Anti-consumption: Investigating the role of socio-psychological factors in motivating customers to help other customers not to shop

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Background: Consumers are known to help others engage in consumption and anti-consumption practices. It is argued that behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions may motivate customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices.

Aim: This study aims to investigate the role of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices.

Setting: A self-administered survey was sent by a research agency to South African respondents aged 18 and older, who generally advise other customers about suitable anti-consumption practices.

Method: A quantitative study was undertaken and respondents were selected using purposive sampling. A total of 476 useable responses were collected. Furthermore, descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and multiple regressions were undertaken to test the study's hypotheses.

Results: Three of the four behavioural involvement factors tested are significant predictors of helping; while two of the social norm factors tested are significant predictors of helping. Marketers' inappropriate actions impact negatively on their customers' behaviour, but a more far-reaching consequence is that their customers are willing to help others engage in anti-consumption practices.

Conclusion: Behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions motivate customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices.

Contribution: The study uncovers the role of socio-psychological factors in motivating customers to help other customers avoid brands that may be harmful towards society.

Keywords: anti-consumption; helping; social norms; behavioural involvement; socio-psychological factors.

Introduction

Customers are known to engage in helping behaviours when other customers need assistance or experience a problem. Customers engage in helping behaviours by assisting, teaching, and advising other customers (Yi & Gong 2013) and performing these helping behaviours voluntarily both offline or online at no cost (Van Tonder & Petzer 2022). The role of social and psychological factors in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices is significant to this study. Anti-consumption involves consumers' mindful and intentional choices as a form of sustainable behaviour (Lin & Park 2023) that is guided mainly by consumers' needs, and not their wants (Hwang et al. 2016). The study of anti-consumption practices is noteworthy, as consumers increasingly realise that their consumption practices impact not only their own, but also on environmental and societal well-being (Lin & Park 2023). Since consumers are prone to help others engage in their consumption practices (Yi & Gong 2013), it is only logical that the same is true concerning anti-consumption.

Thus far, studies at the intersection of sustainable consumption and anti-consumption have been primarily grounded in socio-cognitive models that strive to explain consumer decisions to engage or avoid certain behaviours (Culiberg et al. 2023). Central to these approaches are social and psychological factors that have been accredited in explaining sustainable and anti-consumption behaviour, according to a meta-analysis conducted by Bamber and Möser (2007) on the determinants

of pro-environmental behaviour. Moreover, consumer behaviour literature has widely credited the level of behavioural involvement consumers exhibit towards a product or service and the social norms consumers abide by as socio-psychological factors influencing consumer behaviour (Bennett et al. 2009; Tsui & Wang 2012). Nevertheless, little is known about the relevance of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. Involvement as a psychological factor in consumer behaviour can be described as the extent to which a consumer 'is really "into" something' (Bennett et al. 2009:15). According to Stone (1984 quoted in Kim, Scott & Crompton 1997), behavioural involvement refers to the passion and/or the period a consumer spends engaging in an activity. Contrastingly, social norms as a social factor in consumer behaviour comes into play in situations where consumers assume a psychological responsibility, particularly purchase behaviours, that society does not find acceptable (Tsui & Wang 2012). Where consumers focus on obtaining the fullest utility possible, they do not only consider costs versus benefits, but also social norms (Tsui & Wang 2012). More specifically, social norms are ideas individuals hold internally and are reflected in how society expects them to behave (Maxwell & Garbarino 2010).

Schmidt (2019) opined that the choices consumers make align with their perceptions of the prevalent norms. However, social norms are not always reliable predictors of consumer behaviour, as consumers often rationalise and justify their behaviour even if it does not align with prevailing social norms, rather calling on conventions, stories, codes, and technical standards (Tilly 2006 quoted in Eckhard, Belk & Devinney 2010). Accordingly, the level of behavioural involvement that influences customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices is also investigated. Behavioural involvement is considered as it is a critical determinant of consumer behaviour (Khare, Sadachar & Chakraborty 2022).

To address the research gap, this study's objective is to investigate the role of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. The intention is to clarify to what extent behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices and social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices influence customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices (i.e., avoiding brands that may be harmful to society). Selected anti-consumption practices in relation to four consumption situations are examined: (1) sustainable consumption, (2) country of origin, (3) human rights, and (4) animal welfare. These consumption situations have been identified by the researchers as appropriate for this study as they often elicit anti-consumption behaviours and have been considered in other research focusing on consumer behaviour and/or anti-consumption behaviour (e.g., Dart 2022; Islam &

Hussain 2023; Malek, Umberger & Goddard 2019; Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher 2018). These situations are discussed in the theoretical development section of this paper.

This study is novel in its contribution, since it considers the role of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. The study clarifies the extent to which behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices and social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices influence customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. Moreover, the study juxtaposes the role of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in the selected anti-consumption practices.

The findings serve as a warning to marketers of how their inappropriate actions or unacceptable behaviours impact negatively on their customers' behaviour, with a more far-reaching consequence being that their customers could help others engage in anti-consumption practices. Additionally, the findings are valuable to organisations supporting sustainable practices, anti-consumption advocates, and policymakers in understanding the drivers motivating customers to help other customers with anti-consumption practices and to what extent these customers could be influenced and assist in promoting environmental and societal well-being. In the next sections, the theoretical grounding, methodology, results, findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study are presented.

