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# **The influences on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly**

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The influences on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly

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**Abstract**

Over the years, the consumption of airplane travels has increased, and the aviation industry is seen as one of the fastest growing sources for greenhouse gases. As a result, the climate debate has intensified and the phenomenon "flight-shame" has been introduced which has contributed to more environmental awareness. Despite this, consumers still choose to fly and therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how the climate debate and the phenomenon "flight-shame" influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Empirical data was collected through four focus groups and a total of 18 travellers participated in this study.

Based on the answers from the focus group, this study has found that factors such as consumer needs, values, and reference groups influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly differently depending on their travel motives. Moreover, the climate debate and "flight-shame" is also found to influence the consumer behaviour of some leisure travellers whereas they have mostly influenced consumer attitudes of business travellers.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the underlying factors which influence consumers' decisions to fly or not to fly. Moreover, it highlights the media as an additional influence on consumer behaviour which to the best of our knowledge has not been explored before. Also, the study sheds light on the importance of green marketing communication by airlines. Lastly, limitations are discussed, and future research is suggested to extend and address the generalizability of the findings by a quantitative research.

**Keywords:**

Flight-shame, consumer behaviour, climate debate, aviation industry, travel, transportation

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# 1. Introduction

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*The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of this thesis. The phenomenon of “flight-shame” and the ongoing climate debate are big influences on consumer behaviour towards the aviation industry. However, research on how these factors influence consumer behaviour is limited. Therefore, more extensive research is needed to explore and provide a more detailed insight into how these factors influence consumer behaviour. In this chapter, we will first discuss a background to the development of “flight-shame” and the climate debate. Second, the problematization is discussed and explained. Further, the purpose and research questions are presented. Lastly, an overview of the thesis is provided.*

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## 1.1 Background

Globalization has led to a more interlinked world (Hill & Hult, 2018), which allows people more access to the world in new ways. Traveling abroad, whether it is for vacation with the family or for business trips has become the new normal. Nowadays, many see it as necessary and unavoidable to travel by airplane (Gössling, Hanna, Higham, Cohen, & Hopkins, 2019). However, the aviation industry is seen as the fastest growing source for greenhouse gases (EU, n.d), and the industry accounts for three percent of the European Union’s total greenhouse emissions and more than two percent of the global emissions. According to Transportstyrelsen (2010; 2019) there has been a 40 percent increase in flying from the year 2010 to 2019. This accounts for both domestic and international flights from all Sweden’s airports.

Greenhouse gases are one of the main reasons for climate change, which has increased the debate for a better climate. The ongoing environmental debate has led to more attention on lowering the individual carbon footprint (Asquith, 2020). In addition, the phenomenon “flight-shame” [flygskam] was introduced in the Swedish “nyordlista” in 2018 (Lodin, 2018), and since then it has been commonplace (Blunt, 2020). The phenomenon of “flight-shame” is a contributor to the encouragement for people to fly less. Even though flying is seen as an easy way to connect people, “flight-shame” identifies flying as morally questionable (Gössling et al., 2019). However, it is not only the phenomenon of “flight-shame” that can influence consumer behaviour in the aviation

industry. For instance, movements such as Fridays For Future and Extinction Rebellion are taking the world by storm. These movements call for increased action to battle the climate crisis by organising climate strikes and protests worldwide (Fridays For Future, n.d; Extinction Rebellion, n.d).

In contrast to the growing trend to fly, the environmental debate has contributed to an increase in the number of people taking the train. This increasing number is due to increased environmental awareness among people and their willingness to minimize their carbon footprint (Blunt, 2020). This follows that more people are trying to cut down or completely stop flying. At the same time, we also live in a contrasting world where the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg sails across the Atlantic (Lindau-Skagerström, 2019) to reduce her carbon footprint, whereas the Swedish blogger and entrepreneur Isabella “Blondinbella” Löwengrip is trying to engage people to fly with private jets (Westin, 2019).

There is a need to see changes in greenhouse gas emissions and Hares, Dickinson, and Wilkes (2010) present three potential factors that need to change in order to see these changes. First, there is a need for technological changes, which include new aircraft engine designs and development in fuel efficiency. Second, Hares et al. (2010) suggest market-based changes, which include taxes on aircraft emissions and jet fuel. However, these two changes alone will not be sufficient. Third, and last, consumer behaviour needs to change, which is considered to be the most important factor in order to reduce emissions (Hares et al., 2010). According to Jackson (2005), consumer behaviour is the key impact society has on the environment. The choices that consumers make have either a direct or an indirect impact on the environment. Therefore, there is a need to motivate consumers to change their behaviour and patterns that are already imbedded within them (Jackson, 2005). However, it can be hard to change consumer behaviour as individuals can sometimes feel locked into their unsustainable patterns, even if their intentions are good (Jackson, 2005). Furthermore, individuals have little faith that their actions contribute to making a change. Research shows that people are more prone to make changes in their private life, rather than changing their traveling patterns. Kanterbacher, Hanna, Miller, Scarles and Yang (2019) found that the actions for climate change that people are most willing to do are recycling, commute without their car, and volunteering.

Speculations show that one reason people are more prone to change their private life could be that people feel that they have earned the right to fly (Hares et al., 2010).

As of writing this thesis, the world has been hit by the Corona pandemic. The pandemic has caused cities and countries to close their borders, and people have been advised to stay isolated and maintain social distancing (World Health Organization, 2020). As a result, the aviation industry is in crisis and people are now less interested in traveling (Peterson & Larsson, 2020). This aspect needs to be considered, since it will most likely influence people's views on traveling, in particular traveling by airplane.

The ongoing climate debate indicates the importance of studying consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Even though people are more aware and concerned about climate change, the demand for flying is still increasing. This will result in lower prices making it more affordable to fly (Hares et al., 2010). Moreover, much of the previous research has not focused on how "flight-shame" influences consumer behaviour, which can be because of the newness to the phenomenon. Therefore, we see a need for more research to explore if "flight-shame" influences consumers' decision to fly or not to fly.

## **1.2 Problematisation**

As a result of the increasing greenhouse emissions from the aviation industry, reductions in greenhouse emissions are necessary to decrease global warming and to meet the United Nations sustainable development goals. Previous research related to consumer behaviour and environmental concern presents that consumers still chose to fly despite its negative impact on the environment (Hares et al., 2010; McDonald, Oates, Thyne, Timmis, & Carlile, 2015). Moreover, some research highlights differences in consumer behaviour and attitudes towards flying as a means of transportation depending on consumers motives for travelling, distance and financial state (Gössling et al., 2019; Higham & Cohen, 2011).

However, much of the previous research which investigates consumers' attitudes towards flying and climate change is not up to date as the phenomenon "flight-shame" is not in focus of the research. As a result, the influence of "flight-shame" on consumer behaviour often becomes overlooked and rather unexplored. The reason for this is because the phenomenon "flight-shame" was introduced in 2018 (Lodin, 2018). Also, the climate debate has become more intense throughout 2018 and 2019 in tandem with public figures

like Greta Thunberg receiving more media coverage. Parallel to this, Sweden hit records in train travellers as a total of 250 million travellers commuted by train in 2019 (Magnusson, 2020). Similarly, we can see indications of a behavioural change as domestic flights in Sweden decreased with 8,9 percent in 2019 compared to 2018 (Transportstyrelsen, 2019).

Another notable trend throughout 2019 is the increase of *carbon offset schemes* which allow travellers to offset their environmental impact when flying (Independent, 2020). This is a service provided by aviation companies like BRA, SAS, and Norwegian whereas it has also become a way for aviation companies to take more social responsibility (BRA Flyg, n.d; Norwegian, n.d; SAS, n.d). Besides aviation companies, there are also “for-profit” companies like *Klimatkompensera*, that works with climate offset projects certified by the United Nations and Global standard to help people and companies reduce their environmental impact (Klimatkompensera, n.d). Although carbon offset schemes and projects may help consumers reduce their carbon footprint, some fear that carbon offset schemes and projects are not enough to cancel out the environmental impact caused by flying (Ambrose, 2019). Moreover, there is also a fear that carbon offset schemes encourage individuals to choose flying over other means of travelling that have less impact on the environment.

