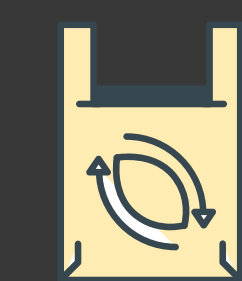
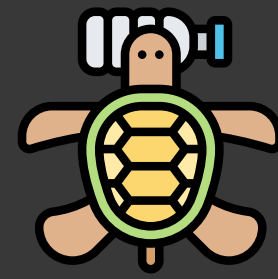


The effect of message framing and Prototype Willingness Model components on pro-environmental behaviour

THE PROBLEM

Climate change poses a major challenge to humankind. With increasing environmental concern, disposable plastic has become the centre of environmental awareness campaigns across social media in order to stimulate pro-environmental behaviour.



Research has shown that although consumers' report high environmental concerns, there remains a discrepancy between their stated environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behaviours.

The aim of the current study was to investigate factors that influence pro-environmental behaviour using the Prototype Willingness Model (PWM), as well as the effect of message framing on the use of disposable plastic.

An important contribution of the present research was to extend PWM applicability to environmental behaviour.

In the UK national surveys suggested 13 billion plastic water bottles are used every year, with an average of 150 bottles per person (Environmental Audit Committee, 2017). It is vital to mention that only 7.5 billion of those are being recycled and the remaining end up in landfill, littered or incinerated.

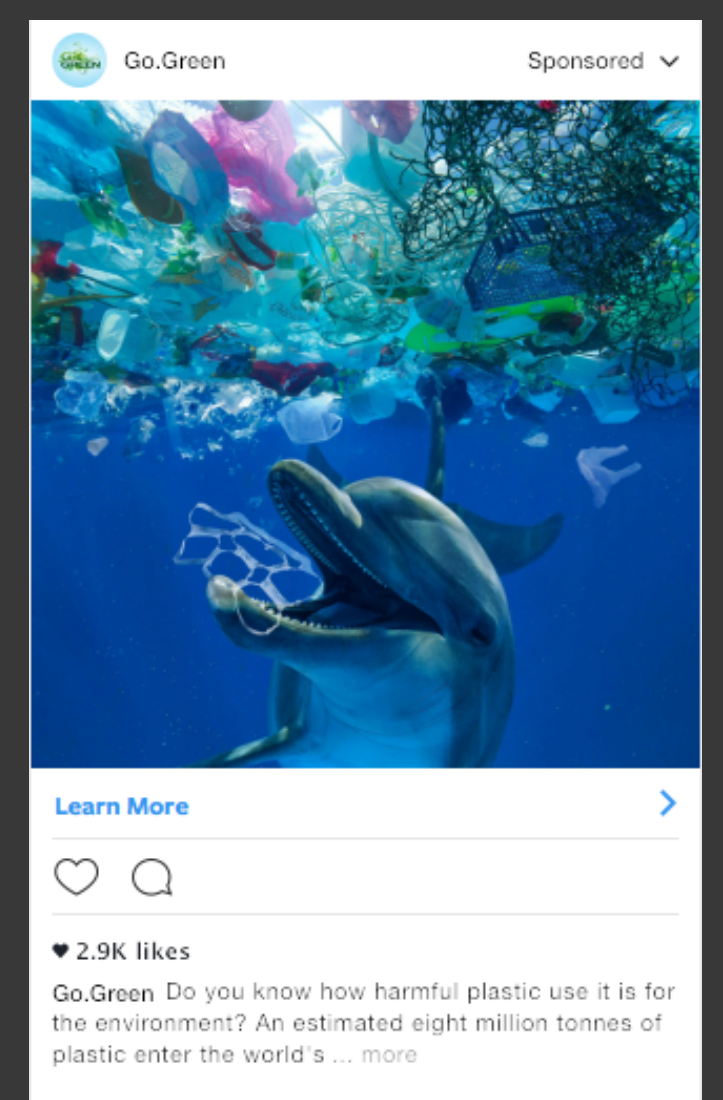
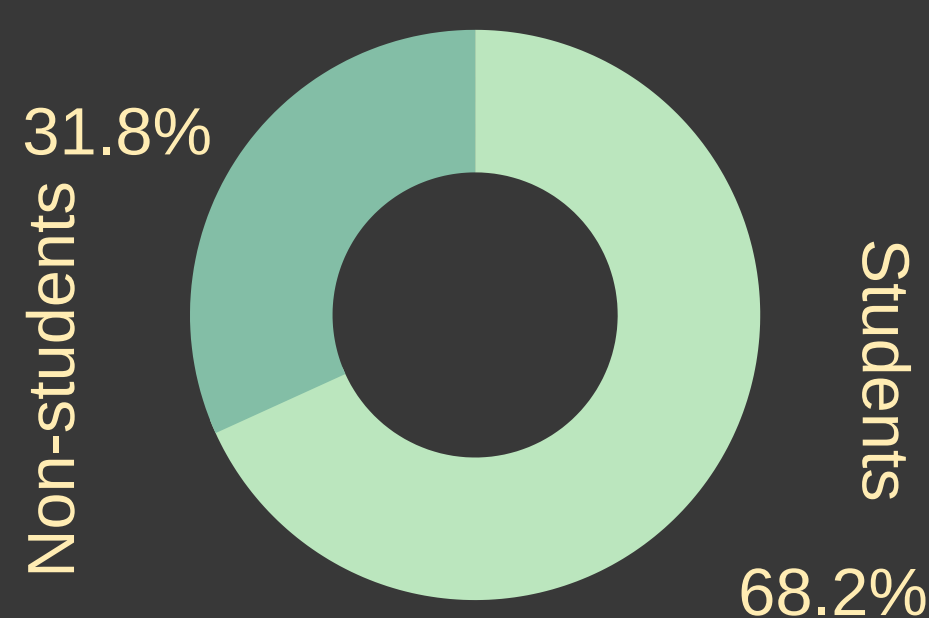
METHOD



Participants: Female - 70% Male - 29% Non-binary - 1%

An online questionnaire was completed by 157 participants aged 18-60, recruited through social media and email invitations. The study used an experimental design where participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Past behaviour, attitudes and social norms towards using disposable plastic were measured first.

Then the participants were asked to 'think about the typical person their age who engage in pro-environmental behaviour' and to rate it by indicating the extent to which they felt they possessed five positive characteristics (cool, fun, intelligent, liberal, caring) and five negative characteristics (judgemental, eccentric, hippie, unhygienic, overreactive). They were also asked to rate how similar they were to that person.



Before completing intentions and willingness scales participants saw a social media advert either positively or negatively framed regarding the environmental consequences of using plastics.

RESULTS

It was found that attitudes, past behaviour, social norms and willingness predicted intentions to avoid using disposable plastic. Evaluation of the typical environmentalist (i.e. prototype favourability) predicted behavioural willingness to avoid disposable plastic when controlling for past behaviour, attitudes and social norms constructs.

The findings illustrated that participants engaged in pro-environmental activities such as using reusable containers, bags and bottles approximately 50% of the time. Lastly, the type of social media advert did not have an influence on the levels of intentions and willingness despite the way it was framed.

The findings challenge the influence of environmental awareness campaigns promoting pro-environmental behaviour and suggest that behavioural intention and willingness seem primarily driven by past behaviour, attitudes, social norms and prototype perception. These findings can be used to influence interventions that aim to promote pro-environmental behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

WHAT NEXT:



INCREASE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ECO-FRIENDLY



CREATE SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS TO USE DISPOSABLE PLASTIC



CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF THE "ENVIRONMENTALIST"