Theoretical development

As previously addressed, the intention of the current investigation is to clarify to what extent behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices and social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices influence customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices (i.e., avoid brands that may be harmful to society). Selected anti-consumption practices in relation to four consumption situations are examined. These consumption situations are further addressed below. Thereafter, customer helping behaviour is discussed.

Behavioural involvement and social norms, as well as previous contributions in this regard are also examined. Preference was specifically given to studies addressing the four consumption situations and anti-consumption behaviours that were of interest to this study. The discussion evidently informs and provides support to the hypotheses formulated for this study.

Consumption situations
Sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption is key to the preservation of the earth's natural resources (Quoquab & Mohammad 2020) and

is acknowledged within the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Ahamad & Ariffin 2018). Extant literature refers to sustainable consumption as an 'oxymoron', as the concept underscores both sustainability and consumption (Haider, Shannon & Moschis 2022:3). In essence, sustainable consumption addresses basic need fulfilment and improved life quality for current and future human populations (Haider et al. 2022). Sustainable consumption concerns being sensitive to the basic needs of humans and refraining from engaging in excessive consumption practices (Quoquab & Mohammad 2020). Accordingly, sustainable consumption includes moderate consumption and the selection of products that will not pollute the earth (Shao 2019). Therefore, consumers who do not buy products from, or support a marketer that is known to engage in actions that harm the natural environment, engage in sustainable consumption practices.

Understanding consumers' rationale for engaging in sustainable consumption practices is fundamental to advancing these behaviours (Abdulrazak & Quoquab 2018). Some scholars have concluded that consumers engage in sustainable consumption for symbolic reasons. Sustainable consumption presents a mirror image of, for example, customers' values, viewpoints, and global perspectives (Abdulrazak & Quoquab 2018). Other scholars have found customer emotions, such as respect, pride, guilt, and anger, to be relevant in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour, including the intent to buy household appliances that are energy-conserving (Wang & Wu 2016). Moreover, it is believed that social factors affect sustainable consumption behaviour. Particularly, environmental influences, education, and information pertaining to environmental conservation and market conditions have been found to have a meaningful impact on sustainable consumption behaviour (Figueroa-Garcia, García-Machado & Pérez-Bustamante Yábar 2018). Within the South African context, sustainability awareness and sustainable marketing efforts are associated with sustainability behaviour (Masocha 2018). More recently, the focus has shifted to remanufactured products. Factors relating to morality, risk, and cost have been found to influence consumers' purchase decisions in this regard (Alyahya et al. 2023).

Country of origin

Country of origin concerns consumers' preferences for products from a specific country, which may not necessarily originate from the country in which they reside. Accordingly, country of origin differs from consumer ethnocentrism, denoting consumers' patriotism for products manufactured by their domestic country (Yang, Ramsaran & Wibowo 2018). Several cues may signify country of origin, including an explicit statement of the name of the manufacturing country, symbols of the country's scenery, and communication in the language of the country of origin (Hornikx et al. 2020).

Consumers tend to associate country of origin with a given level of quality (Thøgersen et al. 2019) or may perceive brands from other countries to have superior symbolic value (Huang, Zhang & Zhu 2022). Country of origin is especially relevant as a quality indicator in the absence of product information (Malhotra 2022). Knowledge of the country of origin is significant as it may result in several effects. Prior research suggests that country of origin may impact consumers' product appraisals. Consumers are more optimistic about products stemming from countries with an approving image than from countries with an image that is less approving (Hornikx et al. 2020). Customers are more accepting of products purchased from developed economies, such as the United States of America, than from developing economies like China (Hoang et al. 2022). Within the South African consumer context specifically, evidence shows that customers' intentions to purchase products manufactured in Korea or China are influenced by product-country image, cultural openness, and world-mindedness (Lee & Robb 2022). Overall, country of origin may also affect purchase decisions relating to food choices (Thøgersen et al. 2019) and electrical appliances (Hien et al. 2020). For instance, consumers may favour French wine, but prefer German beer (Fischer & Zeugner-Roth 2017).

Human rights

Human rights are a global concern. In 2011, the United Nations employed the 'Protect, Respect, and Remedy Framework', which also emphasises companies' roles in preventing human rights violations. Companies are expected to protect their workers' human rights, which may include being paid for services rendered, avoidance of human trafficking practices, and grievances procedures. Allegations of human rights violations can ruin a company's image (Smith, Betts & Smith 2018). Several established brands, including The Gap, Nike, Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo, have experienced reputational harm for contravening human rights in their practices (Ginder & Byun 2022).