Although data indicate a general behavioural change and an increase of carbon offset schemes, current research calls for further research to explore how this relates to different purposes for travelling such as work or leisure (Gössling et al., 2019). This is important to explore as individuals’ travel behaviour may differ depending on purpose for travelling but also because current research has been conducted on smaller research populations. Therefore, more extensive research is required to provide more detailed insights of how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour in relation to consumer motives for travelling.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the underlying factors which influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Furthermore, we want to contribute to an increased knowledge of how consumer behaviour is influenced by the ongoing climate debate and

the phenomenon “flight-shame”, and if these influence consumers choice to fly or not to fly.

## **1.4 Research Question**

For this thesis, the research questions are as followed: “*How does the climate debate and the phenomenon “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour and consumers choice to fly or not to fly?*” and “*Are there any differences in consumer behaviour between leisure travellers and business travellers?*”

## **1.5 Outline**

This paper consists of six chapters. *Chapter 1* presents a background to the subject to frame the relevance of the purpose and the research question. *Chapter 2* discusses the theoretical background which the study is based on, which consists of theories and concepts related to consumer behaviour. *Chapter 3* presents the qualitative method used for the thesis, both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. *Chapter 4* contains a presentation of the results and findings from the focus group discussions. In addition, an analysis of the findings is presented. In *Chapter 5* we present one typology with three different types of travellers that we created from the findings in the analysis. Last, *Chapter 6* concludes the thesis with a summary. In addition, theoretical and practical implications of the study are presented along with limitations to the study and implications for future research.

## 2. Literature review

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*Consumer behaviour has many drivers, both on a personal and social level. These are discussed and later narrowed down to the concepts relevant to this thesis. These concepts include, consumer values, beliefs and norms, consumer needs, reference groups, green marketing communication, social class, and consumer knowledge about the environment. Finally, these concepts are summarized and explained in a theoretical framework.*

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### 2.1 Drivers of consumer behaviour

People make choices every day in their lives. Whether these choices are about what food to eat or the transportation method to work or school, the underlying processes and influences which drive these choices are of great interest to consumer research (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). This is also of interest as individuals do not only consume products and services on the bases of the utilitarian value, but also because of what symbolic value and meaning the product or service represents (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Previously, some models on consumer behaviour have focused on rational economic behaviour (Cisek et al., 2014). These models suggest that consumers make extensive cost-benefit analysis before they make purchase decisions. However, consumers are not entirely rational, and many do not evaluate and choose according to economic principles (Cisek et al., 2014). According to Fahy and Jobber (2015) there are two main influences on consumer behaviour, namely *personal influences* and *social influences*.

Personal influences describe the drivers related to the individual, which includes six factors: *information processing, motivation, beliefs and attitudes, personality, lifestyle, and life cycle* (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). Cisnek et al. (2014) state that individuals are also motivated and driven to make purchase decisions that are consistent with their self-image and self-motives, which also falls under personal influences. In contrast to personal influences, social influences describe the influence society has on an individual. There are three factors that have social influence on an individual: *culture, social class, and reference groups* (Fahy & Jobber, 2015).

Research has also shown that the environment influences consumer behaviour (Finisterra do Paço, Raposo, & Filho, 2009). With the growing climate debate, consumers are more willing to conserve the environment. As this willingness has increased, the notion of green consumerism has started to emerge (Taufique & Vaithianathan, 2018). Green consumers generally consider the environment when making purchase decisions (Prusa & Sadilek, 2019) and their behaviour reflects their attitudes towards environmental protection (Gonçalves, Lourenço, & Silva, 2016). An individual's green purchase decisions are evaluated in terms of the consumer's willingness or intention to buy green (Prusa & Sadilek, 2019). The more concerned consumers are about the environment and climate change, the more likely they are to buy green products. Apart from this, other factors which influence green purchase decisions are personal beliefs and social pressure from reference groups (Cheah & Phau, 2011; Jansson, Marell, & Nordlund, 2010).

This thesis focuses on how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour. In this thesis, we have decided to focus on how *consumer values, beliefs, and norms* influence consumers' choice of transportation methods as these factors are found to influence pro-environmental behaviour (Han, 2015; Jansson et al., 2010). In addition, aspects such as *consumer needs, reference groups, and social class* are also found to influence consumer behaviour (Cheah & Phau, 2011; Deliana & Rum, 2019; He, Cai, Deng, & Li, 2016). Therefore, it is also relevant to explore these aspects in relation to consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. Apart from these aspects, other studies also suggest that *green marketing communication and knowledge about the environment* influence consumer behaviour because consumers are more concerned about the environment (Alniacik, Alniacik, & Genc, 2011; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). As a result, consumers support companies which take on more social responsibility whereas consumers also purchase more environmentally friendly products. Hence, it is also relevant to explore the influence green marketing communication and knowledge about the environment have on consumers decision to fly or not to fly.

## **2.2 Consumer values, beliefs, and norms**

According to Fahy and Jobber (2015) beliefs about a person's “self-concept” is a significant element of consumption. This aspect is important for marketers to understand as consumers use brands, products, and services to convey their identity. In addition, it is also important for marketers to understand consumer beliefs as they are linked to

consumer attitudes, which influence purchase decisions (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). For instance, negative attitudes towards a product or service result into less sales, whereas positive attitudes result into more sales. Consumer behaviour can be determined by various factors which depend on the involvement with the product and behaviour. Jansson et al. (2010) state that *attitudinal factors* which include values, beliefs and norms have the greatest influence over consumer behaviour. In particular, attitudinal factors are demonstrated to guide consumers' predisposition to act with pro-environmental intent. Apart from this, habits which are automatic responses to goals are also considered as influences on consumers' predisposition to act with pro-environmental intent.

A person's values are seen as the guiding principle in life and have frequently been cited as a key determinant of behaviour (Jacobs, Petersen, Hörisch, & Battenfeld, 2018), and is often seen as influencing consumer behaviour indirectly (Lind, Nordfjörn, Jörgensen, & Rundmo, 2015). Jansson et al. (2010) state that there are several types of individual values that influence green consumer behaviour. *Social-altruistic, biospheric* and *egoistic values* have been found to be the values that most strongly relate to activating pro-environmental personal norms, which in turn influence green consumer behaviour (Jansson et al., 2010).

Individuals with a social-altruistic value orientation base their green consumer decisions on perceived costs and benefits for other people. Individuals with a biospheric value orientation will base their decisions to act green or not on the perceived costs and benefits for the ecosystem and biosphere as a whole. However, according to Han (2015), individuals who display high levels of biospheric value are more likely to be concerned with the environment than an individual who display low levels. And finally, individuals with an egoistic value orientation mainly consider costs and benefits of green behaviours for themselves personally, which indicates that when perceived benefits exceed the perceived costs they will behave in an environmentally friendly way and vice versa (Jansson et al., 2010). Jansson et al. (2010) state that social-altruistic and biospheric values have been found to have a positive relation with green consumer behaviour, whereas egoistic values have been found to have negative influence.

It is not only values that influence consumers green behaviours. According to Jansson et al. (2010) different types of beliefs also influence green consumer behaviours. Research indicates that if individuals are aware of the environmental consequences of their

behaviour and if they ascribe responsibility to themselves for taking preventive actions, a pro-environmental norm develops with a high potential to influence actual behaviour (Jansson et al., 2010).

According to Han (2015), personal norms are seen as a moral obligation to perform or refrain from specific actions, and it is closely linked to attitudes (Jansson et al., 2010). Personal norms are assumed to be formed by incorporating social norms into consistent personal value systems. Research shows that personal norms have a positive effect on the use of environmentally friendly travel modes, which indicates that personal norms are a successful predictor of green consumer behaviour (Jansson et al., 2010).

