the potential to enhance students' mindfulness, mindful consumption, and life satisfaction, making it a valuable tool for promoting sustainable behavior and well-being.

Furthermore, as suggested by Chandra (2022), there is a positive correlation between mindfulness and consumption practices, which indicates that individuals who exhibit a mindful nature tend to be more aware of their own needs as well as the needs of the environment, resulting

in more ethical purchasing decisions and the promotion of sustainable consumption habits among both young adults and adults.

Bhattacharjee et al. (2021) also examined mindful consumption, defining it as an advancing notion which involves considering how one's consumption choices, such as purchasing products or using resources, are influenced by a mindset that values self-care, care for the environment, and care for one's community. They analyzed consumers and how they behave more consciously. They realized that customers are turning to social media more often to gather the thoughts and evaluations of other consumers, to make more knowledgeable purchasing decisions. Additionally, mindfulness, the individual's ability to be aware and comprehend new information, plays a role in how they interpret and process this information. Despite the potential benefits of mindful consumption, such as improved personal and ecological well-being, there is a significant obstacle that hinders its full realization: the limited time and resources available to consumers for engaging in mindfulness training. While practicing mindfulness may require initial effort, it can eventually become a habit that evolves into a state of trait mindfulness, requiring less effort to maintain. Therefore, it is crucial for consumers to consistently engage in mindfulness practices across various consumption contexts to establish the habit of mindful consumption. In order to advance the adoption of mindful consumption as a means of enhancing personal, ecological, and social welfare, key stakeholders such as scholars, marketing consultants, customers, and policymakers must equip themselves

with the ability to effectively tackle the complex and pressing issues of the contemporary world with both rationality and empathy (Bahl et al., 2016). Policymakers are typically aware of the significance of consumer welfare for society at large, as well as for individual well-being. Given the evidence of the favorable impact of pro-environmental conduct on consumer welfare, policy makers could promote communication strategies that emphasize the affirmative outcomes of such behavior, thereby encouraging individuals to engage in more pro-environmental actions (Gao et al., 2020).

2.2.2. Connection to nature

Li et al. (2020) reported the presence of a direct relationship between mindfulness and environmentally conscious consumption, and an indirect relationship between mindfulness and socially conscious consumption, which is facilitated by the strengthening of an individual's connection to nature. This connection, in turn, leads to a greater understanding of one's thoughts and values, resulting in a more conscious approach to consumption. The authors investigated the way in which mindfulness influences ethical consumption and contrasted the processes involved in its impact on environmentally and socially conscious consumption. Furthermore, mindfulness has been shown to trigger a transformation of daily consumption habits, reducing the discrepancy between attitude and

behavior. As mindfulness practitioners establish a deeper connection with nature, they become more aware of their inner joy, leading to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. These findings demonstrate the importance of mindfulness in promoting sustainable and responsible consumption practices (Yigit, 2020).

Practitioners of mindfulness, usually feel more connected with the natural environment, therefore, this behavior reinforces the connections with the natural world. In consequence, people who practice mindfulness end up making sustainable options more prominent (Barbaro & Pickett, 2016).

Upon conducting a comprehensive analysis of the literature pertaining to the impact of mindfulness on sustainable consumption, as well as mindful consumption and its connection to nature, it has become imperative to investigate the potential association of these constructs with consumer well-being. This will enable a better understanding of the relevance of this study to consumer behavior.

2.3. MINDFULNESS, SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER WELL-BEING

The studies conducted by Brown and Kasser (2005) demonstrate that personal well-being and ecologically responsible behavior are positively linked, with individuals who report higher levels of happiness being more likely to adopt sustainable practices. These findings are consistent with recent research by Resnik (2022) and Wickramasekara and Jayawickrama (2022), which highlight the critical role of consumer behavior in shaping the well-being of individuals and the environment. Specifically, excessive consumption, driven by materialistic values, has been shown to contribute to a range of environmental issues and negatively impact individual well-being. To address these negative impacts, the authors emphasize the need for individuals to adopt sustainable consumption practices that prioritize environmental and personal well-being, thereby creating a more positive future for both individuals and the environment. In addition, Resnik (2022) created a model to identify the connection between these three constructs:

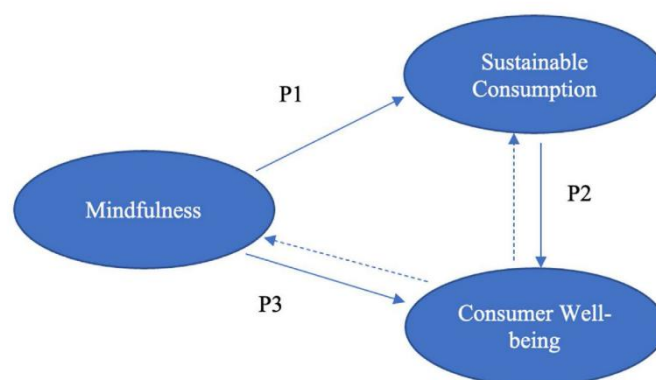


Figure 1- Model representing the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being (Resnik, 2022).

Based on the feedback obtained from the participants, the researcher developed research propositions which are represented as P1, P2, and P3 in Figure 1. P1 established the connection between mindfulness and sustainable consumption, P2 established the link between sustainable consumption and consumer well-being and P3 connected mindfulness and consumer well-being.

Onel et al. (2018) reported that several participants in their research acknowledge the financial burden associated with achieving sustainability, and some express feelings of guilt for not prioritizing sustainability in their daily lives. However, sustainable living need not be viewed solely as an additional cost, as a reduction in consumption can lead to substantial resource savings. To this end, it is crucial to demonstrate to individuals that they can simultaneously achieve multiple goals, including budgetary considerations, health, and sustainability, without having to make trade-offs. The promotion of mindfulness and awareness in decision-making processes can help reinforce a sense of personal agency and confidence in individuals' ability to make a meaningful impact. This process of growing mindfulness can contribute to a reinforcing spiral of sustainable behavior and a corresponding sustainable identity, as suggested by Onel et al. (2018).

Zhan's (2022) investigation into the Zero Waste movement aims to illustrate that sustainable living, particularly through reduced consumption practices, can satisfy numerous human needs and enhance individual and collective well-being. Using practice theory, the study emphasizes the practical

aspects that serve as synergistic satisfiers. In the context of the Chinese Zero Waste movement, the study highlights the critical role of lifestyle communities in enabling the fulfillment of needs. By centering well-being in the context of communal practices of sustainable consumption, the study seeks to position Zero Waste as a community-driven initiative aimed at fostering well-being and promoting sustainability, rather than relying solely on individual behavioral change. Furthermore, this approach underscores the importance of considering how societies can be better organized to enable sustainable and effective satisfaction of needs, starting with safeguarding synergistic need satisfiers, such as sustainable communities, to thrive and flourish. Comprehending the process of consumer decision-making, including the underlying mechanisms and motivations, constitutes a crucial factor in enhancing consumers' pro-environmental behavior. Insights drawn from research on sustainable consumer behavior hold paramount importance for the formulation of green strategies, both at the governmental policy and corporate levels. These strategies are particularly important for policymakers and sustainability-focused organizations seeking to impact consumers' choices, consumption patterns, and disposal of products that impact the environment (Trudel, 2018).

Armstrong (2012) researched the relationship between consumption habits, satisfaction with life and mindfulness aspects and the findings included “acting with awareness” and “non-judging” as the aspects more significantly correlated. This alludes that the interviewed adults on this

research suggested that mindfulness switched their auto-pilot mode, making them act more concentrated and without distractions. Hence, empirical support was afforded supporting the application of mindfulness in the field of compulsive consuming and the part mindfulness could take in the reduction of the automatized conduct.

Moreover, the empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of mindfulness in mitigating compulsive consumption behaviors and reducing automatic behaviors lends further support to the investigation of the interrelationship between sustainable consumption and consumer well-being. Therefore, a deeper analysis of the concept of materialism, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs, is crucial to fully understand this complex interplay.

The prevalence of materialistic values has contributed to the maintenance of consumer capitalism, while also resulting in adverse effects on both individual well-being and sustainability. Isham et al. (2022) conducted a study that demonstrated the negative impact of materialistic values on the adoption of well-being behaviors that promote individual and environmental well-being. Despite research suggesting that behaviors such as sufficiency orientation, mindfulness, and flow experiences can promote well-being without causing significant environmental damage, their findings reveal that individuals who hold strong materialistic values are less likely to adopt these behaviors. Dhandra (2019) previously supported this by demonstrating a negative correlation between mindfulness and materialism, indicating that individuals who have a more mindful life are more likely to

participate in sustainable consumption patterns, leading to greater life satisfaction. The inverse relationship between materialistic values and the adoption of these well-being behaviors suggests that the prevalence of materialistic values may impede progress towards more satisfying and sustainable lifestyles.

In accordance with Helm and Subramaniam (2019) research, materialism is found to have a negative correlation with mindfulness. However, certain sustainable consumption practices may provide potential pathways for materialistic individuals to partake in sustainable consumption behavior. The pursuit of novel, sustainable products align with materialistic tendencies, thereby promoting engagement with sustainable consumption habits. The impact of mindfulness on ecological interest and perceived consumer efficiency is indirect yet results in a positive effect on mindfulness as a function of these values and principles (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019). In recent times, a growing body of research has been dedicated to exploring the correlation between sustainable behavior and various psychologically beneficial outcomes, including but not limited to consumer well-being. Nevertheless, despite the increasing interest in this area, there is a dearth of research investigating this relationship within the context of mindfulness. As such, the present study aims to elucidate the connection between sustainable consumption behavior and consumer well-being by specifically examining the role of mindfulness.