The degree to which companies support their employees' human rights also affects consumer behaviour. Within the apparel industry, consumers seem to be more conscious of the social outcomes of their purchase decisions. Human rights violations of working situations in sweatshops appear to be particularly concerning and may result in consumers avoiding brands that violate workers' human rights (Roozen & Raedts 2020). However, other research has shown that consumers have a greater intention to purchase fair-trade food, than fair-trade fashion (Eberhardt et al. 2021). Fair trade concerns a trading partnership that safeguards employees' rights. Products sold within the fair-trade system are more expensive, yet customers are normally willing to pay extra for socially conscious goods (Cheung & To 2020; Zerbini, Vergura & Luceri 2019). Prior research has shown that consumers' perceptions of retailers' ethics, including fair trade, may positively influence word of mouth (Cheung & To 2020) and fair-trade engagement may lead to fair-trade purchasing behaviour (Gillani et al. 2021). Fair-trade practices are also implemented in South Africa, but more work is required to ensure irregularities within the system are addressed (Ngcwangu 2021).

Animal welfare

While several advancements have been made to protect animal welfare, the main obstacle to progress still resonates with China, being a key player in the cosmetics industry. Legislation in this country enforces animal testing with respect to selected products. Animal testing is conducted to assess the extent to which products, such as medicines and cosmetics, are safe for human consumption (Min, Lee & Zhao 2018).

Regardless of these drawbacks, there are still consumers and companies that agree on the importance of animal welfare and support initiatives in this regard. For instance, consumers appear to increasingly select food and cosmetic products that support animal welfare. Credibility, attitude towards marketing claims, subjective norm, and altruistic concerns with animal welfare positively impact purchase intentions of products that avoid animal testing. From a business perspective, companies have introduced product labels confirming that they have not tested their products on animals (Grappe et al. 2021). Green cosmetics present a case in point, referring to cosmetic products that are not animal tested and that seem to be well accepted by consumers (Kapoor, Singh & Misra 2019). The green cosmetics industry is expected to increase in value within the next few years (Shimul, Cheah & Khan 2022). Animal-friendly claims influence brand perceptions favourably (Grappe et al. 2021). Moreover, previous research has established that satisfaction towards green cosmetics is influenced by health consciousness, environmental concern, and information certification (Kapoor et al. 2019). Within the South African environment, research has found that customers' intentions to purchase green cosmetics are affected by attitudes and price perceptions (Mahowa 2021). Organic food offerings present another example where animal welfare is considered. Extant literature denotes that environmental and animal welfare motives impact positively on the desire for organic food (Shimul et al. 2022).

Customer helping behaviour

Several studies have been conducted to understand the underlying reasons why consumers help each other in the marketplace. Overall, several factors may motivate helping behaviour, including psychological contract violation (Liu, Yang & Chen 2020), perceived value (Cheng et al. 2016), affective commitment (Choi & Lotz 2018), and sustainable customer engagement behaviour (Chuah et al. 2020).

Some scholars believe that customer helping behaviour is a form of customer citizenship behaviour (Yi & Gong 2013). Customer citizenship behaviour concerns actions customers may perform out of their free will, which may be helpful and contribute to an organisation's competitive advantage (Gong & Wang 2022). However, given the current study's interest in customers assisting other customers to avoid brands that may harm society, the help that is provided in this regard cannot fully be classified as a form of citizenship behaviour.

Advice against the purchasing of selected brands may affect the competitive position of these brands.

Within the current setting, the customer help provided should merely be perceived as a form of social support. Social support refers to 'the social resources that persons perceive to be available or that are actually provided to them by non-professionals in the context of both formal support groups and informal helping relationships' (Gottlieb & Bergen 2010:512). Moreover, among the different forms of social support, informational support seems to be specifically relevant to this study. Informational support concerns giving advice and information, leading the way, and providing suggestions to address problems and develop possible strategies to solve them (Gurrieri & Drenten 2019). Subsequently, within the current study, helping refers to providing assistance and advice to other customers about avoiding brands that may be harmful to society.

Hypotheses development
The effect of involvement

Involvement has seen several conceptualisations over time and is most often considered an amalgamation of consumer values, needs, interests, and variables specific to situations consumers find themselves in (Bruwer & Cohen 2022). Furthermore, a differentiation can be made between enduring and behavioural involvement. Enduring involvement relates to consumers' interest and arousal with a product over the long term (Bruwer & Cohen 2022), while behavioural involvement involves time and passion exerted in engaging in an activity, as measured by frequency of engagement, for instance (Bruwer & Cohen 2022).

Regarding the four consumption situations examined in this study, there is further consensus amongst consumer behaviour scholars that involvement determines decision-making styles and behaviour of consumers (Yousaf & Shaukat Malik 2013). There is also no doubt that consumers' extent of involvement influences consumption (Bennett et al. 2009). Extant research denotes that consumers' involvement in, for example, a domestic product, positively influences their judgements and willingness to buy the domestic product (Prince 2020). Similarly, empirical evidence exists that consumers' involvement with a boycott cause has a large effect on boycott participation intents (Albrecht et al. 2013). Previous research additionally suggests a positive 'spillover effect' between different forms of environmental behaviour. Involvement in one form of pro-environmental behaviour may contribute to a more pro-environmental orientation and other forms of pro-environmental behaviour may follow (Nilsson, Bergquist & Schultz 2017). For example, consumer behaviour associated with recycling has been found to 'spillover' into the purchasing of environmentally friendly clothes (Ha & Kwon 2016:10). In relation to green cosmetics, a higher level of involvement positively moderates attitude's effect on purchase intention (Shimul et al. 2022). Furthermore, prior research has established that within a given behavioural

category (i.e., outdoor activities), individuals with a high level of behavioural involvement in one type of activity (i.e., fishing) also seem to engage highly in other related activities within this behavioural category (i.e., other outdoor activities) (Sievänen, Neuvonen & Pouta 2018).