Research on how values, beliefs and norms influence consumer' decision to fly or not to fly is limited. However, previous mentioned studies indicate that consumers who care more for people and the environment are more likely to act with a pro-environmental intent. Likewise, consumers who are aware of the environmental impact of their behaviour will perform or refrain from actions to reduce their environmental impact. Based on these studies, it is suggested that values, beliefs, and norms influence consumer behaviour. As these factors guide consumers' predisposition to act with pro-environmental intent it is also possible that these factors influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. This is because consumers who are aware of their environmental impact will choose more environmentally friendly travel methods to reduce their environmental impact.

### **2.3 Consumer needs**

Apart from values, beliefs, and norms, Fahy and Jobber (2015) also point out that consumers have a variety of needs which must be satisfied. These needs are important in the purchase decision of one product or service over another as consumers choose the product or service which best fulfil their needs (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). Despite concerns for the environment, some consumers still choose to consume air travels over other means of transportation regarded as more environmentally friendly. This demonstrates an attitude-behaviour gap and that there are factors which make flying more attractive than other travel methods. Two of the main reasons for choosing airplane over other transportation methods are because it is cheaper and faster (Gössling et al, 2019; Higham,

Cohen, & Cavaliere, 2014). Apart from this, flying is perceived as more convenient and comfortable than other travel methods (McDonald et al., 2015).

Another factor which makes flying more attractive than other means of transportation is its availability to reach far distant locations (Higham et al., 2014). In particular, this is true for consumers who consume long-haul flights to reach far distant locations considered “dream trips” (Cohen & Higham, 2011; Higham & Cohen, 2011). However, these consumers are also shown to be less concerned about the climate impact of taking long-haul flights as the trips are considered as once in a lifetime experiences. Apart from this, some consumers are more concerned about the climate impact of frequent short-haul flights whereas others have adapted climate change strategies like recycling in hope that these would justify their emissions through air travel.

However, not all purchase decisions are influenced by the previous mentioned factors. Instead, consumer behaviour can also be driven by *impulse buying* which is composed by *denial of responsibility, injury, and victim* (Chatzidakis, Smith, & Hibbert, 2009). This means that consumers believe the consequences of their behaviour is neither harmful nor serious. Moreover, this also means that consumers believe they should not be accountable for their actions as they blame others or factors beyond their control. Apart from this, Chatzidakis et al. (2009) also highlight that consumers justify *impulse buying* by arguing that everyone else purchases something unnecessary.

Based on previous mentioned studies, it is suggested that consumer needs such as price, travel time, convenience and comfort are featured in consumers’ decision over transport methods. Moreover, the ability to reach far distant locations is also highlighted as a factor which makes flying more attractive than other travel methods. Apart from this, it is also possible that denial of responsibility, injury, and victim may influence consumers’ preference for flying. The reason for this is because individuals are either unaware of the environmental impact of the aviation industry or because they believe others are responsible for their actions. Moreover, individuals may also justify air travel by arguing that others are flying as well.

## **2.4 Reference groups**

Besides consumer needs, reference groups such as family, friends and colleagues may also influence consumer behaviour and purchase decisions (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). Fahy

and Jobber (2015) state that reference groups influence consumer attitudes and consumer behaviour by informing members of the group about a product or service. In addition, members may choose to consume products or services perceived as acceptable to their reference group in order for them to fit in or because they feel the consumption of a product or service will enhance their image within the group (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). According to Salazar, Oerlemans, and Van Stroe-Briezen (2013), this is referred to as *herd behaviour*. Apart from this, Cheah and Phau (2011) point out that reference groups also influence consumer behaviour through instruction and social persuasion. However, persuasion may not always achieve the desired effect of creating positive attitudes towards a product (Guo & Main, 2017). Instead, persuasion can lead to negative attitudes towards the source of the message if the person is aware of the other person's motives. This is particularly true when consumers are aware of sales agents' motives and tactics.

According to Cheah and Phau (2011), reference groups strongly influence purchase decisions which involve environmentally friendly products. Although Cheah and Phau (2011) only found data which partially support this claim, other studies have found a stronger link between reference groups and green purchase behaviour (Culiberg & Elgaaied-Gambier, 2016; Figueroa-García, García-Machado, & Pérez-Bustamante Yábar, 2018; Wang, Tu, & Guo, 2014). These findings are also supported by Salazar, et al. (2013). However, in contrast to the other studies, Salazar et al. (2013) also found that the probability of individuals purchasing sustainable products are higher when peers do the same. The reason for this is because individuals observe and imitate the actions of peers to comply with the values and norms of the reference groups (Salazar et al., 2013). Similar results are also found when applied to other industries. For instance, Gao and Mattila (2016) demonstrate a positive link between reference groups and selection of greener hotels. Apart from this, research also demonstrate the results are transferable to the fashion industry (Dobbs, Pitts, & Smith, 2016).

Another important finding was made by Fielding, McDonald, and Louis (2008) who suggest that environmental group membership influences environmental activism intentions. This includes behaviour such as protesting, increase awareness of environmental issues and behaviour aimed at improving the quality of the environment (Fielding et al., 2008). Similar results are also found in a study by Dono, Webb and Richardson (2010). However, in contrast to Fielding et al. (2008), it was also found that

people who identify themselves with environmental groups are more likely to adopt pro environmental behaviour (Dono et al., 2010).

Due to the newness of “flight-shame”, research on how the phenomenon and the climate debate influence consumer behaviour is limited. However, previous research suggests a positive link between reference groups and green consumer behaviour. In addition, the correlation between reference groups and green consumer behaviour is demonstrated to be transferable to various industries. This follows that similar results can also be found when applied to the aviation industry in relation to “flight-shame” as individuals may stop flying because it is perceived as unethical by their reference groups. Moreover, individuals may also stop flying and choose more environmentally friendly transport methods because they are persuaded by peers or because they want to enhance their status within their reference group and fit in. Another reason why “flight-shame” and the climate debate may influence green consumer behaviour is because individuals may identify and engage with environmental activist organizations such as Fridays For Future, and “flight-shame”. As demonstrated by Fielding et al. (2008) and Dono et al. (2010), individuals who identify and engage with environmental activist organizations are more likely to take on pro environmental behaviour. This follows that individuals who identify and engage with “flight-shame” will choose greener transportation methods instead of flying.

## **2.5 Green marketing communication**

Apart from reference groups, marketing communication from businesses may also influence consumer behaviour. According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), the aim of marketing communication is to provoke an audience response such as consumption or to increase consumers’ willingness to pay higher prices for products or services. However, to achieve successful marketing communication, businesses must consider the choice of marketing tools and intensity according to the needs of the target audience (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). For instance, businesses can use advertising, direct marketing, and public relations. Apart from this, businesses must also consider what message to communicate and what communication effects they want to achieve. This means that messages can be used to develop brand values and positive attitudes towards a brand. Other examples of this include encouraging individuals to visit websites or pay for goods and services (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

Marketing communication in the context of corporate social responsibility has proven to become a more crucial component in influencing consumer behaviour as consumers demand companies to conduct business in a more sustainable way. This is demonstrated by consumers' preference for products and services from companies which take on and communicate more positive CSR efforts than other companies (Alniacik et al., 2011; Deng & Xu, 2017). Moreover, consumers are more likely to recommend products from companies which communicate positive CSR information to peers. Thus, companies which communicate more CSR information than other companies are more prone to achieve word-of-mouth than other companies. Furthermore, consumers are also more willing to look in different stores for eco-friendly products instead of purchasing products from a company known for not engaging or not communicating positive CSR efforts.