2.4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in exploring the perception and benefits of mindfulness through empirical research, with a focus on the clinical advantages associated with mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), as noted by Chiesa (2013). One key finding of this research is that practicing mindfulness has a positive impact on sustainable behavior, fostering a greater connection with nature and promoting engagement in pro-environmental actions, according to Barbaro and Pickett's (2016) study. Geiger et al. (2020) also investigated the impact of a mindfulness-based intervention designed to promote sustainable consumption behavior (SCB). While the intervention had a slight positive effect on SCB seven months after the training, the impact was not as significant as expected, possibly due to the short duration of the intervention or the lack of significant changes in mindfulness. However, the study suggests that mindfulness has potential for promoting sustainable lifestyles. Furthermore, Chandra (2022) proposed that practicing mindfulness is linked to conscious consumption behaviors, as it encourages individuals to be more aware of their own needs and the environment. Bhattacharjee et al. (2021) further explored the concept of mindful consumption, which involves considering the impact of consumption choices on one's well-being, the environment, and the community. Similarly, Sheth et al. (2011) defined mindful consumption as a belief system that emphasizes responsible

consumption and reducing consumption. These studies suggest that practicing mindful consumption can promote ethical buying choices and the cultivation of sustainable consumption patterns among both young and older adults. Notably, Brown and Kasser (2005) conducted studies that showed a positive correlation between personal well-being and ecologically responsible behavior, finding that individuals who reported higher levels of happiness were more likely to adopt sustainable practices. Together, these studies suggest that practicing mindfulness and mindful consumption can contribute to the development of sustainable behavior and lifestyle patterns. The comprehensive analysis of literature has facilitated a deeper comprehension of the constructs of mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being, and the interrelations among them. As a result of this review, it is imperative to formulate an appropriate research methodology, which includes the selection of data collection techniques and analytical tools.

The present study will be guided by the systematic literature review performed by Fischer et al. (2017) and will incorporate the theoretical model presented by Resnik (2022) to shape and inform the research objectives outlined in this dissertation. Although the relationship between mindfulness and sustainability has been examined to some extent, a comprehensive understanding of this link is still lacking in the literature (Apaolaza et al., 2022). Resnik's (2022) qualitative study supports the need for additional research efforts to establish definitive linkages between the fundamental constructs

of mindfulness, consumer well-being, and sustainable consumption. Furthermore, the study highlights the interconnection and overlap between the concepts of mindfulness and well-being, underscoring the significance of further qualitative and quantitative inquiry into these areas. In the field of investigation under consideration, a multitude of gaps in knowledge are prevalent, especially concerning the sustainability-related effects (Ericson et al., 2014). Most studies exhibit a correlational nature, lacking experimental evidence, except for those focused on the impacts of mindfulness on well-being, which have undergone numerous experimental trials. Long-term implications of experimental research on environmental behavior, political activity (or passivity), and lifestyle remain inadequately studied. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake further qualitative and quantitative research, as emphasized by Ericson et al. (2014) to address this research gap and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of sustainability and its related dimensions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to expound upon the methodological approach employed in the investigation. Therefore, it is imperative to present the methodology employed, which, in this instance, is of a qualitative nature.

3.1. RESEARCH GOALS

In accordance with the initial chapter, the primary aim of this investigation is to explore and understand the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being in the Portuguese context. Followed by the main objective, five specific research objectives were defined:

1. Identify consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness.
2. Explore consumers' perceptions on the differences between mindful consumption and sustainable consumption.
3. Infer how consumers' values and beliefs affect their approach to sustainable consumption and their lifestyles.
4. Explore consumers' perceptions on the relationship between consumer well-being and mindful consumption.
5. Explore if the practice of mindfulness leads consumers to change their consumption habits.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The objectives outlined in the preceding section necessitate a qualitative approach, given their aim to elucidate the manner and rationale underlying phenomena.

As per Santos and Nogueira (2023), qualitative research endeavors to comprehend research problems that involve human behavior, attitudes, and values. Specifically, the objectives of this inquiry concern the examination of consumers' perceptions, opinions, values, and beliefs pertaining to the research topic. Furthermore, qualitative studies are deemed appropriate for exploring research topics and problems that involve the subjectivity of human nature (Santos & Nogueira, 2023). The objectives outlined in this study also pertain to the subjectivity of participants' perceptions concerning the research problem, and thus a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate.

Given that the majority of research in this area has been of a quantitative nature, as exemplified by studies such as, , Brown and Ryan' (2003), Brown and Kasser's (2005), Barbaro and Pickett's (2016), Böhme's et al. (2018) Li's et al. (2020) Gupta and Verma's (2020), Apaolaza's et al. (2022) and Leonti's (2022) the present study seeks to complement the scarce existing literature with a qualitative investigation.

Qualitative research, which employs techniques like interviews or focus groups to investigate attitudes, behavior, and experiences in depth, is

characterized by its descriptive nature and emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of the data throughout the research process (Dawson, 2002; Carmo, H. & Ferreira, 2008). Additionally, within the realm of qualitative research, various methodologies exist. Thus, the qualitative methodology, through semi-structured interviews, as will be explained later, will allow us to understand how sustainable behavior and consumer well-being are influenced by the practice of mindfulness to meet and respond to the specific objectives defined.

Qualitative approach operates based on inductive logic, whereby knowledge is construed through observations of the world. This process involves identifying patterns, themes, categories, or perspectives on the world that are formed through observation and are intended to generate novel insights (Santos & Nogueira, 2023).

3.3. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES: INTERVIEWS

To investigate behaviors and attitudes within the scope of qualitative research, interviews were chosen as the data collection method, as mentioned by Dawson (2002), given the qualitative approach mentioned above. As Sousa and Santos (2020) pointed out, every research endeavor seeks to address a problem arising within the social context by creating new

knowledge to understand and potentially transform the actual conditions being studied.

3.3.1. Participants of the study

To ensure an adequate selection of participants for this study, a post was disseminated on two popular social media platforms, Instagram, and Facebook, with the explicit goal of targeting individuals who actively engage in mindfulness practices, thereby identifying and recruiting participants from this specific area. The selection of participants for this study is justified based on their direct relationship with the empirical context, as all of them engage in mindfulness practice. Their shared experiences and emotions make them valuable contributors to the research objective, which requires a thorough understanding of this practice, therefore, prior knowledge of mindfulness.

The participants in this study were recruited via a social media publication that solicited individuals who actively engage in mindfulness practice. Through a systematic approach to collecting responses and reaching out to individuals who viewed the publication, a total of 20 participants responded to the publication, however, only 11 showed interest in being interviewed, and consequently participate in the study. The sample consisted of 5 men and 6 women, all of whom were mindfulness practitioners, ranging in age

from 20 to 55 years old, whose interviews will allow the answer to the research objectives.

Table 1 presents the coding and characterization of the participants in this study, categorized by their gender and age, profession, time length of the practice of mindfulness, frequency of mindfulness practice per week and whether they consider themselves mindful and sustainable consumers:

Table 1 - Characterization and Codification of the Interviewees

Gender	Age	Profession	Time Length of Practicing Mindfulness	Frequency of Mindfulness Practice per Week	Do you consider yourself a mindful consumer?	Do you consider yourself a sustainable consumer?	Codification
Masculine	49	Salesman in a paper company	18 years	Every day, 10 min per day	Yes	No	I1
Feminine	25	Yoga teacher and Student	2 years	Every day	Yes	Yes	I2
Masculine	25	Unemployed	4 years	Every day, 10 to 15 min per day	Yes	Yes	I3
Masculine	27	Student	8 years	Every day	Yes	Yes	I4
Feminine	47	Therapist	3 years	Every day	Yes	Yes	I5
Masculine	25	Marketer and Student	4 years	It depends on the week, but almost every day	Yes	Yes	I6
Feminine	53	Professor	2 years	Every day	Yes	Yes	I7
Feminine	29	Yoga teacher	6 years	Every day	Yes	Yes	I8
Feminine	23	Administrative Assistant	3 years	Almost every day	Yes	Yes	I9
Feminine	50	Psychologist	10 years	Almost every day	Yes	Yes	I10
Masculine	26	Marketer and Student	2 years	Almost every day	Yes	Yes	I11

3.3.2. Interviews

The interviews with the participants mentioned in Section 3.3.1 were conducted in April and lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed and translated into a Word document.

The question structure development was informed by a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. This approach facilitated the acquisition of insights and perspectives from interviewees concerning the subject matter of this study is essential to meet the research objectives.

Conclusively, all the information gathered by the interviews is going to be analyzed based on the Bardin's (2011) content analysis simplified technique, as showed on the point 3.3 (Bardin (2011) cit in Sousa & Santos (2020).

Table 2- Interview Guide

Research Objective	Question	Category	Authors
1. Identify consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness.	1. What motivated you to start practice of mindfulness?	Mindfulness Practices	Fischer et al. (2017) Langer & Moldoveanu (2000) Kabat-Zinn (2003) Chiesa (2013) Wielgosz et al. (2018) Davidson & Kaszniak (2015) Park & Dhandra (2017)
	2. For how long you have been practicing mindfulness?		
	3. On average, how many times a week do you practice mindfulness?		
2. Explore consumers' perceptions on the differences between mindful consumption and sustainable consumption.	4. In your opinion, what does it mean to be a mindful consumer?	Sustainable Consumption and Mindful Consumption	Barbaro & Pickett (2016) Ericson et al. (2014) Kumar (2021) Fischer et al. (2017) Gao et al. (2020). Li et al. (2020) Kaytaz Yigit (2020). Sheth et al. (2011) Joseph et al. (2022) Milne et al. (2020).
	5. How do mindful consumption practices manifest themselves in your life?		
	6. In your opinion, what does it mean to be a sustainable consumer?		
	7. In your opinion, is there a distinction between a mindful consumer and a sustainable consumer? In case your response is positive, what differences do you perceive?		
	8. Do you consider yourself a sustainable consumer?		