Accordingly, it is evident from the discussion above that involvement influences consumer behaviour and that involvement plays a role in consumers' anti-consumption practices. Considering the findings of Sievänen et al. (2018), it seems plausible that consumers who demonstrate behavioural involvement in the selected anti-consumption practices of this study (i.e., refraining from purchasing products that do not support sustainability, a given country of origin, human rights, and animal welfare) are also likely to engage in other related anti-consumption practices, such as helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society and that the relationship between the behavioural involvement factors and helping may be positive. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_1: Behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices, promoting sustainable consumption (H_{1a}), country of origin (H_{1b}), human rights (H_{1c}), and animal welfare (H_{1d}) positively predicts customers helping other customers to avoid brands that may be harmful to society.

The effect of social norm perceptions

Social norms impact consumer decisions (Tsui & Wang 2012) and behaviour intention (Park & Ha 2012). Social norms involve consumers' perceptions of pressure from society to behave or not behave in a certain way and is motivated by social pressure and social approval (Ajzen & Madden 1986). According to Maxwell and Garbarino (2010), social norms are proscriptive or prescriptive, with the former referring to behaviour individuals should not engage in and the latter referring to behaviour individuals should engage in according to society. In other words, social norms influence consumers to engage in 'appropriate behaviour', whether it is consumption behaviour or anti-consumption behaviour, depending on whether proscriptive or prescriptive norms come into play.

Concerning the four consumption situations examined in this study, extant research further denotes that when environment-friendly social norms are eminent, positive word of mouth about a company engaging in sustainable behaviours may follow (Hwang & Moon 2022). Additionally, it has been established that in an environmentally friendly context, social norms positively influence buying and word-of-mouth intentions (Han et al. 2019). Country of origin is further perceived to have normative associations. Consumers view the assessment of products from a given country as an affirmation of its rules, customers, and behaviours. Subsequently, countries are boycotted or rewarded with purchases (Sharma 2011). Previous research also suggests that normative social influence affects boycott behaviour (Sen, Gürhan-Canli & Morwitz 2001). Subjective norm (a form of social norms) towards boycott behaviour positively influences intentions of boycott behaviour

(Hamzah & Mustafa 2018). Furthermore, subjective norm has been found to positively affect customers' intentions to purchase products that avoid animal testing (Grappe et al. 2021). Similarly, subjective norm has been found to positively influence customers' intentions to purchase organic skincare and haircare products (Yeon Kim & Chung 2011) as well as the help customers may provide to other customers in purchasing green products (Van Tonder, Fullerton, De Beer & Saunders 2023).

It is evident from the discussion above that social norms also influence consumer behaviour. Moreover, social norms seem to influence consumers' anti-consumption practices with respect to their own purchasing behaviours as well as the help and assistance they provide to other customers to conform. Therefore, it seems plausible that when social norm perceptions are evident (i.e., views of appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices, promoting sustainable consumption, country of origin, human rights, and animal welfare), further anti-consumption practices may follow. Customers may want to help other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_2: Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices, promoting sustainable consumption (H_{2a}), country of origin (H_{2b}), human rights (H_{2c}), and animal welfare (H_{2d}) positively predict customers helping other customers to avoid brands that may be harmful to society.

Figure 1 provides a graphical illustration of the hypotheses that were formulated for the study.

Research methodology
Measurement and control variables

Aligned with previous studies, behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices was measured by assessing behavioural frequency (Verkuyten & Yildiz 2010). The respondents were requested to answer four questions using a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 ('Never') to 6 ('Always'). Each question addressed one of the four anti-
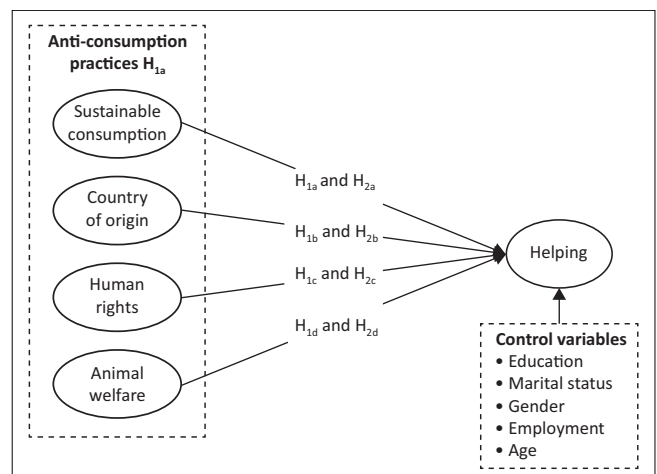

FIGURE 1: Conceptual model for the study.

consumption practices examined in this study. Specifically, the respondents were requested to indicate how frequent there is at least one brand they refuse to purchase or one retailer where they refuse to buy from, because of: (1) the origin of the product, or because of the marketer's history of being involved in actions (2) that would harm the environment, (3) that do not support basic human rights and (4) that concerns experimental testing on live animals. Effectively, behavioural involvement in these anti-consumption practices promotes sustainable consumption, country of origin, human rights, and animal welfare.