As environmental issues have become more important for consumers, airlines are seen to introduce green elements into their marketing mix (Mayer, Ryley, & Gillingwater, 2014). For instance, airlines use marketing tools such as public relations, advertisement, and database marketing to inform consumers about development and use of more fuel-efficient engines and biofuels. Apart from this, the green commitment of airlines can also be shown on websites, newspapers and in sustainability reports. However, carbon offset schemes are highlighted as the main way of how airlines address environmental changes and corporate social responsibility (Mayer et al., 2014). This implies that consumers purchase credits to support projects like planting trees and changes in power generation to offset their environmental impact. As a result, carbon offset schemes may encourage individuals to choose flying over other means of travelling that have less impact on the environment.

Research on how green marketing communication in the aviation industry influence consumer behaviour is limited. However, the introduction of green elements into the marketing mix of airlines indicates that green marketing communication is becoming more important. Also, green marketing communication in general is becoming more important as consumers prefer products and services from companies which communicate positive CSR information contrary to companies which do not (Alniacik et al., 2011; Deng & Xu, 2017). Based on studies, it is possible that green marketing in the aviation industry may also influence consumer behaviour.

## 2.6 Social class

People's consumption patterns may also differ significantly between different social classes (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). According to Fahy and Jobber (2015), social class is largely based on occupation where individuals with higher income earning occupations are considered higher class than those who earn less. However, the use of occupation as a determinant of consumer behaviour has been highly criticized by some as certain occupations may not be related to differences in disposable income. Nevertheless, various studies have found a positive link between higher income and green purchase decision (He et al., 2016; Jansson et al., 2010; Kreuzer, Weber, Off, Hackenberg, & Birk, 2019). However, other studies also point out that higher income leads to increased carbon emissions. For instance, Hurth (2010) points out that higher income earners have higher energy consumption than other groups. This correlation is both found for energy consumption in home and transport (Hurth, 2010). Similar findings are also reported in a study by Baiocchi, Minx, and Hubacek (2010) which found that higher income relates to increased carbon emissions. This correlation is also supported by Yang, Wu, and Cheung (2017) who argue that increased income lead to increased carbon emissions.

However, income is not the only factor which influence consumer behaviour. According to Deliana and Rum (2019), consumer behaviour also differs across generations. For instance, individuals who belong to generation Y (1977-1994) and Z (1994-2013) are more aware of green consumer behaviour than older generations (Deliana & Rum, 2019). Also, individuals born between 1977 and 1994 have a higher level of purchases than any other generation. One reason for this is because generation Z has more economic constraints than generation Y. Another reason for this is because generation X (1965-1976) is very sceptical and more concerned about conventionality whereas generation baby boom (1946-1964) are more concerned about their health. Similar results are also found by Baiocchi et al. (2010). However, Baiocchi et al. (2010) also points out that higher education leads to lower carbon emissions. This finding is also supported by Jansson et al. (2010) who found that higher education increases consumers' willingness to purchase more fuel-efficient cars to reduce pollution.

Research on how age, education, and income influence consumers' decisions to fly or not to fly is limited. However, based on the previous mentioned studies, it is demonstrated that younger generations and more educated show greater concern for the environment.

As a result, younger generations and more educated people purchase more environmentally friendly products in order to reduce their environmental impact. In relation to the decision to fly or not to fly, it is possible that younger generations and higher educated who are more concerned about the climate will choose more environmentally friendly travel options instead of flying.

The influence of income on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly is harder to estimate as studies indicate higher income leads to both increased carbon emissions and green purchase decisions. However, it is possible that individuals with higher income are required to travel more and longer than other individuals. The reason for this could be that individuals with higher income have occupations which require them to travel more and longer compared to other groups. Hence, occupation may be a determinant to differences in consumer behaviour as suggested by Fahy and Jobber (2015).

## **2.7 Consumer knowledge about the environment**

Another influence on green consumer behaviour is consumers knowledge about the environment. Knowledge about the environment, also known as *ecoliteracy*, is a factor that influences consumers' attitudes towards environmentally friendly products (Cheah & Phau, 2011). *Ecoliteracy* can evolve in two forms. The first form is that consumers need to be educated on the way products are produced in an environmentally friendly way and the second form is that consumers need to be educated to understand the impacts products have on the environment (Cheah & Phau, 2011). Individuals who show a low level of *ecoliteracy* may sometimes feel like it is hard to be green (Johnstone & Tan, 2015), which can lead to inaction to act green.

In addition, research shows that a low level of knowledge about the environment equals to a low level of climate concerns (Cohen & Higham, 2011). Even though the climate debate has become more intensified over the last few years, there are still people that are unaware of the impacts the aviation industry has on the environment. To some the impact flying has on the environment is equal to that of cars and trains (Cohen & Higham, 2011). The aviation industry has put itself in a positive environmental light, i.e. through climate offset campaigns, which is due to the lack of public awareness (Cohen & Higham, 2011).

An individual does not become environmentally friendly overnight. It is a process that is time consuming, take efforts and costs money (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Johnstone and

Tan (2015) found that individuals feel that there is a strong need to be aware, live in the right place, have self-discipline, and be prepared to make personal sacrifices if you want to be green. Research shows that individuals that are more knowledgeable about the environment, are also the ones who are more prone to change their behaviour (Cohen & Higham, 2011). This does not only apply for daily tasks, but also in relation to future air travel. Research indicates that individuals who are more aware of environmental consequences ascribe responsibility to themselves to take on preventive actions (Jansson, et al., 2010).

Research on how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumers’ decision to fly or not to fly is limited. Therefore, it is unsure whether the intensifying climate debate and “flight-shame” have influenced consumers to choose more environmentally friendly travel methods than flying. However, previous mentioned studies demonstrate the more knowledge consumers have about the environment, the more willing they are to change their behaviour (Cohen & Higham, 2011; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Based on these studies, increased knowledge about the environmental impact of the aviation industry may also change consumer behaviour. This may be possible through the intensifying climate debate and “flight-shame” as these have addressed the environmental impact of the aviation industry. As a result, the intensifying climate debate and “flight-shame” have contributed to more knowledge about the environment which may result into consumers choosing more environmental friendly travel methods than flying.

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

To better understand consumer behaviour in the aviation industry, *Figure 1* presents a summary over the personal and social influences behind consumer’ decisions to fly or not to fly. This figure will later be used to facilitate the empirical data and the analysis of consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. In this figure, personal influences refer to drivers of consumer behaviour on an individual level. This includes consumer knowledge about the environment but also the values, beliefs, and norms of individuals. These influences have been included in the model as research suggests a positive correlation between these factors and concern for the environment (Han, 2015; Jansson et al., 2010). Apart from this, consumer needs are also included in the figure as studies highlight financial and time saving aspects as the main reasons to why consumers choose flying over other means of transportation (Gössling et al., 2019; Higham et al., 2014). Also,

comfort, convenience, and location have been identified as other aspects which influence consumers' preference for flying over other transportation methods (Chatzidakis et al., 2009).

In contrast to personal influences, the social influences of the figure describe the influence society has on individuals' green consumer behaviour in relation to consumers' choice of transportation. This includes social class, reference groups and green marketing communication. Although the influence of social class and reference groups on consumers' flying behaviour have not been captured in research, these influences are yet included in the model because other studies have found both social class and reference groups to influence green consumer behaviour in general (Gao & Mattila, 2016; Jansson et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2014). Therefore, it would be interesting to explore how and why social class and reference groups influence consumers' choice of transportation. Apart from social class and reference groups, research on the influence of green marketing communication on consumer flying behaviour is also limited. However, previous research on the influence of green marketing communication on consumer behaviour indicate a positive correlation between green marketing communication and consumers' willingness to purchase products from companies which communicate more positive CSR information than companies which do not. Therefore, it would also be interesting to explore how CSR information in the aviation influence consumers choice of transportation.