	9. Do you feel like you are a mindful consumer?		Bhattacharjee et al. (2021)
3. Infer how consumers' values and beliefs affect their approach to sustainable consumption and their lifestyles.	10. Do you feel that your values and beliefs have an influence on your approach to sustainable consumption?		
	11. What results do you consider sustainable consumption to have in your personal life and in your surrounding society?		
4. Explore consumers' perceptions on the relationship between consumer well-being and mindful consumption.	12. What do you perceive as consumer well-being?	Consumer well-being	Brown and Kasser (2005) Resnik (2022) Wickramasekara and Jayawickrama (2022) Onel et al. (2018) Zhan's (2022) Gupta and Verma (2020) Isham et al. (2022)
	13. Does your well-being influence your own decisions when you go shopping?		
	14. What are your thoughts on how mindful consumption practices impact consumer well-being?		
	15. How do you think sustainable consumption practices and consumer well-being are related?		
5. Explore if the practice of mindfulness leads consumers to change their consumption habits.	16. Do you feel that mindfulness practice influences the decisions you make when you go shopping? Can you give examples?	Habits of Consumption and the effect of mindfulness in the habits of consumption	Geiger et al. (2020) Apaolaza et al. (2022) Chandra (2022) Bahl et al. (2016) Joseph et al. (2022)
	17. Do you believe that your consumption habits have changed since you started this practice? How so?		
	18. Do you think that the time you dedicate to mindfulness and the level of commitment you have to the practice impacts the way mindfulness influences your sustainable consumption habits?		

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE : CONTENT ANALYSIS

Bardin's (2011) content Analysis research technique is a structured process that consists of three distinct phases: pre-analysis, material exploration through categorization or coding, and treatment of results, inferences, and interpretation. The validity of the research findings is contingent upon the internal and systematic coherence that exists between these phases, which is essential in minimizing ambiguities and establishing a solid foundation for the investigation. Thus, the rigor in the organization of the investigation serves as a fundamental premise in ensuring the validity of the research findings (Bardin (2011) cit in Sousa & Santos (2020)). In the figure 2, we find the

representativeness of the sequence of the Content Analysis technique in a simplified way, according to Laurence Bardin:

Table 3- Content Analysis Simplified Technique

Pre-Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floating reading • Choice of documents • (Re)formulation of the research objectives • Hypotheses and the formulation of indicators
Exploration of material
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Categories
Treatment of Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of Results

Source: (Bardin cit. in Sousa & Santos, 2020).

To conduct an analysis of the information collected during the interviews, a content analysis was employed. Firstly, the transcripts of the eleven interviews were read and translated, resulting in forty-four pages of data. The quotations were then compiled and organized in an Excel table, to facilitate the content analysis process. As shown in Table 4, six themes were defined, corresponding to the specific objectives of this investigation. These themes were further divided into four categories and twenty-three subcategories. The construction of the semi-structured interview guide and the dimensions supported by the authors, as previously mentioned in Table 3, were the basis for the development of these categories and subcategories.

Table 4- Definition of Categories and Subcategories

Research Objective	Category	Subcategories	Authors
Identify consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness	Mindfulness Practices	Mental Health: Stress and Anxiety; Personal Development; Auto-pilot mode; Consciousness.	Fischer et al. (2017) Davidson and Kaszniak, (2015) Park and Dhandra (2017)
Explore consumers' perceptions on the differences between mindful consumption and sustainable consumption. Infer how consumers' values and beliefs affect their approach to sustainable consumption and their lifestyles.	Sustainable Consumption and Mindful Consumption	Ecological footprint; Fashion Consumption; Recycling; Financial well-being; The use of plastic; Environmental Consciousness; Values and Beliefs; Self- Control; Desire vs Need; Food awareness and mindful eating.	Joseph et al. (2022) Barbaro and Pickett, (2016) Böhme et al. (2018) Ericson et al. (2014) Kumar and Panda (2021) Helm and Subramaniam (2019) Sheth et al. (2011) Bhattacharjee et al. (2021) Li et al. (2020) Resnik (2022) Wickramasekara and Jayawickrama (2022) Gupta and Verma (2019) Dhandra (2019)
Explore consumers' perceptions on the relationship between consumer well-being and mindful consumption.	Consumer well-being	Quality of Products; Regret after purchase; Impulsive Buying; Emotional and mental well-being; Relationship with brands; Product price.	Milne et al. (2020) Chandra (2022) Brown and Kasser (2005) Onel et al. (2018)
Explore if the practice of mindfulness leads consumers to change their consumption habits.	Habits of Consumption and the effect of mindfulness in the habits of consumption	Health awareness; Shift in the consumption practices; Consistency.	Geiger et al. (2020) Apaolaza et al. (2022) Bahl et al. (2016)

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is comprised of four sub-chapters, each containing further sub-sub-chapters and it is organized based on the table 4, containing the categories of analysis. The first sub-chapter pertains to research on mindfulness practices, which is subsequently categorized into subcategories including mental health: stress and anxiety, personal development, auto-pilot mode, and consciousness. The second sub-chapter delves into the topic of sustainable and mindful consumption, with subcategories including ecological footprint, fashion consumption, recycling, financial sustainability, the use of plastic, environmental consciousness, values and beliefs, desire versus need, and food awareness, as well as mindful eating. The third sub-chapter focuses on consumer well-being and is subdivided into categories including product quality, post-purchase regret, impulsive buying, emotional and mental well-being, brand relationships, and product pricing. Finally, the sub-chapter relating to consumption habits and the effect of mindfulness on consumption habits is divided into three subcategories, namely health awareness, shift in the consumption patterns, and consistency.

4.1.MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

This category is subdivided into four sub-categories: Mental Health: Stress and Anxiety; Personal Development; Auto-pilot mode and Consciousness. For each of the subcategories, pertinent quotations from the interviewees have been included to provide insight into their comprehension and interpretation.

4.1.1. Mental Health: Stress and Anxiety

As Chiesa (2013) noted, there has been a notable surge of interest in empirical studies examining the perceptions and objectives of mindfulness, with a growing body of evidence highlighting the clinical benefits associated with mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs). In line with this, the participants in the study reported practicing mindfulness with the aim of reducing anxiety and stress levels, and some even saw yoga as a way of practicing mindfulness, as seen in the cases of respondents I1, I4, and I11, who acknowledged the usefulness of mindfulness in mitigating stress.

I1: *"I started doing yoga in 2005, in a situation of work stress and it was very useful, we did many interesting practices and yoga is a way of being in life. I did three intensive years, with different practices and retreats. Three years ago, I returned to yoga and started to do a set of practices that are very diverse. Every 3 months I do a retreat on different practices."*

I4: *"The method that helps me and that's how I discovered mindfulness was: I had just taken a shower and I was just looking at the drops on the glass and at that moment all the stress of life, with starting college and everything related, it seems that disappeared and that what was outside that door didn't matter and it was at that moment that I started to practice and realize that in times of stress, having that moment was important."*

Similarly, interviewees I3 and I6 indicated that they initiated mindfulness practice to alleviate anxiety, with positive outcomes.

I3: *"I started mindfulness through a psychologist, and at the time I was having a lot of anxiety problems and so it was one of the methodologies he applied and until then I didn't know the concept and that's where I started."*

I6: *“At the end of my degree I started to experience a lot of anxiety, sometimes induced by myself, other times by my parents or external pressures and I had a really bad phase when I finished the course and I remember perfectly one of the times when I entered the hospital, the nurse told me that it tended to snowball, and I got that in my head and realized that I was going to have to come up with solutions on my own. I could go to a psychologist, I could ask for help from others, but I think that for the case that it was, nothing better than starting with me and starting to understand what was happening to me and fighting not only when I was experiencing anxiety, but also look for ways to prevent it from happening in the future.”*

“I started researching more and more and doing some of these techniques and I began to understand that it really had an effect on the anxiety I felt and even to control it in moments of greater stress and I realized that it was something that changed me a lot and thanks to techniques like meditation, cold water baths, breathing techniques, I know I got over that and today I'm much happier because of it.”

Additionally, interviewee I5 attributed mindfulness and meditation practice as instrumental in his recovery from a burnout episode.

15: *"The practice of mindfulness has been around for a few years now, but before getting into mindfulness, I started with simple meditation. I sought out meditation for mental health reasons. I was going into burnout and the medication wasn't enough, so I started looking for alternatives that could help me, and I discovered meditation, I practiced it, I practiced guided meditation and I started to get interested in the area."*

4.1.2. Personal Development

Interviewees 11 and 17 have expressed the view that the adoption of mindfulness practices has facilitated their personal growth and enhanced their pursuit of an improved quality of life. According to Interviewee 11, the engagement in various tasks has positively influenced his personal development.

11: *"I've always been interested in personal development, and I do multitask, namely yoga, which I've been doing for a few years now, bio dancing, everything that I think brings me improvement and will develop me. Reading in the focus part is one of the things I need most, and I have been focused on it lately."*

Interviewee 17 has reported that she began practicing mindfulness with the goal of stabilizing her life and achieving a higher quality of life.

I7: *"I started practicing mindfulness to stabilize my life and achieve a better quality of life. Essentially, that's what led me to change my lifestyle a little bit and get into this wave of mindfulness and yoga."*

The aforementioned views of Interviewees I1 and I7 are in line with the benefits of mindfulness as described in the literature. Research has shown that mindfulness can be cultivated through training, which can enable individuals to gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts, emotions, feelings, and bodily sensations. This, in turn, may equip them with the skills to regulate and manage these experiences, leading to an improvement in their overall well-being (Park & Dhandra, 2017).

4.1.3. Auto-pilot mode

According to respondents I6 and I11, mindfulness has been instrumental in disengaging them from autopilot mode and cultivating a greater sense of attentiveness and awareness. They have expressed that mindfulness practice has helped them to break free from habitual patterns of behavior and thought, allowing them to become more present in the moment and attuned to their experiences.

I5: *"In my day-to-day, in moments related to certain activities, I try to be more attentive and aware of what I do and not to turn on autopilot mode and formally in the meditations that I do."*

I11: *"Ideally, I would practice mindfulness every day, but I don't. For example, when I'm in periods of high stress is when I feel the need to do something and I try to fit in, it's almost mandatory for me, because I know it's my escape to get out of that stress, but the ideal and what I wanted was to fit in my routine, but it really depends on the phase, there are phases when I'm really stressed or I feel like I need to stop because I'm just on autopilot and in those phases I try to fit mindfulness every day."*

Similarly, the adult participants in Armstrong's (2012) study suggested that practicing mindfulness helped them break out of auto-pilot mode and focus more effectively without distractions, providing empirical support for the use of mindfulness in reducing compulsive consumption and addressing automatic behavior.

4.1.4. Consciousness

Interviewees I1 and I2 reported that practicing mindfulness facilitated a heightened sense of awareness in their life. Specifically, I2 noted that this process was gradual, with mindfulness enabling her to approach her life with an additional layer of conscientiousness.