Four single-item labelled Likert-type scales were applied to measure social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices that promote sustainable consumption, country of origin, human rights, and animal welfare. Respondents were requested to confirm views of appropriateness for consumers to refuse to purchase a product or support a marketer: (1) known to be involved in behaviours that may damage the natural environment; (2) known to sell products from an undesirable country of origin; (3) known to engage in human rights violation practices; and (4) known for being involved in experimental testing on live animals. The respondents' answers were recorded on a six-point labelled scale, ranging from 1 ('totally inappropriate') to 6 ('totally appropriate').

Helping was assessed using an adapted version of the validated scale of Yi and Gong (2013). The scale included four items, whose stems remained intact. However, the statements were slightly modified to be more reflective of the informational social support customers may provide to other customers in avoiding brands that may be harmful to society, as addressed earlier (Gurrieri & Drenten 2019). Subsequently, the statements related to providing assistance and advice to other customers, and helping to solve problems experienced in avoiding brands that may be harmful to society. The respondents' answers were recorded on a six-point labelled Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (6).

Finally, gender, educational level, age, and employment status were included as control variables predicting helping. Research has indicated that these variables are likely to influence voluntary assistant type of behaviours (Ahmed 2008; Eagly 2009; Mayr & Freund 2020; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Suárez-Acosta & Guerra-Báez 2017). Marital status was also included as it was measured in this study and often included in consumer behaviour studies as it influences consumer behaviour (Kumar 2016).

Sample procedure, data collection, and data analysis strategy

In the absence of a complete sampling frame, a purposive sampling technique was followed. Two screening questions were formulated to ensure only respondents aged 18 and older and who generally advise other customers about suitable anti-consumption practices were included in the survey. Framing the target population in this manner was deemed suitable to obtain a more accurate and rationalised understanding of the perceptions and behaviour of customers who help other customers with anti-consumption practices.

An accredited research agency in South Africa assisted in collecting the research data. The research panel of the accredited agency received an email requesting them to complete the self-administered survey online on a voluntary basis. The respondents who did not pass the screening questions were not allowed to continue with the survey. The research agency provided the data in Excel format and excluded respondents' contact information. All cases with missing values were deleted from the data file, resulting in a final sample of 476 respondents who answered the self-administered questionnaire in full.

Of the 476 useable responses, 52.5% were male, 45.8% were female, 0.4% were gender-neutral or binary, and 1.3% preferred not to answer. At the time of the survey, majority (34.7%) of respondents were aged 56–75, followed by 41–55 (34%), 26–40 (26.9%), 76 and older (2.5%), and 18–25 (1.5%), while the remainder (0.4%) preferred not to answer. Regarding current work status, most participants (63.9%) were full-time employed, 16.8% were retired, 7.6% worked part-time, and the remainder (11.7%) were students, unemployed or indicated their current work status as 'other'. Most respondents (60.7%) were married, 17.6% were single, 9.5% were divorced or separated, 8.4% were living with a partner, 3.4% were widowed, and 0.4% preferred not to answer. With respect to education, majority of respondents held a post-school qualification (85.9%), 12.6% completed high school, 0.2% did not complete high school, and 0.4% preferred not to answer. The sample surveyed represents older, married, mostly employed, and well-educated individuals.

Descriptive statistics were reported for the social and psychological factors examined in this study as well as customer helping behaviour, being the dependent variable. The internal consistency reliability of helping others to engage in anti-consumption practices was assessed by calculating the Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.931 – well above the 0.7 cut-off (Hair et al. 2014). Reliability could not be assessed statistically for the single-item scales that measured behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were undertaken to determine if the social and psychological factors under investigation were significant predictors of helping others to engage in anti-consumption practices (i.e., avoiding brands that may be harmful to society), when the demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education and employment status) measured in the study were controlled for. The hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted after the assumptions related to sample size, multicollinearity, and singularity as well as outliers had been checked (Allen & Bennett 2010).

Results

Descriptive statistics for behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions

The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) are presented in Table 1. With respect to behavioural involvement (psychological factor), the scale means for the four selected anti-consumption practices ranged from 3.49 to 4.14. On average, the respondents exhibited the highest level of behavioural involvement with human rights (mean = 4.14) – where 1 was 'never' and 6 was 'always' – followed by animal welfare (mean = 4.11), sustainable consumption (mean = 3.83), and country of origin (mean = 3.49). For social norm perceptions (social factor) concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in the four selected anti-consumption practices examined, the scale means obtained ranged from 4.51 to 5.31. Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices were the strongest for human rights (mean = 5.31) – where 1 was 'totally inappropriate' and 6 was 'totally appropriate' – followed by sustainable consumption (mean = 5.23), animal welfare (mean = 4.96), and country of origin (mean = 4.51).