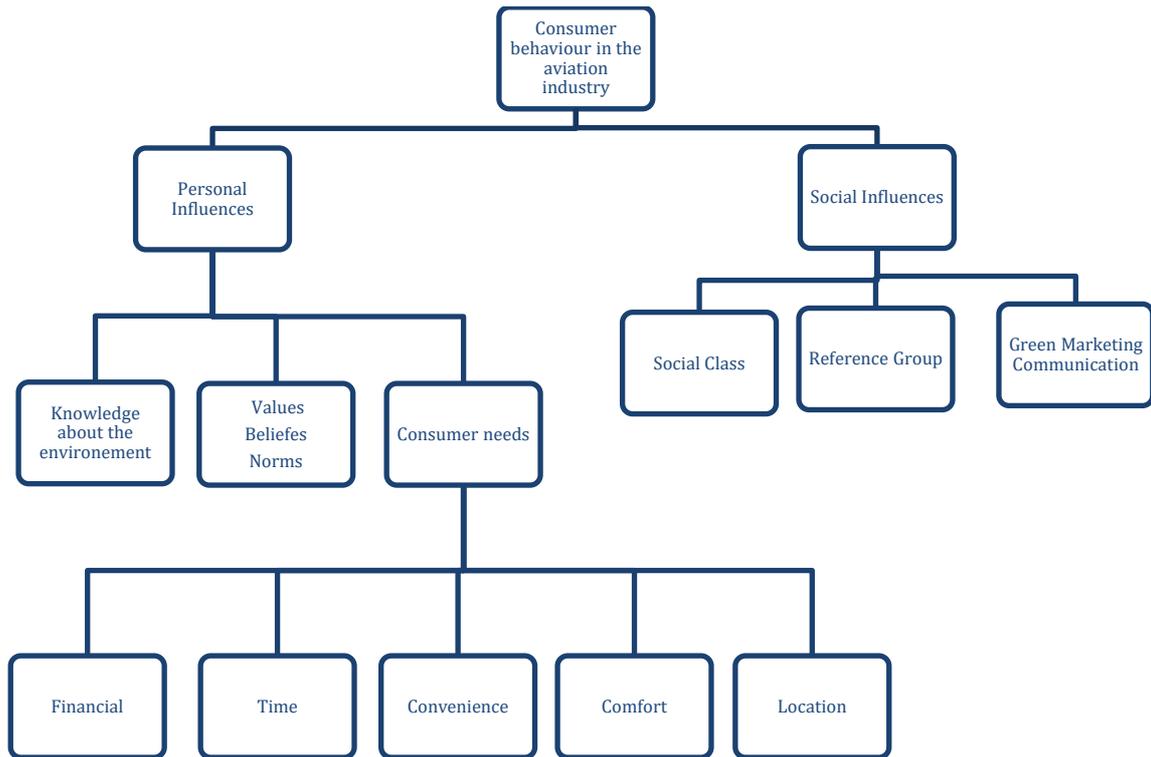


Figure 1. Influences on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly

## 3. Methodology

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*In this chapter there is an explanation to our choice of research strategy. Furthermore, we explain the choice of using focus groups as a data collection method, as well as how we conducted them. In addition, we discuss how we used thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. Lastly, the trustworthiness of the study is presented.*

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### 3.1 Research Philosophy

Within business research there are three different epistemological philosophies: *positivism*, *realism* and *interpretivism* (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018). The different research philosophies tend to use different research paradigms (Denscombe, 2018). As this research aimed to develop a deeper understanding of how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour, this research was based on an interpretive paradigm. The focus of interpretivism is to explore the “how” and “why” of human behaviour (Bell et al., 2018), which we wished to do.

In contrast to positivism, which views the reality objectively and externally, interpretivism has a subjective perception of the reality of social science as it is constructed by human action (Bell et al., 2018). However, interpretivism can make it harder for a researcher to be fully objective as a researcher’s opinion is to some extent shaped by his/her own experiences and identity (Denscombe, 2018).

### 3.2 Research Approach

The research approach is comprised of how the researcher uses theory to predict or create explanations. There are three different research approaches that one can adopt when writing a research paper. These are *deductive*, *inductive*, and *abductive* (Lind, 2014). The choice of approach is influenced by various factors such as design and objective of the paper. The three methods can be distinguished on the base of where the research journey begins (Bell et al., 2018).

Researchers who use a *deductive* approach start out by investigating a theory and build up the research from a theoretical ground (Bell et al., 2018). The researchers start by reviewing already existing literature and theory and continue by testing their hypotheses

that have surfaced from the theories (Lind, 2014). In contrast to the deductive approach, researchers who use an *inductive* approach start with an empirical observation. The use of theory is less prominent, and the intent is to create and develop theories, concepts, and models from the empirical material (Bell et al., 2018; Lind, 2014). For this reason, this approach is usually said to be theory generating (Lind, 2014). The last approach is a mixture of deductive and inductive and is called *abductive*. Similar to the deductive approach, researchers who use an abductive research approach have a relatively clear theoretical starting point. However, the theory does not need to be formalized or expressed in models and hypotheses as it is integrated in the empirical part of the study to discuss and explain patterns in human behaviour (Lind, 2014). Hence, the purpose of an abductive research approach is to explore and highlight characteristics of the studied behaviour. As this study aimed to explore the underlying factors which influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry, an abductive approach was used. The abductive approach allows for a mixture of the deductive and the inductive approaches, which may contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic.

### **3.3 Research strategy**

When discussing research strategy there are two distinctive forms one can choose from, namely *quantitative* and *qualitative*. Denscombe (2018) describes quantitative research as research that uses numbers as analysis, whereas qualitative research uses words and visual images as analysis. As the purpose of this thesis was to explore the underlying factors which influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry, a qualitative research strategy was applied. The reason for this was because qualitative research tends to provide more detailed and plentiful explanations to rather unexplored research areas (Denscombe, 2018). Moreover, qualitative research permits more than one explanation to social phenomena. Therefore, qualitative research may be better at developing a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena than quantitative research (Denscombe, 2018). Denscombe (2018) mentions several types of qualitative methods one can choose from, with the most common ones being interviews and observations. For this study, we chose to use focus groups as our research strategy, which will be further explained in the following sections.

### 3.3.1 Focus groups

One method that can be used to collect qualitative data is focus groups. Ahrne and Svensson (2015) state that focus groups are good when a researcher wants to explore how people think and speak about a certain subject. Focus groups are similar in character to interviews, with the main difference being the ability to interview more than one person at the time with focus groups (Bell et al., 2018). The main characteristics of focus groups are that they involve a topic that is generally discussed in-depth and the participants within the group discuss the topic in a group rather than discussing it individually (Denscombe, 2018). According to Denscombe (2018), this interaction will help the researcher understand the reasoning behind the participants point of view and opinions. Furthermore, the discussion among participants can go in two different directions, both being of value for the researcher. First, the discussion can lead to consensus among participants, where they share a lot of common aspects. On the contrary, the discussion can show big differences among the participants (Denscombe, 2018). This results in a wider range of perspectives on the subject. Whatever direction the focus group takes, the information will be of value for the researcher.

When conducting focus groups there are several questions that need to be considered. These questions involve how many focus groups should be made, how many participants should be included in each group, but also when and where the discussions should take place (Bell et al., 2018). In order to receive sufficient data, we used four focus groups with three to six participants in each group. The number of groups is influenced by various factors, with cost and time being two of the main determinants as there are almost always a time and cost limitation in the process (Bell et al., 2018). In addition, it can be hard to find participants who are eligible to participate. Apart from the number of groups, one also has to consider the number of participants in each group. Denscombe (2018) states that the ideal number of participants is between six and ten. As stated previously, we had between three to six participants in each group. This number was sufficient enough to enable the participants to share a series of views and opinions, without being too big of a discussion so that it became unmanageable. Another reason to not have too many participants in a group is that the transcription process will become more difficult as more material must be transcribed (Bell et al., 2018).