I1: *“Working with consciousness is something that helps with people's way of being and that requires work, our brain is the most deceitful thing that exists. We must work on a set of emotions to improve over time and do things intuitively.”*

I2: *“I started mindfulness in the form of meditation about 3 years ago, but I feel that it is a continuous thing and in everything I do I feel that there is an extra awareness.”*

During the interview, Interviewee I8 described how she incorporates mindfulness into her daily routine by using the act of brushing her teeth as a form of meditation. By consciously focusing her attention on the sensations and movements involved in the process, she can transform a previously mundane and automatic activity into a mindful and present moment of reflection.

I8: *"I try to remember a simple routine, which is brushing my teeth, which can be something so mechanical, or so present and conscious. I believe that most of us are in a hurry when brushing our teeth, but if we stop for a second, will that feeling of rush and stress at that moment when we are brushing our teeth, speed up the process, or will it delay the process of brushing your teeth?"*

As noted by Fischer et al. (2017) the origins of mindfulness can be traced back to Buddhist philosophy, and the concept is defined as purposeful, impartial, and genuine awareness of present-moment experiences. This definition aligns with the experiences reported by interviewees I1, I2, and I8, who described how practicing mindfulness has allowed them to approach their work and daily routines with heightened attentiveness and a greater sense of purpose.

4.2.SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND MINDFUL CONSUMPTION

This category can be further classified into ten distinct subcategories, namely ecological footprint, fashion consumption, recycling, financial sustainability, plastic usage, environmental awareness, values and beliefs, desire versus need, and food consciousness through mindful eating.

4.2.1. Ecological footprint

Interviewee I1 contends that a conscious consumer is an individual who, in the process of purchasing and utilizing products, deliberately seeks to minimize their ecological footprint from a personal rather than a global perspective.

I1: *“A conscious consumer for me is a consumer who, when buying or using what is around us (agriculture and food creation), thinks a little about the things that he uses in everyday life on a recurring basis and the footprints that the products have until they reach us and what we can do to reduce this footprint. In our way of life there is only one possibility of contributing to a better world and that is to see less the global and more the personal.”*

Conversely, Interviewee I4 posits that environmental sustainability should be viewed from a global standpoint, considering it as a comprehensive issue. This is because, according to him, even if an individual has never contributed

to environmental degradation, their emissions would only represent a fraction of a second in the ecological footprint.

I4: *"A few years ago I found out about the subject of sustainability, and I was told that the ecological footprint of a person, without ever having had any kind of impact on the world, had had the equivalent of erasing 1 second of the total emission. And when I heard that, I started to think: If I didn't exist, even if I did everything perfectly in terms of ecology, recycling, etc., it would only take 1 second for me to erase. So, I feel that many times when talking about sustainable consumers, it's almost like gaslighting in the sense that we are putting the responsibility for all this on the consumer alone and I don't always feel that we are having the greatest impact."*

Consumption, as noted by Interviewees I1 and I4, is a crucial driver of economic activity in the global market, relying heavily on natural resources to satisfy consumer demands for satisfaction. While Interviewee I1 suggests that conscious consumers deliberately seek to minimize their ecological footprint at a personal level, Interviewee I4 argues that environmental sustainability must be approached from a global perspective as a comprehensive issue. This is due to the potential risk posed by irrational consumption habits that have increased damage to the environment, which could compromise the well-being of current and future generations, as suggested by Joseph et al. (2022).

4.2.2. Fashion Consumption

Regarding fashion consumption, respondents exhibit divergent perspectives. Interviewee I2 espouses the view that purchasing second-hand or premium clothing represents a rational choice, given its enhanced longevity and reduced environmental impact.

I2: *“Mostly opt for second-hand products or something slower, that is, maybe sometimes pay a little more but buy something with more durability.”*

Interviewee I6 posits that there exist sustainable brands such as Patagonia and domestic labels whose profits are directed towards social welfare, notwithstanding their relatively higher cost.

I6: *“When I buy for myself and use my money, I like to be aware of what I'm buying and I like brands like Patagonia, and others nationwide. But Patagonia has become a love brand for me, for that very reason, it has a very great environmental and social responsibility and I prefer to give more money, but I know that this profit that I am giving to the company will be well delivered (...).”*

Interviewee I9 maintains that her financial circumstances prohibit her from pursuing more eco-friendly but costlier alternatives, forcing her to resort to fast fashion, which undermines her sustainability goals.

I9: *“There are certain aspects that stand out, for example fast fashion: I consume fast fashion considering what we receive in Portugal and taking into account my profession and my income. So, it's natural that I cannot use more sustainable fashion and pay €200 for a blazer, when with €200 I can buy a lot more clothes to wear.”*

The perspectives shared by Interviewees I2, I6, and I9 in this study shed light on the complexities of sustainable consumption practices. While Interviewees I2 and I6 advocate for sustainable alternatives, such as purchasing second-hand or premium clothing, and supporting sustainable brands, Interviewee I9 highlights the financial constraints that can limit the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives. In light of these varied perspectives, the research of Kumar & Panda (2021) emphasizes the urgent need to adopt sustainable consumption practices, particularly given the harmful effects of overconsumption on the planet's well-being. These insights underscore the importance of exploring ways to make sustainable alternatives more accessible and affordable, particularly for those facing financial barriers.

4.2.3. Recycling

According to Interviewee 16, the topic of recycling elicits teasing from their peers, but the individual remains steadfast in their commitment to environmental conservation.

I6: *"Whenever I make a purchase or whenever I ask my friends to be aware of a certain type of subject, if they use plastic bags, if they recycle, they really "make fun" of me, it means that I am doing something right."*

Interviewee 17 shares a similar sentiment, citing colleagues who fail to grasp the importance of sustainable behavior. Despite this, 17 maintains that recycling reinforces their own eco-friendly and eco-sustainable values.

I7: *"I have colleagues who ask me why I do it in terms of recycling and I manage to be the only one doing it but doing it and I have my values getting stronger and stronger in relation to eco-friendly and eco-sustainability."*

Interviewee 18 reports engaging in recycling practices both out of conscience and a sense of ethical obligation.

I8: *"Recycling for me, I do it, I don't know where it will end up, nobody knows, or rather, we all know, but nobody knows, and I do it, and this can be to free my own conscience, but in fact I know that I am also doing what is right."*

The mentioned interviewees' experiences and attitudes towards sustainable consumption and recycling are connected to the research conducted by Böhme et al. (2018) on the importance of educating individuals about sustainable consumption. Despite facing teasing from friends and a lack of understanding from colleagues, some interviewees still perceive their actions as positive and worthwhile. Böhme et al. (2018) suggest that promoting mindfulness and moral values can lead to a positive impact on learning processes in sustainable consumption education, which could potentially increase awareness and understanding among individuals.

4.2.4. Financial Sustainability

Interviewee I2 asserts that a significant financial factor prevents many individuals from engaging in more sustainable consumption, as the cost of sustainable products remains a significant barrier.

I2: *"To be sustainable there is also a very strong financial part, because things often end up being more expensive and I feel that it is not a hundred percent option for everyone."*

In contrast, interviewee 4 contends that, in his opinion, the concept of "sustainability" is more closely associated with financial considerations rather than environmental ones.

I4: *"I could have thought about sustainability for example: depending on the money I have and how I am managing my life, and with the rest of the world, I can be an environmental consumer. But I think much more about the issue of financial sustainability."*

According to respondents I6 and I9, financial constraints limit their ability to practice sustainable behaviors, particularly considering economic conditions in their country.

I6: *"Then there is also environmental awareness, it is very difficult, especially when we are young and don't have that much money... I try to be as conscious as possible, considering the limitations as a young person living in Portugal."*

I9: *"I consume fast fashion taking into account what we receive in Portugal and taking into account my profession and my income."*

Conversely, interviewee I11 contends that adopting a mindful approach towards consumption has financial benefits, as it allows for a greater awareness of the true value of products and reduces the impact of promotions and discounts.

I11: *"On a financial level, if I'm in a state of reaction, I'm going to make a certain purchase and I'm impacted by promotions, discounts and I'm in that day-to-day rush and stress, I won't even think too much, a more appealing promotion will appear and I will buy, even if it is not advantageous for me. In this sense, mindfulness is an advantage, I can think well about what I am going to buy."*

Several interviewees noted that financial considerations can be a significant barrier to sustainable consumption (I2, I4, I6, I9). However, interviewee I11 suggests that incorporating mindfulness into consumption habits can lead to greater awareness of the true value of products and reduced impact of promotions and discounts. Hence, this perspective of the interviewees goes in line with Milne et al. (2020), who argue that mindfulness practices can broaden the focus of mindful consumption, leading to changes in habits that benefit not only the economy but also community and environmental well-being. Therefore, it is important to consider the role of mindfulness in promoting sustainable consumption practices, especially given the financial constraints faced by many individuals.

4.2.5. The use of plastic

According to the responses of Interviewees I1, I6, and I7, the utilization of plastic in commercial settings is overstated. As a result, they endeavor to purchase in bulk or abstain from plastic usage, with such "enhanced awareness" aiding them in this endeavor.

I1: *"The amount of plastics we use is too much, we can choose to buy in bulk."*

16: *"It is very difficult to go to the supermarket and leave without a piece of plastic, but I try to avoid it as much as possible."*

"Usually, we go every day or almost every day to the supermarket or a bakery to buy whatever it is, and if I go to a bakery and I can choose between a paper bag or a plastic bag, I am already being more conscious."

17: *"When it comes to shopping for clothes or food and more, I try to buy more in bulk and try to avoid using plastic."*

Conversely, Interviewee 18 contends that striving for sustainability as a consumer necessitates a balance of choices. She admits to occasionally acquiring plastic bottles out of forgetfulness but asserts that this leads to a change in attitude the following day.

18: *"(Being a sustainable consumer) is a balance of choices. I bought a plastic water bottle, I know that has an impact, but I wanted to drink water and I didn't bring my glass bottle. Probably when I leave the house tomorrow I'll think about it and I'll bring the glass bottle."*

Interviewee 19 reports making efforts to alter the behavior of her parents by decreasing plastic consumption.