Descriptive statistics for helping

Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations for the items measuring the dependent variable of the study, helping others engage in anti-consumption as well as the mean score for the dependent variable. The means for the four items measuring helping others to engage in anti-consumption ranged from 4.21 to 4.68 on the six-point Likert-type labelled scale. The standard deviations for the individual items ranged from 1.068 to 1.250. The overall mean for helping others engage in anti-consumption was 4.43, with a standard deviation of 1.053. The means of the four items measuring helping others to engage in anti-consumption were close in value.

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics.

Anti-consumption practices	Behavioural involvement		Social norm perceptions	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Sustainable consumption	3.83	1.280	5.23	1.231
Country of origin	3.49	1.433	4.51	1.277
Human rights	4.14	1.471	5.31	1.189
Animal welfare	4.11	1.688	4.96	1.512

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics for helping others engage in anti-consumption.

Construct and items	Mean	Standard deviation
Helping others to engage in anti-consumption	4.43	1.053
I assist other customers if they need my help in avoiding brands that may be harmful to society.	4.68	1.068
I help other customers if they seem to have problems avoiding brands that may be harmful to society.	4.48	1.113
I teach other customers about avoiding brands that may be harmful to society.	4.21	1.250
I give advice to other customers about avoiding brands that may be harmful to society.	4.36	1.189

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to assess the influence of behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices on helping behaviour, when the demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education and employment status) measured in the study were controlled for. As indicated earlier, several assumptions were checked and met prior to the analysis.

For the first step, the results of the hierarchical multiple regression showed that the demographic variables measured in the study accounted for 0.9% of the variability in helping others engage in anti-consumption practices ($R^2 = 0.009$, F (5, 470) = 0.81, $p = 0.541$). The model was non-significant and none of the control variables were significant predictors of helping others engage in anti-consumption practices. For the second step, it became evident that the model including the behavioural involvement in the anti-consumption practices examined accounted for a further 22.8% of the variability in helping others engage in anti-consumption practices ($\Delta R^2 = 0.228$, ΔF (4, 466) = 34.83, $p < 0.001$) (see Table 3). Therefore, the second model was significant. As further indicated in Table 3, behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practices – with respect to three of the four anti-consumption practices examined – is a significant predictor of helping others engage in anti-consumption practices when the demographic variables are controlled for. Hence, H_{1a}, H_{1b}, and H_{1c} were supported.

Another hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine whether social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices were significant predictors of helping others engage in anti-consumption practices, if the demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, education, marital status, and employment status) measured in the study were controlled for. As indicated earlier, several assumptions were checked and met prior to the analysis.

From the results of the first step of the hierarchical multiple regression, demographic variables measured in the study accounted for 0.9% of the variability in helping others engage in anti-consumption ($R^2 = 0.009$, F (5, 470) = 0.81, $p = 0.541$). The model was non-significant and none of the control variables were significant predictors of helping others engage in anti-consumption. For the second step, it became evident that the model including the social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in the selected anti-consumption practices accounted for a further 6.6% of the variability in helping others engage in anti-consumption practices ($\Delta R^2 = 0.066$. ΔF (6. 464) = 8.30, $p < 0.001$) (see Table 4). Consequently, the second model was significant. Furthermore, Table 4 denotes that the social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices are only significant predictors of customer helping behaviour with respect to the first two anti-consumption practices examined. Therefore, H_{2a} and H_{2b} were supported.

TABLE 3a: Model summary: Behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices.

Model summary									
Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R^2 change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.093	0.009	-0.002	1.05445	0.009	0.813	5	470	0.541
2	0.487	0.237	0.222	0.92914	0.228	34.831	4	466	0.000*

*, Level of significance is 0.05.
df, degree of freedom; Sig., Significant; Std., Standard.

TABLE 3b: Model summary: Behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices.

Analysis of variance					
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.519	5	0.904	0.813	0.541
	Residual	522.580	470	1.112	-	-
	Total	**527.099**	**475**	-	-	-
2	Regression	124.797	9	13.866	16.062	0.000*
	Residual	402.301	466	0.863	-	-
	Total	**527.099**	**475**	-	-	-

*, Level of significance is 0.05.
df, degree of freedom; Sig., Significant.

Implications and conclusion

It is a well-researched conception that customers engage in helping behaviours to assist other customers by assisting, teaching, and advising them during the consumption process (Yi & Gong 2013). Furthermore, we contend that customers not only help others engage in consumption behaviours (Yi & Gong 2013), but also help other customers engage in anti-consumption behaviours. The study of anti-consumption practices is receiving much more attention, as customers realise the impact of their consumption practices on others and the world (Lin & Park 2023). Little is known about the relevance of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. Hence, this study's purpose was to investigate the role of behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices.

Accordingly, the research findings in relation to the means presented in Table 1 indicate that the respondents exhibited behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practices, with the highest level concerning human rights and animal welfare. This was followed by behavioural involvement in sustainable consumption and country of origin anti-consumption practices. As for social norm perceptions concerning the appropriateness for consumers to engage in anti-consumption practices, human rights and sustainable consumption came out top, followed by animal welfare and country of origin. The results prove that anti-consumption practices related to human rights are characterised by higher levels of behavioural involvement and stronger social norm perceptions, compared to the other constructs measured. Of the four anti-consumption practices measured, country of origin had the lowest levels of behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions.