Two other aspects that need to be taken into consideration when organizing focus groups are when and where the focus groups will take place. Focus groups can take place either in person or online (Bell et al., 2018). Online focus groups can either be *synchronous* or *asynchronous*. The difference between these two forms are that synchronous focus groups take place in real time, whereas in asynchronous focus groups exchanges are not in real time (Bell et al., 2018). For instance, in synchronous focus groups questions are answered almost immediately whereas in asynchronous focus groups, questions are sent in advance via email and thereafter answered a few days later. Due to the ongoing corona pandemic our focus groups took place online using the digital platform Zoom. To ensure a better discussion and faster follow-up probes, we used synchronous focus groups.

Even though focus groups are an effective way to collect empirical data, they have some limitations. Focus groups allow for a free discussion of the topic among participants, which can lead to the researcher losing control (Bell et al., 2018). However, this is not only a disadvantage. On the contrary, this can be beneficial since there are less interruptions from the researcher. As moderators of the focus groups, we wished to contribute to the discussions as mediators by being as objective as possible and not steer the conversation in a direction we wanted. A second limitation to focus groups is that the data can be harder to analyse due to data overflow (Bell et al., 2018). In addition, this led to the data being harder to transcribe. In order to overcome this, we recorded the focus groups sessions. A third limitation to focus groups is a variation of group effects. For instance, some participants may hog the stage, while others do not speak up (Bell et al., 2018). In order to overcome this, we as moderators were inclined to make sure that every participant's voice was heard. For instance, phrases such as "*That is one point of view. Does anyone have another point of view?*" were used in order to secure that all participants got their voices heard (Bell et al., 2018, p. 478).

As our focus groups took place online, there are some advantages and disadvantages that needs to be considered. According to Bell et al. (2018), one advantage of online focus groups is that it is more cost and time efficient than face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, when using online focus groups one can reach a wider range of participants than when using face-to-face focus groups (Bell et al., 2018). In our case, we had the ability to invite both current and former exchange students at HKR, which gave us the ability to receive an international viewpoint to our research. In addition to these advantages, there are also

some disadvantages that need to be considered when conducting focus groups online. One disadvantage of online focus groups is that only participants who have access to internet can participate (Bell et al., 2018). Furthermore, online focus groups require bigger engagement from the participants, since they might need to download new software in order to participate (Bell et al., 2018). This in turn can lead to individuals withdrawing from participating. Bell et al. (2018) also state that online focus groups will make it harder to do group exercises since the participants are not sitting together in a room. Apart from this, internet connections can be lost which make online interviews harder to carry through. During the discussions, some participants had unstable internet connections which made it harder for them to connect to the Zoom meetings before the discussions had started. When this occurred, participants were asked to stay patient and wait until everyone had connected to the meeting. This followed that some meetings started later than expected. Apart from this, participants' unstable internet connection could sometimes also make it more difficult to hear what the participants said. When this occurred, participants were asked to repeat what they said for everyone to hear.

### 3.3.2 Participant selection

The purpose of this study was to explore the underlying factors which influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Despite the climate debate and “flight-shame”, the aviation industry still has many consumers and it is therefore important to understand the underlying motives to why people choose to travel by airplane. Consumer behaviour in the aviation industry has not yet been fully explored as individuals may have different motives for travelling such as work, leisure, or studies. Therefore, we felt a need to explore travel motives for different kinds of travellers. To participate, participants needed to fulfil one of the criteria listed in Table 1. These criteria were chosen in order to explore differences and similarities in consumer behaviour between business and leisure travellers. Moreover, we also wanted to include an international perspective on consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. This would have been more explored if we were to stand at an airport with international travellers. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic this was not possible and therefore, the criterion that a participant must be an exchange student who travelled during their studies as HKR was also used. This criterion also allowed us to explore consumer behaviour for individuals who had studies as their main motive for travel. Based on all these criteria, four focus groups were constructed. The

first group consisted of four exchange students with various nationalities at HKR. These nationalities included three Germans and one Belgian whose main motive for travelling was studies. In addition, leisure trips were also consumed by this group. Thereof, international perspectives and cultural differences of consumer behaviour in the aviation industry were also included. In contrast, the second group consisted of business travellers who flew during worktime whereas the third and the fourth group consisted of leisure travellers. However, the fourth group flew more than the third group as participants in group four flew on average three to four times in the last three years compared to participant in group three who flew on average zero to two times in the last three years. This was done to explore if there were any differences and similarities in consumer behaviour between leisure travellers who travel more and leisure travellers who travel less.

Table 1. Participant criteria

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Focus group 1. Must be an exchange student who travelled during their studies at HKR
Focus group 2. Must be a business traveller who flew during worktime
Focus group 3. Must be a leisure traveller who have flown on average zero to two times in the last three years
Focus group 4. Must be a leisure traveller who have flown on average three to four times in the last three years

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In regard to selection of participants, the participants for this study were selected through *convenience selection*. This implies that researchers use the most advantageous option of participants due to limited resources (Denscombe, 2018). Initially, our plan was to stand at airports and ask travellers questions in regard to their travelling behaviour. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, convenience selection was considered the most advantageous option at the time. The invitations to participate were sent out on Facebook and LinkedIn (see Appendix 1). In addition, *snowball selection* was also used to find additional participants as the convenience selection did not identify enough participants for the study. This meant that participants from the convenience selection asked peers to participate. Furthermore, some participants were approach directly as we knew they fulfilled one of the criteria to participate.

There are several benefits of selecting participants through convenience sample. The primary benefits are that it is a cheap and time efficient method to find participants for a study (Denscombe, 2018). The reason for this is because the researchers select the participants closest at hand who have the most knowledge and experience in the subject. Moreover, this may lead to researchers receiving more qualitative data which can be used

to explore the subject more in depth. Although convenience sampling allows researchers to select the most advantageous option of participants, the method may lead to sampling bias as participants are not randomly selected. Moreover, the findings highlighted in the study may not be representable for the study population as the researcher may select participants for the purpose to support their conclusion. However, in qualitative research it is not necessary to include a representative sample. The reason for this is to allow the researchers to focus on a smaller sample to explore more in-depth and generate ideas for relatively unexplored research areas (Denscombe, 2018).

Similar to convenience sampling, snowball sampling also allows the researchers to handpick participants for their study. Moreover, it is also an effective way of finding additional participants as already recruited participants can recommend peers to also participate (Denscombe, 2018). However, selecting participants who already know each other may have a pre-existing style of interaction or status difference (Bell et al., 2018). This may lead to that individuals may operate with taken for granted assumptions where one person hogs the stage whereas others remain silent. Another disadvantage with snowball sampling is that handpicked participants may not be representable for the research population. Therefore, findings may be biased to support a specific conclusion.

Table 2 below consists of a summary of each focus group participant's demographic information, such as age, gender, and occupation. The groups varied in sizes, with the smallest group consisting of three participants and the largest group consisting of six participants, and in total there were 18 participants.

Table 2. Focus group participants

Group	Age	Gender	Occupation	Participant
1 Exchange Students	26	Female	Student	A
	24	Male	Student	B
	24	Male	Student	C
	22	Male	Student	D
2 Business Travellers	40	Male	Full time worker	E
	42	Male	Full time worker	F
	40	Male	Full time worker	G
3 Leisure Travellers 0-2	23	Female	Student	H
	27	Female	Student	I
	24	Female	Student	J
	21	Male	Student	K
	25	Female	Student	L
	22	Female	Student	M
4	24	Female	Student	N
	26	Female	Student	O
	40	Female	Full time worker	P

Leisure	40	Female	Full time worker	Q
travellers	28	Female	Full time worker	R
3-4				

### 3.3.3 Focus group guide

At the start of each focus group, the participants were informed about the purpose of the focus groups. In addition, the participants were asked for consent to be recorded. Also, they were informed that they would be anonymous when referred to in the study. Furthermore, we clarified our role as moderators. After the presentation of the practical information, the sessions were divided into two phases (see Appendix 3).