19: *"I see that my parents have a tendency when they pick up fruits and vegetables to always put them in plastic bags, and I try to tell them that it is not necessary."*

Interviewee I10 asserts that the quantity of plastic present in oceans is alarmingly high, resulting in ramifications for the food chain and, consequently, species perpetuation. Accordingly, she emphasizes the need for heightened awareness of the choices we make.

I10: *“As has already been made public, the oceans are full of plastic, and it ends up entering our food chain and whether we like it or not, this has an impact on us again. It starts with us and ends with us. If we all make an effort and are more aware and sustainable in the choices we make, we end up creating a more conducive environment to guarantee our perpetuation as a species.”*

Bhattacharjee et al. (2021) investigated mindful consumption, which involves being aware of how our consumption choices are influenced by values such as self-care, care for the environment, and care for the community, which is in line with the answers given by the interviewees. The responses of the interviewees provide examples of mindful consumption practices, such as purchasing in bulk or abstaining from plastic usage to reduce environmental impact, striving for a balance of choices, promoting sustainable behavior in the community, and emphasizing the need for heightened awareness of consumption choices to address the issue of plastic pollution in oceans.

4.2.6. Environmental Consciousness

Interviewee I2 posits that sustainable consumption is characterized by the idea of minimizing the damage to the environment. Similarly, interviewee I3 suggests that sustainable consumption involves making choices that have a positive impact on the environment, all while acknowledging the finite nature of natural resources.

I2: *"It has a lot to do with the idea of trying to create as little damage as possible to the planet, hand in hand with the idea that being full of stuff around me is not good for my mental health, so I think it has a lot to do with the way I look at the world at large."*

I3: *"In my opinion, being a sustainable consumer means consuming and thinking that my consumption will have a positive impact on the environment. It means being aware that there are no unlimited resources and adapting our choices to this notion."*

Interviewee I6 acknowledges his commitment to minimizing his environmental impact, recognizing that as an individual, he can still influence those around him in this regard. Meanwhile, interviewee I7 notes that mindful consumption and sustainable consumption are inherently linked, both of which prioritize environmentally friendly practices.

I6: *"What I try to have is less environmental impact, I know I'm a person, but I always try to influence those around me in that sense."*

I7: *“Mindful consumption has to do with sustainable consumption and always trying to be a friend of nature, being calm and always thinking about more conscious consumption.”*

The interviewee, I10, acknowledges that sustainable consumption entails a balanced approach to purchasing goods, with consideration given to minimizing environmental impact by limiting the waste generated.

I10: *“A sustainable consumer is one who tries to consume in a balanced way, especially the initial part of “acquiring” and being concerned about that and acquiring what is necessary, with the awareness that we are not asking excessive resources from the environment that surrounds us and that we are not going to overload it with the excessive waste that we all tend to accumulate.”*

Li et al. (2020) established a direct correlation between the practice of mindfulness and environmentally conscious consumption, and an indirect correlation between mindfulness and socially conscious consumption. In this regard, the interviewees portrayed above ostensibly exhibited a connection to nature, suggesting that their environmentally conscious consumption practices may be attributed, at least in part, to their reinforcement of this relationship with the natural world. This finding is consistent with Li et al.'s (2020) observation that mindfulness can facilitate an individual's connection to nature and, in turn, promote socially conscious consumption behaviors.

4.2.7. Values and Beliefs

Respondents I1 and I3 state that their values and beliefs affect their approach to sustainable consumption, and I1 adds that values are changeable, that 20 years ago he did not have the values he has now.

I1: *"My beliefs are guaranteed to change my approach to sustainable consumption, and my values as well, but these are changing. What my values were 20 years ago are not the same values I have today."*

I3: *"What drives me to be a sustainable consumer are my principles and values, without a doubt."*

According to participants I4, I5 and I6 personal values and beliefs exert a significant influence on their consumption patterns. Participant I5 further contends that the practice of mindfulness has prompted a shift in their cognitive and behavioral approach to consumption.

I4: *"I have my values and beliefs very well defined, and the values and beliefs shape the person I am and this probably affects the way I consume and my interests."*

I5: *"Beliefs always influence our attitudes, our thoughts. There was a need to change some beliefs and in that sense I think mindfulness came to change some beliefs, so there was a change in action and thinking."*

16: *"I think that my values and my beliefs are clearly related to the way I see this issue of consumption and I don't know if they are values that I acquired with my parents, or if I acquired them with this relationship that I've always had with nature."*

Interviewee 17 postulates that the acquisition of beliefs is frequently associated with limitations.

17: *"In relation to this, the beliefs that we have and acquire, many of them are limiting".*

Interviewee 110 espouses the perspective that an individual's values and beliefs serve as the compass that guides their behavior. According to 110, the adoption of sustainable consumption practices is facilitated by a set of deeply ingrained values and beliefs that promote responsible stewardship of the environment and resources.

110: *"People's values and beliefs govern everything people do, or at least they should. There is no conscious consumption or sustainable consumption without being governed or guided by the compass that guides us all and which end up being our values."*

Interviewee 111 asserts that their personal values and beliefs serve as a guiding force in their consumption habits, with a focus on both financial considerations and the desire to make a positive impact on the world. This

perspective highlights the importance of aligning consumption behaviors with deeply held beliefs and values to promote responsible consumption practices and social responsibility.

I11: *“On the one hand, financial values and beliefs, and on the other hand the impact that I also want to have and leave on the planet and society, and I think that this also directly influences the way I will manage and how I will behave.”*

The research conducted by Helm and Subramaniam (2019) suggests that individual values and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping sustainable consumption practices, such as the interviewees I4, I5 and I6 and I11 who state this relation between values and beliefs and consumption patterns, as well as I10 who affirms that the adoption of sustainable consumption practices is deeply ingrained by values and beliefs. The study by Helm and Subramaniam (2019) indicates that the practice of mindfulness can lead to positive changes in sustainable consumption behaviors, as well as heightened environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness, through the mediating influence of values and beliefs.

4.2.8. Desire versus Need

As per the accounts of Interviewee I4 and Interviewee I5, individuals who engage in mindfulness practices exhibit a heightened sense of awareness regarding their possessions and necessities. Consequently, such individuals do not feel compelled to engage in the superfluous consumption of goods and services. Interviewee 5 also posits that this acute sense of awareness leads to a greater emphasis on adhering to what is essential, thereby avoiding wasteful and extravagant behavior. As such, the practice of mindfulness appears to engender a more balanced perspective on distinguishing between desires and necessities.

I4: *"A person who practices mindfulness knows what he needs and what he has and, as a result, he does not need to consume unnecessary things."*

I5: *"A sustainable consumer is one who tries not to waste, only to have what he will really need so that there is no waste (...) it is sticking to what is most important, what we really need, without waste or exaggeration, so there is greater weighting and reflection on the day-to-day."*

According to Interviewee I6, adopting sustainable consumption practices requires a heightened level of awareness. The interviewee contends that consuming based solely on one's desires may lead to an irresponsible and

reckless attitude towards the planet. In this regard, it is crucial to differentiate between desires and needs and to exercise discretion while consuming. The interviewee argues that individuals who cultivate such discernment are more likely to practice responsible consumption and contribute towards the preservation of the environment.

I6: *"I think that being a sustainable consumer means being aware that, if we consume based on our desires, we can never be sustainable and we are not taking the planet into account (...) and, therefore, we must have a little of that in mind whenever that desire to buy something or have something arises and we have to realize this difference between desire and need."*

As referred by Interviewee I10, the absence of conscientiousness can result in impulsive or compulsive consumption behavior, which is not guided by individual needs. The interviewee contends that a lack of awareness or mindfulness can lead to an unhealthy relationship with consumption, characterized by a disconnection between the individual's needs and their purchasing decisions. This perspective underscores the importance of conscientiousness in consumption behavior and its potential to promote a more thoughtful and responsible approach towards consumption.

I10: *"When we are not aware of this, we end up compulsively or impulsively consuming and end up realizing that many of the things we end up acquiring are not in fact a necessity, they were the result of the moment and it may have been because we were bored, or due to connect with another emotion."*

Interviewee I10 posits that it is crucial to evaluate the necessity and essentiality of a potential purchase before deciding. The interviewee emphasizes the role of self-control in adhering to this approach and maintaining a conscious awareness of the urge to acquire unnecessary items. Such a practice, according to the interviewee, is instrumental in preventing excessive consumption and fostering a more mindful approach to consumption behavior. In essence, the interviewee highlights the significance of deliberation and restraint in promoting responsible and sustainable consumption practices.

I11: *"It's not shopping on impulse and thinking if I really need to buy that thing and if it's essential. Of course, there are purchases that will be made that are not essential goods, but it is having the thought of "do I need another watch or the same wallet?". I think it depends a lot on self-control and following this line of reasoning and being aware of not buying too many things, just to have them."*

These views are supported by Chandra's (2022) findings of a positive relation between mindfulness and consumption practices, indicating that individuals who cultivate a mindful disposition tend to exhibit a heightened awareness of their own needs and the environmental impact of their consumption behavior. As such, incorporating mindfulness practices in consumption behavior can potentially promote ethical and sustainable

purchasing decisions, contributing towards the preservation of the environment.

4.2.9. Food awareness and mindful eating

Interviewees I3, I6, and I7 posit that the incorporation of mindfulness practices into their daily lives has engendered a heightened awareness and discernment with respect to their dietary choices, which has in turn yielded positive ramifications for their physical health. Specifically, Interviewee I6 contends that his dietary vigilance has increased during the week, with a concomitant emphasis on the nutritional benefits of food. Alternatively, Interviewee I7 reveals that her adoption of mindfulness practices has led to marked improvements in her physical well-being, particularly considering her autoimmune condition.

