



In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Art
Jennifer Brown

Will defend her thesis

Conversations with the Circular Consumer

Friday, April 17, 2020

3:00 PM

[Zoom Meeting](#) ID: 665-515-434

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Kevin J. Dooley, Chair
Dr. Rajesh Buch, Member
Dr. Daniel Fischer, Member

Abstract

The circular economy is viewed as a solution to many of the environmental and social ills that the linear economy has exacerbated. Whether it is through refill solutions or redesigning a cardboard shipping container, fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands are rethinking the way their products are delivered to consumers through business model innovations that promote circularity.

The consumer plays the important, often overlooked, role of enabler within circular business models. This study aims to increase broader understanding of what motivates circular consumption of fast moving consumer goods while analyzing the relationship between motivators and the behaviors required to participate. Semi-structured interviews provide insights from consumers who are currently purchasing household cleansers from brands that operate with a circular business model.

Results from this study highlight a group of consumers that are distinguished by their common desire to reduce their personal consumption of single-use plastics. There is clear indication that these consumers are in fact seeking out ways to consume more sustainably. A significant subset of this group expresses concern regarding ingredients used in the products. Health concerns for themselves, their family or a pet are driving a desire to understand product ingredients. With some consumers, concern for ingredients translate to the desire to reduce plastic use to avoid chemicals in plastics. There is evidence to indicate that the concern for personal consumption of single-use plastics is being driven in-part by information distributed via social media and supported by targeted advertisements for brands that address this concern.