*The first phase* included a warm-up round where all the participants introduced themselves, told us about their favourite travel destination and their latest travel experience. After this, we introduced three different cases in order to get a good discussion going between the participants. The first two cases were aimed to see if there were any differences or similarities in consumer behaviour between the participants of the four focus groups. In contrast, the third case was more aimed to be a group discussion to see if the participants could come up with a mutual answer. The last case was more aimed at the business travellers to explore their consumer behaviour. However, the case question was also asked to the leisure travellers as some of them may also travel some in their worktime. Moreover, we wanted to explore if their answers would differ from that of the business travellers in focus group two and receive more data. *The second phase* started off by asking the participants in each group what factors they think influence consumer behaviour and if these factors depend on the type of product or service they choose to buy. *The second phase* also included more in-depth questions that the participants in each group discussed among themselves. These questions were more adjusted towards the framework presented in chapter two and were used to explore how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour and consumers’ choice to fly or not to fly, but also to explore differences in consumer behaviour between leisure travellers and business travellers. However, in some discussions all questions were not asked. This depended on what the participants had touched upon in the case discussions. When *the second phase* came to an end, we thanked the participants for their valuable time. When all focus groups had been completed, an e-mail was sent out to the participants (see

Appendix 4). The e-mail thanked them for their commitment and informed them that in case they had any more ideas that they liked to share; they were welcome to contact us.

### 3.4 Transcription

All focus groups discussions were recorded and transcribed. The focus group discussions were held in Swedish, except for the one with exchange students which was conducted in English. The focus groups conducted in Swedish were also transcribed in Swedish to make sure that the participants' statements were correctly worded. Furthermore, the focus group conducted in English were transcribed in English for the same reason. The length of the transcriptions varied, which depended both on how talkative the groups were and the size of the groups. The transcription of group one was 14 pages, the transcription of group two was 17 pages, the transcription of group three was 24 pages, and the transcription of group four was 11 pages.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in qualitative research can be challenging for researchers. This is because qualitative data tend to generate an overflow of data and therefore, it becomes more difficult to analyse and interpret the data (Bell et al., 2018). According to Bell et al. (2018) one common approach to analyse qualitative data is through a *thematic analysis* which is the search for topics that recur again and again in the data which relates to the research focus.

According to Denscombe (2018), the first step in analysing qualitative data is to familiarize with the qualitative data after it has been collected. This helps the researchers to better understand the data in its context (Denscombe, 2018). In this study, this was done by listening to the audio recorded focus group discussions and reading the transcripts from it. In the second step of the analysis, the empirical data was coded according to the labels of the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) to make it easier to identify themes of underlying factors which influence participants' decision to fly or not to fly. For instance, data was coded as *consumer needs*, *green marketing communication* and *social class*. In the third step, themes were identified by searching for recurrence of actions, events, and opinions in the coded data. Moreover, themes were also identified by reviewing recurrence of similarities and differences in the way participants discussed a topic in different ways. Themes were also identified by searching for words like

“because” and “since” as these would indicate connections in the minds of participants. As a result, themes such as *price*, *social persuasion* and *scepticism towards green marketing communication* were identified. In the last step, the most relevant and important themes related to consumer needs, reference groups, green marketing communication, social class and knowledge about the environment were summarized in Table A (see Appendix 5). These themes were used for the analysis in chapter four to explore the underlying factors which influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry.

### 3.6 Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are criteria which measure the degree to which studies can be replicated and generalized across social setting (Bell et al., 2018). These criteria help to establish and assess the quality of quantitative research. However, the same measurements are harder to apply in qualitative research as measurements are not of interest in qualitative research. Moreover, it is harder to assess reliability and validity in qualitative research as time changes social behaviour (Denscombe, 2018). Furthermore, researchers in qualitative research tend to become more involved in the collection and analysis of data. Hence, it is harder to replicate identical data and conclusions in other studies. However, the purpose was not for the data and conclusions to be replicated but to explore the underlying factors which influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. Nevertheless, researchers have suggested qualitative research to instead be assessed on their trustworthiness which consists of four criteria. These criteria are *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability*.

#### 3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility measures the accuracy of data in qualitative research (Denscombe, 2018). Although there is no way to ensure complete accuracy of data in qualitative research, researchers can utilize *respondent validation* to show that the research has been conducted in good practice (Bell et al., 2018). In addition to respondent validation, researchers can also use *triangulation* to increase the validity of the study. Also, different sources of data and theoretical perspectives can be utilized in a study to increase credibility and avoid intrinsic biases. In this study, different theoretical perspectives were used to explore and interpret consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Moreover, multiple focus groups

were also constructed to compare findings from different groups. This allowed us to explore if findings were consistent in other groups. As a result, credibility is increased. However, respondent validation and different research methods were not used in this study due to limited resources. For this reason, validation in this study may decrease.

### 3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability measures the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study is replicable in other contexts or in the same context at another time (Bell et al., 2018). However, findings in qualitative research tend to be harder to replicate than findings in quantitative research. The reason for this is because qualitative research is conducted on smaller groups of individuals to explore the depth of social phenomenon. As a result, findings in qualitative research become unique for the context of the studied phenomenon and therefore harder to replicate. Although findings in qualitative studies may be harder to replicate, researchers should provide detailed accounts of the studied phenomenon so others can assess the quality of the study and assess whether the findings are transferable to other cases. However, the purpose of this study was not to replicate the findings in other contexts or in the same contexts at another time. Instead, the purpose was to increase knowledge of how consumer behaviour is influenced by the ongoing climate debate and the phenomenon “flight-shame”.

### 3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability measures whether other researchers would produce the same results if they would replicate and repeat the study (Denscombe, 2018). In qualitative studies, there is no absolute way to fully replicate data and findings of a study. However, it is suggested that researchers adopt an *auditing approach* to increase dependability of their studies. This means that researchers provide complete and detailed records of procedures such as methods, selection of participants and data analysis decisions for others to assess whether other researchers would have arrived at the same conclusions.

To increase dependability, information on research method, selection of participants and data analysis decisions have been provided. However, due to the chosen research method, dependability may be reduced. The reason for this is because follow-up questions in the focus groups are based on answers given by participants. Moreover, each participant may have different beliefs which produce unique answers.

### 3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability measures the objectivity of a qualitative study (Denscombe, 2018). Qualitative data is never completely objective as data is product of interpretation which may be influenced by personal values and convictions. Therefore, it is suggested that researchers must approach the research subject with an open mind. This means that researchers must not neglect data which is inconsistent with the data analysis but explore it to assess its significance. Moreover, alternative explanations to phenomena must also be explored through different theoretical perspectives.

To increase objectivity of this study, analysis of data has been explained in an unbiased way. Moreover, data which is inconsistent with the data analysis have been explored to assess its significance. This entails that different theoretical perspectives have been utilized to explain social phenomena.

## 3.7 Ethical consideration

When conducting research, it is important to consider ethical principles of the study (Bell et al., 2018). This thesis focused on three principles. First, in order for the participants to know what they have agreed too, an information letter was sent out prior to the focus group sessions (see Appendix 1). In addition, the participants were given additional information at first contact (see Appendix 2). Second, in order to ensure anonymity and privacy, all participants were given a letter that was used when referred to in the analysis. Moreover, questions which may intrude on participants' private and personal domain like income are avoided. Also, participants were not obliged to answers questions they feel intruded on their privacy. Lastly, all transcriptions except one, were in Swedish to ensure that the statements were written correctly. However, the statements were translated to English when used in the analysis. Apart from these three principles, all participants were protected by The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This means that personal data of participants were not processed, and audio recordings of focus groups were deleted.