I3: *"Everything I consume, particularly in terms of what I eat and what I see, is very well thought out. I'm that kind of person who weighs my food, chooses my food properly, etc."*

I6: *"As far as food is concerned, since I started practicing mindfulness, I started to become more aware and in large areas of my life, especially food. I'm much more aware of what I'm consuming, the meals I eat during the week, I'm aware that some of them will help me reduce inflammation, others will help me maintain the levels of nutrients I need."*

17: *“On a physical level, I feel much better. I have an autoimmune thyroid disease that helped me a lot and that was also the starting point for me to change my concept and my daily life a little bit, both in terms of food and consumption in general.”*

Interviewee 15 asserts that she utilizes mindful eating as a technique, imbuing certain day-to-day activities with heightened significance. Conversely, Interviewee 18 advocates for flexibility in meal planning, emphasizing the integration of mechanisms that have a beneficial impact on the environment, such as the flex diet.

15: *“They manifest themselves mainly in terms of mindful eating (...) In my day-to-day life, in moments related to certain activities, I try to be more attentive and aware of what I do and not to turn on autopilot mode.”*

18: *“I’m going to talk about a topic that is increasingly talked about in the world we live in, which is veganism and vegetarianism. I’m none of them, but I usually say I’m flex. It is important to have flexibility, to understand what is going on in general and to be able to practice it in some way.”*

Interviewee 110 reflects on her impulses with the goal of determining the necessity of consuming additional food items, with this discernment stemming from the utilization of mindful techniques.

I10: "Sometimes, when tempted to want to eat or consume something else, it's important to understand precisely the scale of that impulse and ask myself this question, if I really need to eat more or if I need to buy something,, if it's because it's really a necessity or if it's on impulse."

According to the perspectives shared by interviewees I3, I6, I7, I8, and I10, the incorporation of mindfulness practices into one's daily life can engender a heightened awareness and discernment with respect to dietary choices and other consumption activities. This discernment can enable individuals to prioritize their core concerns and make decisions that align with their values.

Aligned with this quotes, Bahl et al. (2016) alluded that while initiatives aimed at mindful eating and addiction management do exist, there is a need for evidence-based programs that facilitate the integration of mindfulness into consumption behaviors across various domains of well-being. Mindful consumption, when adopted by consumers, has significant implications for numerous domains, including health, addiction, family dynamics, financial well-being, and materialistic tendencies.

Together, both the interviewees and Bahl et al. (2016) suggest that adopting mindfulness practices can promote discernment and values-based decision making in consumption activities, and evidence-based programs are needed to facilitate this integration of mindfulness into various domains of well-being.

4.3. CONSUMER WELL- BEING

This category pertains to consumer well-being and can be further divided into seven distinct subcategories: Quality of Products, Post-Purchase Regret, Impulsive Buying, Emotional and Mental Well-Being, Brand Relationships, Environmental Concern, and Product Pricing.

4.3.1. Quality of Products

Interviewee I5 reported a shift in consumer behavior towards thoughtful consideration of product quality over brand reputation. Similarly, interviewee I6 emphasized the importance of product quality and values alignment, seeking out products with quality certifications. Interviewee I7 expressed that ease of access to quality products contributes to their overall well-being, while acknowledging the cost associated with sustainable products.

I5: *"I learned to be more thoughtful and to observe the products. Do not buy for the brand, but for the quality of the product. Read the labels, be more attentive. I think a lot about food and I'm very observant."*

I6: *"For me quality is very important (...) I try to look for what my values are and if I go after my values, I know that I will feel good as a consumer if I choose to consume products with certifications and products with quality."*

17: *“When a consumer gets the products and quality and manages to acquire the products with relative ease, because we know that they are more expensive products and not so easy to get in some situations (...)”*

It is noteworthy that all three participants recognize the importance of quality in their consumption habits, and that interviewee 17 points out the trade-off between quality and cost in the context of sustainability. These findings suggest that consumer behavior is shifting towards more thoughtful consideration of product quality, and that sustainability remains a consideration for many consumers despite the added cost.

The insights provided by interviewees 15, 16, and 17 align with the findings of Wickramasekara and Jayawickrama's (2022) research on the critical role of consumer behavior in shaping personal well-being and environmental sustainability. The shift towards thoughtful consideration of product quality over brand reputation mentioned by 15 and the emphasis on product quality and values alignment by 16 reflects the need for individuals to adopt sustainable consumption practices as recommended by the authors. Similarly, 17's acknowledgment of the cost associated with sustainable products highlights the importance of access to quality products in contributing to overall well-being, which is also emphasized by the authors.

4.3.2. Post-Purchase regret

The participants I2, I10, and I11 posit that consumer well-being pertains to the absence of post-purchase regret. I2 notes that it entails experiencing long-term happiness, free of any immediate remorse. I10 emphasizes the significance of mindfulness in decision-making, stating that conscious purchases are less likely to result in regret. In contrast, I11 suggests that consumer well-being may stem from the consumer's ability to exercise control over their actions, thereby mitigating the probability of post-purchase regret.

I2: *"It has to do with the consumer being comfortable with their purchase in the sense that it is not a very complicated purchase to make, for example, if it is an online purchase, it is a relatively direct purchase, if it is in person, it is also easy and with adequate service and we're happy in the long run with what we buy, there's no regrets right away.."*

I10: *"If I'm mindful and making a conscious purchase, naturally, when I arrive and see what I've bought, I see that it actually satisfies my need at the moment, I don't feel guilty because I bought something I shouldn't have or because I overdid it or bought something that won't be of much use, and in this sense, we understand what we are buying, how we are buying it and what we are buying it for."*

I11: *"I would say that it may be connected with this feeling good, because you know you have control over your actions as a consumer, that is, there is less probability of having regrets when you get home after the purchase"*c

The study by Onel et al. (2018) revealed that while some participants recognized the financial obstacles associated with pursuing sustainability, others expressed regret for not prioritizing it in their daily lives. However, it is worth noting that the adoption of sustainable practices need not incur additional expenses, as reducing consumption can lead to significant resource preservation. Participants I2, I10, and I11 further emphasized the importance of mindfulness and conscious decision-making in achieving consumer well-being, which may involve avoiding immediate remorse and taking agency over one's actions to mitigate the likelihood of post-purchase regret.

4.3.3. Impulsive Buying

According to respondents I1 and I2, the promotion of consumer well-being and conscious well-being can help to mitigate impulsive purchasing behavior. I1 explained that conscious well-being is a critical factor that guides their shopping decisions, which was not previously the case. Meanwhile, I2 noted that adopting mindful consumption techniques can

have a long-term impact on the consumer's well-being by enabling them to make more deliberate purchases and avoid impulsive behavior. This approach fosters a thought process that considers whether an item makes sense to buy immediately, or if it would be better to wait and make the purchase in the future.

I1: *"I always have a goal when I go shopping and I always try not to leave that goal. But my conscious well-being is what aligns me when I go shopping. In the past, I used to go out of line because I was buying more and more impulsively. Now I go with conscience because I think purchases must be rational."*

I2: *"Mindful consumption techniques mostly impact in the long term. At the moment, maybe the will is different, to make a more impulsive decision and even buy something to feel good at that moment, but the reality is that if it's something that really makes sense to buy, in any way, it will continue to make sense in a week or two if I keep thinking about it (...) it will give me more time to reflect and in the long run feel better about not having those regrets of the next day or the next week."*

The pursuit of novel, sustainable products that aligns with materialistic tendencies may contribute to promoting consumer well-being and

conscious well-being, as suggested by respondents I1 and I2. This, in turn, can help mitigate impulsive purchasing behavior by fostering a more thoughtful consideration of whether a purchase is truly necessary, as opposed to buying something on impulse. Additionally, adopting mindful consumption techniques can lead to a long-term positive impact on the consumer's well-being, enabling them to make more deliberate purchases and avoid impulsive behavior. The findings corroborate Helm and Subramaniam (2019), who alluded that this approach may also encourage an indirect yet positive effect on mindfulness as a function of the consumer's values and principles towards sustainability.

4.3.4. Emotional and mental well-being

In a recent study by Wickramasekara and Jayawickrama (2022), it was found that excessive consumption driven by materialistic values can negatively impact individual well-being and contribute to environmental issues. To address this, the authors suggest adopting sustainable consumption practices that prioritize personal and environmental well-being. This is particularly relevant given the insights shared by the interviewees.

Interviewee I2 mentions the possibility of being happy with a purchase even when feeling less aware or in a lower emotional state.

I2: *“Even today if I turn off this switch of being aware of my purchases a little bit and I'm feeling a little more down or anxious and I go buy something, I'll still feel that way, happy, at least at that moment. But conscience is precisely that, it is being able to think above what my emotions are telling me to do.”*

In contrast, respondents I4 and I10 caution against shopping while hungry, emphasizing the influence of emotional states on purchasing decisions. I10 even suggests that emotions can be manipulated to drive consumer behavior.

I4: *“Everyone knows that expression of “Never go shopping hungry”, or if you're going through a bad time, it's much easier not to care about what you're going to consume. In that sense, I feel that a person's emotional state, above all, will greatly affect the purchases they make.*

I10: *“It is normally recommended that people do not go shopping when they are hungry, because they will buy too much, because at the time they are in deprivation, and the same happens in emotional terms and in terms of well-being. We end up being a little bit manipulated by our moods and emotions.”*

Furthermore, I9 underscores the critical role of mental and emotional well-being in consumer well-being. Specifically, I9 posits that individuals who

struggle with emotional instability may be more prone to seek comfort in the consumption of food products.

I9: *“The consumer's well-being depends a lot on people's mental well-being, for example a person who is more emotionally unstable and who declines a lot for comfort food will be influenced by this when going to the supermarket and this can happen in everything at consumption and consumer level.”*

4.3.5. Brand Relationships

Comprehending the process of consumer decision-making, including the underlying mechanisms and motivations, constitutes a crucial factor in enhancing consumers' pro-environmental behavior. Insights drawn from research on sustainable consumer behavior hold paramount importance for the formulation of green strategies, both at the governmental policy and corporate levels. These strategies are particularly important for policymakers and sustainability-focused organizations seeking to impact consumers' choices, consumption patterns, and disposal of products that impact the environment (Trudel, 2018). In this context, the perspectives of interviewee I6 and I11 are relevant. Interviewee I6 believes that brands prioritizing consumer well-being positively impact their own well-being, while interviewee I11 emphasizes the importance of practicing mindful consumption habits to

shape one's perspective towards brands and reduce susceptibility to promotions and discounts. Understanding such perspectives can inform the development of effective green strategies that consider consumers' behavior and motivations.