TABLE 3c: Model summary: Behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices.

Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	β	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Model 1							
(Constant)	4.794	0.285		16.796	0.000*		
Gender	0.003	0.086	0.002	0.035	0.972	0.966	1.035
Age	-0.047	0.060	-0.040	-0.777	0.437	0.797	1.254
Education	-0.003	0.034	-0.004	-0.091	0.928	0.987	1.013
Marital status	-0.034	0.051	-0.032	-0.663	0.508	0.909	1.100
Employment status	-0.028	0.024	-0.057	-1.168	0.243	0.875	1.143
Model 2							
(Constant)	6.102	0.288		21.151	0.000*		
Gender	0.001	0.077	0.000	0.011	0.991	0.926	1.080
Age	-0.025	0.054	-0.022	-0.470	0.638	0.775	1.291
Education	-0.004	0.030	-0.005	-0.131	0.896	0.969	1.032
Marital status	-0.057	0.045	-0.054	-1.265	0.206	0.900	1.112
Employment status	-0.014	0.021	-0.028	-0.656	0.512	0.871	1.148
Sustainable consumption	0.200	0.041	0.243	4.826	0.000*	0.648	1.544
Country of origin	0.096	0.035	0.130	2.699	0.007*	0.704	1.420
Human rights	0.174	0.038	0.242	-4.605	0.000*	0.591	1.692
Animal welfare	-0.036	0.029	0.058	-1.231	0.219	0.741	1.350

*, Level of significance is 0.05.
Sig., Significance; Std., Standard; VIF, Variance inflation factor.

Moreover, aligned to the findings of Sievänen et al. (2018) that initially investigated outdoor behavioural categories, it seems plausible that consumers who demonstrate behavioural involvement in the selected anti-consumption practices of this study (i.e., refraining from purchasing products that do not support sustainability, a given country of origin and human rights) are also likely to engage in other related anti-consumption practices, such as helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society. Behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practices, relating to sustainable consumption ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.001$) and human rights ($\beta = 0.242$, $p < 0.001$) are the best predictors of helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society (H1$_a$ and H1$_c$). Behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practice related to country of origin ($\beta = 0.130$, $p = 0.007$) is also a significant predictor (H1$_b$), whilst behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practice related to animal welfare ($\beta = 0.058$, $p = 0.219$) is not a significant predictor (H1$_d$). Therefore, overall behavioural involvement in selected anti-consumption practices predicts customers helping other customers, which aligns with the findings of Bennett et al. (2009) that consumers' involvement influences consumption (i.e., helping others).

TABLE 4a: Model summary: Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected ant-consumption practices.

Model summary									
Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R^2 change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.093	0.009	-0.002	1.05445	0.009	0.813	5	470	0.541
2	0.273	0.075	0.057	1.02314	0.066	8.303	4	466	0.000*

*, Level of significance is 0.05.

df, degree of freedom; Sig., Significant; Std., Standard.

TABLE 4b: Analysis of variance: Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected ant-consumption practices.

Analysis of variance					
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.519	5	0.904	0.813	0.541
Residual	522.580	470	1.112	-	-
Total	**527.099**	**475**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Regression	39.285	9	4.365	4.170	0.000*
Residual	487.814	466	1.047	-	-
Total	**527.099**	**475**	**-**	**-**	**-**

*, Level of significance is 0.05.

df, degree of freedom; Sig., Significant.

Social norm perceptions (social factor) concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices only seem to predict helping behaviour with respect to sustainable consumption ($\beta = 0.119$, $p = 0.034$) and country of origin ($\beta = 0.149$, $p = 0.003$). Social norm perceptions addressing country of origin is the best predictor of helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society followed by social norm perceptions addressing sustainable consumption (H2$_a$ and H2$_b$). Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected anti-consumption practices with respect to human rights ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.115$) and animal welfare ($\beta = 0.070$, $p = 0.165$) are not significant predictors of helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society (H2$_c$ and H2$_d$). Therefore, overall social norm perceptions predict helping other customers to avoid brands that may be harmful to society, in respect to two anti-consumption situations, which align with the notion by Ajzen and Madden (1986) that social norms involve consumers' perceptions of pressure from society to behave in a certain way and these norms can either be proscriptive or prescriptive (Maxwell & Garbarino 2010).

Collectively Table 3 and Table 4 evidence that behavioural involvement (psychological factor) may have more potential than social norm perceptions (social factor) in motivating customers to help other customers engage in selected anti-consumption practices. Specifically, sustainable consumption, country of origin and human rights appeared to be consumption situations that are of relevance in the proposed model. Accordingly, the study found that compared to social norm perceptions, behavioural involvement in anti-consumption practices in relation to sustainable consumption and human rights are better predictors of helping other customers avoid brands that may be harmful to society. Previous research established that social norms are not always reliable predictors of consumer behaviour (Tilly 2006 quoted in Eckhard, Belk & Devinney 2010). Overall, the

TABLE 4c: Coefficients: Social norm perceptions concerning appropriateness for consumers to engage in selected ant-consumption practices.

Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	β	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1							
(Constant)	4.794	0.285	-	16.796	0.000*	-	-
Gender	0.003	0.086	0.002	0.035	0.972	0.966	1.035
Age	-0.047	0.060	-0.040	-0.777	0.437	0.797	1.254
Education	-0.003	0.034	-0.004	-0.091	0.928	0.987	1.013
Marital status	-0.034	0.051	-0.032	-0.663	0.508	0.909	1.100
Employment status	-0.028	0.024	-0.057	-1.168	0.243	0.875	1.143
2							
(Constant)	5.534	0.310		17.859	0.000*	-	-
Gender	-0.011	0.086	-0.006	-0.124	0.901	0.914	1.094
Age	-0.044	0.060	-0.037	-0.736	0.462	0.776	1.289
Education	-0.032	0.033	-0.044	-0.956	0.339	0.959	1.043
Marital status	-0.074	0.050	-0.070	-1.463	0.144	0.874	1.144
Employment status	-0.022	0.024	-0.044	-0.929	0.353	0.871	1.149
Sustainable consumption	0.102	0.048	0.119	2.125	0.034*	0.631	1.586
Country of origin	0.123	0.041	0.149	2.958	0.003*	0.787	1.270
Human rights	0.080	0.051	0.091	1.577	0.115	0.598	1.672
Animal welfare	-0.049	0.035	0.070	-1.390	0.165	0.773	1.293

*, Level of significance is 0.05.

Sig., Significance; Std., Standard; VIF, Variance inflation factor.

current findings confirm that customers involved in anti-consumption practices, may be more likely help other customers to follow their lead.

Only with respect to anti-consumption practices in relation to country of origin, social norm perceptions regarding the appropriateness of the behaviour, seem to be a slightly better predictor of helping behaviour than level of behavioural involvement. These results could be attributed to the fact that consumers view the assessment of products from a given country as an affirmation of its rules, practices, and behaviours (Sharma 2011), which are strongly associated with social norms and a key driver of their willingness to help others engage in anti-consumption practices. Therefore, in relation to country of origin, social norm perceptions are still important and could affect the anti-consumption behaviours of other customers in future.

Finally, the findings with respect to animal welfare is also of significance. Despite animal welfare being strongly supported, the social and psychological factors in relation to animal welfare do not seem to motivate helping behaviours. It is plausible that the research context may have influenced the results, considering South Africa being a developing

country. With little propaganda about animal testing in this country, customers may have felt less inclined to help other customers avoid brands supporting animal testing.

From a managerial perspective, it is evident that perceived inappropriate actions or unacceptable behaviours of marketers impact on their customers' anti-consumption behaviour. However, a more far-reaching consequence is that their customers are willing to help others engage in anti-consumption practices driven by behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions.

On the other hand, the findings are also of meaning to organisations supporting sustainable practices, anti-consumption advocates, and policymakers in understanding the drivers motivating customers to help other customers with anti-consumption practices and to what extent these customers could be influenced and assist in promoting environmental and societal well-being.

Specifically, based on the research findings its seems that customers who are involved in anti-consumption practices in relation to sustainable consumption and human rights, could be targeted to promote further anti-consumption behaviours. Advertising campaigns, online educational material and advertorial discussions could sensitise these consumers to the important role they perform in protecting the environment and society and that their help is needed to ensure fellow customers engage in similar types of behaviours. Social media platforms present a viable opportunity to stimulate further discussions among consumers in this regard.

Customers involved in anti-consumption practices in relation to country of origin may be similarly targeted. However, campaigns endorsing products stemming from countries with an approving image and communicating normative expectations in this regard, may enhance the likelihood of helping behaviour and customers assisting other customers to avoid brands that were not manufactured in an approved country of origin. Social media discussion groups, celebrities and brand ambassadors may serve as useful avenues to fuel normative expectations and to encourage further helping behaviours in relation to avoiding brands from unapproved countries.

Research limitations and directions for further research

The study focused on four anti-consumption practices to test the research hypotheses. A myriad anti-consumption practices could still be investigated in future studies. Behavioural involvement and social norm perceptions were measured using a single-item labelled Likert-type scale. In future, multi-item scales could be utilised to measure the constructs of the study where the anti-consumption practices are concerned. Since the study uncovered that behavioural involvement (psychological factor) and social norm perceptions (social factor) motivate customers to help other customers engage in selected anti-consumption practices, future research could

investigate other psychological and social factors that may influence customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. Future studies could also focus on a specific anti-consumption practice in more detail to understand how it motivates customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices. Moreover, an experimental study could be undertaken where participants in both the experimental and control groups are exposed to different anti-consumption practices. Finally, researchers could emphasise how the impact of anti-consumption practices on motivating customers to help other customers engage in anti-consumption practices, could be mitigated.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declared that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

D.J.P. was responsible for conceptualising the article as well as for the introduction, statistical analysis and theoretical implications and conclusions section. E.V.T. contributed to the literature review, methodology, implications and conclusions as well as the reviewing and editing of the article. S.F. contributed to the implications and conclusions as well as the reviewing and editing of the article.

Ethical considerations

This research study was approved by the ethics committees of the North-West University - NWU-00016-21-A4.

Funding information

Data availability

The research data supporting the article's findings are available in the manuscript.

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