I11: *“On the one hand, there is the well-being of the mindful consumer, who will feel that what he is doing is much more correct and he will not buy a lot of things he does not need, and on the other hand, the financial well-being, because he will feel who have much greater control over the brands and over the marketing itself and will not be influenced by promotions because they will be able to filter this type of information”.*

4.3.6. Product Pricing

According to Interviewee I4, given the current dissatisfaction with prices and inflation, consumers find it exceedingly difficult to overlook the pricing of products, which significantly impacts their overall well-being.

Interviewee I5 maintains that consumers' well-being is contingent upon their ability to procure necessary goods within their budgetary constraints.

14: *"It is a very complicated topic, at a time when people are only talking about the dissatisfaction that everyone has with prices and I feel that nowadays most consumers in this area are not exactly satisfied, but there are parameters that weigh a lot more than others, for example, the environmental context weighs a lot for some people, however for some people the question will be "How much money is coming out of my wallet?" and consequently this affects the quality of the products they choose."*

15: *"It all depends on who you are, what you consume, and being able to buy what you need, within your budget. If the consumer fails to do so, he will not feel well-being, there will not be a balance between what he wants and what he can acquire."*

Interviewee 17 asserts that purchasing sustainable products at reasonable prices has become an arduous task in today's market, and this challenge directly undermines consumers' well-being.

17: *"I think consumer well-being here really has to do with being able to purchase products at more reasonable prices."*

Onel et al. (2018) reported that some participants in their study acknowledged the financial burden of achieving sustainability and felt guilty

about not prioritizing sustainability in their daily routines. However, it is essential to show individuals, as Interviewee I4 suggests, that they can accomplish various objectives simultaneously, such as budgetary concerns, health, and sustainability, without compromising one for the other. As Interviewee I5 notes, consumers' well-being is directly linked to their ability to select necessary goods within their budgetary constraints. Additionally, as Interviewee I7 highlights, the challenge of purchasing sustainable products at reasonable prices has become an obstacle that undermines consumers' well-being in today's market. Therefore, emphasizing the cost-saving benefits of sustainable living, as Onel et al. (2018) suggest, could encourage consumers to prioritize sustainability while still taking care of their financial well-being.

4.4. HABITS OF CONSUMPTION AND THE EFFECTS OF MINDFULNESS IN THE HABITS OF CONSUMPTION

The final category of analysis pertains to consumption habits and their relation with mindfulness, and is subdivided into three distinct subcategories, namely, Health Awareness, Deliberation, and Consistency.

4.4.1. Health Awareness

The interviewees, specifically I2, I5, and I6, asserted that mindfulness practices facilitated a transformation in their consumption patterns, particularly concerning their physical health. In fact, Chandra's (2022) recent findings suggest that there is a positive correlation between mindfulness and consumption practices, indicating that individuals who demonstrate mindfulness tend to make more ethical purchasing decisions and promote sustainable consumption habits, which aligns with the experiences shared by I2 and I6 in terms of their increased attentiveness towards their dietary choices and intake.

I2: *"Everything changed in this sense of going more slowly, buying things in terms of food because in the long run they will make me feel good because they will do my body good and will nourish me, instead of buying things that will taste good to me at the moment, but that digestion won't go so well."*

I5: *"Practice changes beliefs and these beliefs will change my action in relation to some practices. In nutrition I felt a big difference."*

16: *"They have clearly changed and even I have become more aware, especially in the products that I put inside my body, that is, food products and I try to be much more concerned about: the amount of sugar I am consuming per day, the type of products what they are and the benefit I will derive from them and clearly this has had an impact on my decisions from the moment I started practicing."*

4.4.3. Shift in consumption patterns

Interviewees 11, 17, and 18 acknowledge that their attitudes towards consumerism have evolved as a result of practicing mindfulness. 11 notes a heightened awareness and intentionality in their consumption choices, while both 17 and 18 similarly report increased attentiveness towards their purchasing and consumption habits.

11: *"I've never been very consumerist, but I'm certainly more aware."*

17: *"When it comes to purchasing some products, yes, I am much more aware of my purchases. I am much more aware of this. Sometimes I really felt the need to buy products in situations where I was more nervous, now I feel much more relaxed and aware and I avoid it."*

18: *"And even in lifestyle I have been more conscious."*

Interviewee I9 posits that cultivating awareness represents a crucial first step towards effecting change in consumerist behaviors. By acknowledging the need for greater mindfulness in their consumption practices, I9 demonstrates a willingness to embrace more deliberate and conscientious decision-making in this domain.

I9: *"So I think that mindfulness also brought me the ability to be more aware and to analyze what I'm analyzing now, (...) I think that just the act of awareness is already a big step and the first step towards change."*

The interviewee, I10, posits that the cultivation of mindfulness engenders heightened attention and awareness regarding the frivolity of certain forms of consumption. Moreover, I10 contends that excessive consumption is not a prerequisite for achieving a state of well-being and happiness.

I10: *"It made me aware that in fact some consumption is very frivolous and are immediate relief and sensations that do not translate into a more lasting well-being, and it mainly brought me that and the notion that we really don't need to consume so much to feel well and happy."*

Interviewee 11 postulates that the regular practice of mindfulness has resulted in a notable decrease in mall visits and a more discerning approach to shopping, informed by diligent research.

I11: *"I go to the mall much less often than I used to, and even do research on the internet for products, only if I see some advertising that makes me go look for it later, but deliberately going to look for a product that I am interested in, I rarely do it."*

The study conducted by Joseph et al. (2022) sheds light on the evolution of consumer attitudes in the context of mindfulness. Interviewees 11, 17, and 18 have reported a shift in their consumption patterns, highlighting a greater intentionality and attentiveness towards their purchasing habits. 19 stresses the importance of cultivating awareness as a crucial first step towards effecting change in consumerist behaviors. The findings of Joseph et al.,(2022) support this notion, revealing a strong association between mindfulness and self-transcendence, which extends to sustainable consumer behavior. Moreover, interviewee I10 asserts that mindfulness engenders heightened attention and awareness towards the frivolity of certain forms of consumption, supporting the results of Joseph et al. (2022). Finally, interviewee 11 attests to the positive impact of regular mindfulness practice, which has resulted in a more discerning approach to shopping and a decrease in mall visits, as revealed by the study.

4.4.4. Consistency

According to Interviewee I2, the impact of commitment and consistency with mindfulness is not immediately apparent in one's behavior and consumption patterns. However, I2 notes that failure to sustain a regular mindfulness practice over an extended period may result in a loss of mindfulness awareness.

I2: "I don't think it's something immediate, I don't think that if I don't practice for two weeks it will completely change my way of acting, but if I stop practicing for a long time, it seems that there is almost a forgetfulness of what is the root of mindfulness."

On the contrary, the views expressed by Respondent I6 suggest that mindfulness bears resemblance to bicycle riding, in that one does not forget the techniques once learned. The respondent further posits that phases of disconnection may arise, which in turn can result in a lack of mindfulness. Nevertheless, it is suggested that through commitment and consistency, greater benefits can be derived.

I6: *"I think that, like all this issue of consistency and commitment, it allows us to derive more benefits and based on that, but I think that this issue of mindfulness is like riding a bicycle, when you start doing it, you don't forget it anymore, of course we can have phases where we feel more or less connected with mindfulness and maybe when we are less connected, we have less of that awareness too."*

According to the perspectives of Respondents I7 and I8, dedicating more time to mindfulness practice leads to increased benefits, particularly in the context of consumption habits.

I7: *"Probably if I didn't dedicate so much time to mindfulness I wouldn't have as much awareness, and I would stick to what I've done for most of my life and I wouldn't have as much attention."*

I8: *"The more time I dedicate, the more aware I will be."*

The interviewee I11, holds the belief that consistency is a crucial factor in making habits seem effortless. They assert that a regular practice of mindfulness facilitates the integration of sustainable consumption habits into one's lifestyle.

I11: *"The longer you practice mindfulness and the more consistent you are, if it's something you do every day, it ends up being natural, and it's already something you do naturally, whereas now it's not."*

The perception and management of information by individuals are influenced by their respective roles. The adoption of mindful consumption habits can significantly improve personal and environmental health. However, a significant challenge that impedes its complete implementation is the limited time and resources available to consumers for practicing mindfulness. The interviewees I2, I7, I8 and I11 referred that with time and consistency mindfulness becomes a habit, leading to increased benefits from it, whose opinions are congruent with Bahl et al. (2016) stating that with persistent effort, mindfulness can become an ingrained habit, requiring less effort to sustain. Therefore, it is crucial for consumers to consistently integrate mindfulness practices into their consumption behaviors across diverse contexts to establish a culture of mindful consumption.

Upon completion of the data analysis and discussion chapter, the primary conclusions and theoretical and practical contributions of this investigation will be presented. Additionally, this study's limitations will be discussed, and recommendations for future research will be provided.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter provides an overview of the key findings and contributions of the current research by addressing the research objectives. Additionally, the limitations of this study are acknowledged, and recommendations for future investigations are presented.

5.1. ANSWERING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The overarching goal of this study was to explore and understand the connection between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being in the Portuguese context. To achieve this objective, a qualitative methodology was employed, which involved participant observation and conducting 11 semi-structured interviews. By addressing the general and specific objectives of the research, the study aimed to shed light on the relationship between mindfulness, sustainable consumption, and consumer well-being.

5.1.1. Consumers' motivations for the practice of mindfulness

Through the course of this study, the underlying incentives behind consumers' engagement in mindfulness were explored. The findings indicated that certain participants were motivated by mental health conditions, such as anxiety and stress, while others sought personal development. For a subset of the participants, practicing mindfulness enabled them to break away from habitual patterns of behavior and make deliberate and informed decisions.

Chiesa (2013) and Wielgosz et al. (2018) have posited the benefits of mindfulness in psychology and neurology. This study contributes to the literature by including participants' personal experiences. Notably, respondents reported beginning mindfulness practice for the purpose of improving their mental health. Several participants (I3, I5, and I6) even mentioned receiving recommendations from professionals in the field to practice mindfulness.

Moreover, Park and Dhandra (2017) suggested that mindfulness can aid individuals in regulating their thoughts, emotions, feelings, and sensations, thereby improving their overall well-being. Consistent with this, interviewees in the present study reported beginning mindfulness practice with the goal of controlling their thoughts and disengaging from automatic pilot mode. For instance, Interviewee I11 reported using mindfulness to achieve greater control over their thoughts.

5.1.2. Differences between Mindful Consumption and Sustainable Consumption

The survey was conducted to enhance comprehension of the concepts of Mindful Consumption and Sustainable Consumption. The insights gleaned from the study participants, in conjunction with the literature reviewed, indicated that the divergence in perspectives between the two was minimal. Participants generally perceived sustainable consumption as entailing heightened awareness of finite resources. Some participants additionally remarked that sustainable consumption could entail adopting more economical practices in one's consumption patterns.

Barbaro & Pickett (2016) have highlighted the positive impact of mindfulness on sustainable behavior. This finding is consistent with the present study, as interviewees reported increased sustainability since beginning mindfulness practice. Specifically, participants reported developing greater awareness of their consumption habits, resulting in more conscious and sustainable consumption behaviors.

In addition, Ericson et al. (2014) and Kumar and Panda (2021) have posited that mindfulness can play a vital role in fostering sustainability. This finding is consistent with the present study, as interviewees also reported a similar perception regarding the positive relationship between mindfulness and sustainability.

Interviewees in the present study reported that engaging in mindful consumption fosters responsible consumption habits and encourages

individuals to consume less, resulting in increased sustainability. This finding is consistent with prior research by Sheth et al. (2011) who similarly demonstrated the positive impact of mindfulness on consumption behavior.

Overall, the respondents did not identify significant disparities between sustainable and mindful consumption, instead suggesting that the two were mutually reinforcing.

5.1.3. Consumers' values and beliefs and its effects on their approach to sustainable consumption and its results on their lives

After conducting a thorough literature review, it was deemed imperative to investigate whether individuals' values and beliefs influenced their stance on sustainable consumption.

Kumar and Panda (2021) have suggested that individuals with higher levels of mindfulness are more inclined to adopt a socially responsible lifestyle, which involves making purchases that align with their intrinsic values and contribute to environmental and community well-being. Additionally, Helm and Subramaniam's (2019) study highlights the impact of individual values and beliefs on sustainable consumption practices.

In general, the interviewees acknowledged the existence of a relation between personal values and sustainable decision-making, with their beliefs serving as a guiding force for making sustainable choices.

However, one interviewee suggested that certain limiting beliefs could hinder an individual's ability to adopt sustainable behaviors, emphasizing the need for higher values to drive sustainable consumption. Additionally, another participant posited that values varied across individuals, with behaviors being influenced by these individual value systems. In conclusion, it was established that values and beliefs do indeed exert a significant influence on sustainable consumption practices, thereby impacting the outcomes of individuals' lives.

5.1.4. The perception of consumers on consumer well-being and the impact of mindful consumption on it

Throughout this study it was found that different factors contribute to their perception of consumer well-being. Some interviewees highlighted the importance of buying quality products to achieve well-being, while others emphasized the absence of post-purchase regret. In fact, consumers' regret after making a purchase can greatly affect their well-being, as it can lead to disappointment, frustration, and even resentment. In addition to these factors, emotional and mental well-being was also mentioned as a crucial component of consumer well-being. It is evident that if a consumer is not

emotionally or mentally well, their overall well-being will be negatively impacted. As such, companies should consider consumers' emotional and mental states when designing and promoting their products. Moreover, the relationship between consumers and brands is another dimension that can contribute to consumer well-being. Consumers who have a strong emotional connection with a particular brand, often referred to as a "love brand," tend to feel a sense of well-being and loyalty. Conversely, negative experiences with a brand can lead to feelings of disappointment and frustration, which can negatively impact consumers' well-being.

Finally, environmental concern was found to be a significant factor in consumers' perception of well-being. Consumers who prioritize sustainable choices and environmentally friendly products tend to feel greater wellbeing. With increasing awareness of environmental issues and rising prices, consumers are increasingly considering environmental factors when making purchasing decisions. Brown & Kasser (2005) have previously demonstrated a positive association between personal well-being and ecological responsible behavior.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with recent research by Resnik (2022) and Wickramasekara & Jayawickrama (2022) which emphasizes the crucial role of consumer behavior in shaping both the well-being of individuals and the environment.

As such, companies should consider sustainability as a crucial component in their product design and marketing strategies. In conclusion, consumer well-being is a complex and multifaceted construct that is influenced by various dimensions. By understanding the factors that contribute to consumer well-being, companies can design products and services that meet the diverse needs and desires of their customers.

5.1.5. The effects of mindfulness on consumers' consumption habits

Through the investigation, the findings indicate that the practice of mindfulness significantly impacts the consumption habits of the interviewees.

Bahl et al. (2016) have asserted that the practice of mindful consumption by consumers has significant implications across multiple domains, including health, addiction, family dynamics, financial well-being, and materialistic tendencies. Barbaro & Pickett (2016) also have suggested that individuals who practice mindfulness often report feeling more connected to the natural environment. As a result, this behavior reinforces connections with the natural world, making sustainable options more salient to those who practice mindfulness.

Furthermore, Yigit (2020) has referred that mindfulness can trigger a transformation of daily consumption habits. As individuals who practice mindfulness establish a deeper connection with nature, they become more

aware of their inner joy, leading to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. These findings underscore the importance of mindfulness in promoting sustainable and responsible consumption practices.

The practice fosters a heightened sense of awareness, which in turn informs more sustainable consumption choices. Notably, one of the respondents (I4) reflected that prior to engaging in mindfulness, they were overly frugal and limited themselves from fully experiencing life. Following the incorporation of mindfulness into their lifestyle, I4's consumption habits underwent a positive shift, with less emphasis placed on monetary concerns when making purchasing decisions. Additionally, several interviewees reported positive changes in their eating habits, with greater mindfulness applied to what they choose to consume, which in turn has benefited their physical health. These experiences highlight a discernible shift towards more deliberate consumption, which can be attributed to the practice of mindfulness. Lastly, our investigation explored whether the duration and level of commitment to mindfulness practices influenced the adoption of more sustainable consumption habits. Our findings revealed that most respondents considered consistency in mindfulness practices to be a critical factor in achieving visible outcomes.

5.2. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

At the conclusion of this study, several theoretical and practical contributions have emerged, which can inform future research in this area.

5.2.1. Theoretical contributions

The results of Resnik's (2022) qualitative research underscore the necessity for further investigation to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay between mindfulness, consumer well-being, and sustainable consumption. The current study adheres to this research recommendation, and therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, this research report serves as a contribution to the literature.

Although the study was inspired by Resnik (2022) work, the aim was to further the knowledge already obtained. During the literature review, other interesting insights emerged, and based on other authors, it was possible to add several analysis categories not previously explored by Resnik (2022). Helm and Subramaniam (2019), as well as Kumar and Panda (2021) emphasized the influence of consumer values and beliefs, a topic also addressed in this study. Mindful consumption, which several authors mentioned, including Joseph et al. (2022) was also given attention, an aspect not explored in Resnik's (2022) study.

Moreover, this research contributes to the literature by providing insights into the influence of mindfulness on sustainable consumption and consumer well-being. Through data analysis, it was possible to determine the motivations of people to practice mindfulness, distinguish between mindful consumption and sustainable consumption, investigate the influence of consumers' beliefs and values on their approach to sustainable consumption, analyze their perception of consumer well-being and the impact of mindful consumption on this well-being, and examine the effects of mindfulness on consumers' consumption habits.

5.2.2. Contributions to Practitioners

Throughout this study, several contributions have emerged for marketing professionals. Starting with the literature, Kumar and Panda (2021) highlighted the positive correlation between mindfulness and socially responsible consumption behavior, indicating that marketing practitioners should be aware of this relationship. Consumers who practice mindfulness are more likely to adopt a socially responsible lifestyle, making purchases that align with their intrinsic values and support the environment and community. To effectively reach these consumers, marketing campaigns should be rationalized and linked to their intrinsic values, which can help establish meaningful connections and promote brand loyalty. By promoting

mindfulness, marketers may encourage more responsible consumption patterns and mitigate the negative environmental effects of overconsumption.

Furthermore, Sheth et al. (2011) previously introduced a framework that links sustainability to a customer-centric methodology. This approach redirects the focus of sustainability measures to the overall impacts of business actions on the environmental, personal, and economic well-being of the consumer, highlighting the importance of considering consumer needs and values in sustainability efforts. Additionally, this method sheds light on how businesses can foster mindful consumption and effectively utilize marketing to implement a customer-centric approach to sustainability,

One of the participants in the study (I6) emphasized the significant role that brand relationships play in their consumer behavior. Notably, some brands prioritize profit maximization over addressing the needs of consumers, and such brands are not considered to be favorable by consumers who are environmentally conscious. Instead, consumers with strong environmental concerns tend to favor companies that employ sustainable practices, thereby developing a stronger affinity towards the brand. In addition, interviewee I9 highlighted the strong stance of "woke" consumers in taking action when encountering stores lacking sustainable practices. Furthermore, interviewee I11 noted that mindful consumers exercise greater control over their interactions with brands and marketing efforts, thereby filtering out promotional content that does not align with their values. Therefore, brands

must prioritize sustainability efforts to cater to the needs of these types of consumers, employing a customer-centric approach, as recommended by Sheth et al. (2011).

5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Notwithstanding the emphasis on scientific and methodological rigor in the development of the present study, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, which will be outlined below, along with recommendations for future investigations. The primary limitation pertains to the time frame, given that the current study was conducted over the course of a single academic year. Despite conducting 11 in-depth interviews with consumers who practice mindfulness, future research endeavors may benefit from an increased number of participants. Therefore, as a recommendation for future investigations, it is deemed relevant to expand the number of participants of the study. Furthermore, it is important to combine qualitative and quantitative research to have a more enlarged view. Moreover, it may be worthwhile to concentrate on a particular generation, such as Generation Z, to alleviate potential research bottlenecks. Despite this attempt, another limitation of the study was the relatively low number of individuals practicing mindfulness in Portugal, where the research was conducted.

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