## 4. Empirical Findings and Analysis

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*In this chapter, the empirical findings from the focus groups discussions are presented. The findings are presented as quotes from the focus group discussions, which are connected to the theories used in the conceptual framework.*

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The conceptual framework on the influences on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly is used to facilitate the empirical data and the analysis of consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Moreover, a table of quotes related to the different parts of the conceptual framework was constructed from the data, which is also to be used in the analysis (see Appendix 5). In regard to the research question, the analysis will help identify themes to explore the underlying factors which influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly and thus, explore how the climate debate and the phenomenon "flight-shame" influence consumer behaviour and consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. Moreover, the analysis will also help identify themes to explore if there are any differences in consumer behaviour and the decisions they make to fly or not to fly depending on consumer motives for travelling.

### 4.1 Consumer values, beliefs, and norms

One of the key determinants of behaviour is an individual's values (Jacobs et al., 2018). According to Lind et al. (2015), values usually influence consumer behaviour indirectly. During the focus groups discussions, the participants were asked if they thought values were a factor that influences their choice of transportations method. The groups all agreed that values can be a great influence, however, not to them personally. Furthermore, participants agreed that values probably played a bigger role if one was more concerned with the environment. One participant stated:

*Like if you are environmentally focused or something like if you have values that are not good to fly, or something like that. Yeah of course I think so. – Participant D*

In focus group three, the participants stated that the concern for the environment is sometimes prioritized over financial and time aspects when deciding transportation method. One participant stated:

*[...] I would consider the environment if I am travelling to Stockholm because I feel it would be insensible to take the flight. I feel like... I can choose the train because of the environment even though the train is more expensive than taking the plane – Participant I*

Participant H agree and continued:

*I agree to some extent. There might be a slight difference if it is inside Sweden. You can feel like one to two hours longer with the train might be worth it if you compare to the airplane which is faster. Otherwise, I would say it is the other factors [...] - Participant H*

These statements indicate that the environmental aspect is sometimes prioritized when participants travel domestically. However, this is not always the case. The participants in this study all agreed that values and norms have an influence over behaviour, however, they did not express to what degree they were important. For instance, sometimes individuals might go against their own values and norms to fulfil their personal consumer needs, which one participant shared:

*In winter I was going to Stockholm from a Thursday to Sunday and wanted to take the train, and I am a student, and thus do not have very good finances. I really wanted to take the train and checked on all possible alternatives, but the flight was so much cheaper [...] I really wanted to take the train, but I felt I was saving so much money to take the flight [...] But I went against my own values. - Participant I*

This indicates that consumer needs, in this case financial, took over and values were overshadowed. Another participant stated on the topic:

*It is value against values. If you put them in a row against each other, it immediately becomes much more difficult. - Participant F*

Furthermore, another participant agreed that the life stage you are in can also be a reason to go against one's values and stated:

*So right now, when you are a student then you have to be honest and say that it is clear that you are looking at what is the cheapest, absolutely. So, for my part where I am, my true values may not be as clear in my choices. – Participant N*

These quotes do not support Jacob et al.'s (2018) theory that values are key determinants of consumer behaviour. If this would be the case, an individual's values would come before other factors such as price, comfort, and so forth. One reason for this could be that the climate debate and the phenomenon "flight-shame" are newer and people have not yet fully taken these into account when deciding if they should fly or not. One participant stated:

*It may take a few years before the Greta-effect has really set in the values. It is probably a little early yet, I think. – Participant F*

Participant F was referring to the climate activist Greta Thunberg, who gained big recognition in 2019 for her organization of school strikes for the climate. This means that the effects of her action and movement are still too new for people to actually incorporate into their values. Hence, it will take a few years until we see the climate debate and the phenomenon "flight-shame" influence consumer behaviour.

With this being said, values can be a contributing factor in the change of an individual's behaviour. One participant stated:

*So, I think everyone should be aware, but if you had asked me two years ago, I probably would have chosen flights every day of the week. But then, we live in a different time and we become more and more aware, and it is my values and norms that has changed me. So that is why I feel it has affected my behaviour – Participant J*

This shows that an individual's values can change, which in turn changes consumer behaviour. Previous research has stated that people who are more environmentally aware ascribe responsibility to themselves for their actions (Jansson et al., 2010). In this case Participant J has become more environmentally aware, which has influenced a behavioural change.

Previous research has highlighted three different types of values, *social-altruistic*, *biospheric*, and *egoistic values*. These three types have been strongly connected to influencing consumer behaviour. However, this study did not find any differences in values. Furthermore, previous research has also highlighted norms and beliefs as influences on consumer behaviour. In this study, these aspects were not seen to have as big influence as an individual's values. The participants did rarely or never speak about these as influences on their consumer behaviour. Instead, an individual's morals could be a contributing factor to act in an environmentally friendly way.

## 4.2 Consumer needs

Fahy and Jobber (2015) point out that consumers have different needs which must be satisfied and that consumers choose the service which best satisfies their needs. In relation to consumer behaviour in the aviation industry, factors such as price, time, convenience, comfort, and to reach far distant locations have previously been identified as factors featured in travellers' decision to fly or not to fly. However, differences of ranking of these features in relation to travel motives have not been fully explored in previous research. For this reason, participants were asked what factors influence their choice of transportation when travelling. Moreover, participants were also asked what factors contribute to their choice of taking flights over alternative transportation methods. Furthermore, participants were asked what advantages they found in taking flights and whether these factors influenced their decision to fly or not to fly.

In the focus group discussions about consumer needs, participants in all groups agreed that price and time were the main influences on consumers' choice of transportation. Moreover, price and time were also the main influences on why consumers choose to fly over alternative transportation methods. Thus, these findings support Gössling et al. (2019) who claim that price and time are the main influences on consumers' choice of transportation. In addition, subthemes to time were also identified through the focus group discussions. The first subtheme identified was *travel time reliability* of transport. For instance, participants in focus group one and two perceived airplanes as more reliable to make it on time than trains. One participant said the following:

*It is mostly in time instead of like trains in Germany, [...] It is one of the most, yeah, crucial parts for me because I am always so annoyed of the trains and them... they are all the time to late. – Participant A*

Whereas Participant G stated:

*Currently, I would agree with what participant E says about reliability, airplanes are more reliable and then it is also the total time. – Participant G*

These quotes illustrate that *travel time reliability* of transport is an important factor which influence participants to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method like train. Another subtheme of time is that airplanes are *faster* than other transportation methods. In focus group three and four, participants stated that airplanes are faster than alternative transportation methods and this aspect gives participants more time to enjoy their holidays. Therefore, airplane is a more attractive travel method than other transportation methods.

Besides time and price, *convenience* and *comfort* were also mentioned by participants to influence their choice of transportation. However, the way participants perceived convenience and comfort differed depending on travel motives. In focus group two, one business travellers stated the following:

*[...] Then it can also depend on departures and what fits into the schedule, [...] it is a little bit harder to work on a plane than on a train. It is not as comfortable. – Participant G*

In contrast to this statement, participant D in focus group one stated that airplanes are more convenient and comfortable than other transportation methods because you get served food but also because you do not have to do anything and then you are on the other side of the world. Despite these advantages, participant D stated he chose to travel to Sweden by car because he could fit more luggage in the car. These statements indicate that perceptions of convenience and comfort vary depending on travel motives. For instance, convenience and comfort for the business traveller are related to what fits into the schedule and the availability to work while travelling. In contrast to this, participant D perceive car as more convenient because he could transport more luggage from his homeland to the university abroad. Other examples of convenience and comfort were

also mentioned in group four. In group four, airplanes were perceived as more convenient and comfortable because it was faster than alternative transportation methods. This was also found true among participants in group three. However, some participants in group three also expressed that airplanes were more convenient than car when travelling through Europe. The reason for this was because participants felt uncomfortable driving on Autobahn due to risk of traffic accidents.

Apart from these needs, the group discussions also highlighted tendencies for impulse buying. One participant said the following:

*Right now, when I am thinking about one thing, I did with two of my old roommates, there was this Ryanair situation that they sell flights for like kind of no money. So, we went to Mallorca for 4 euros both ways. So, when I think about this now, this was kind of not really sustainable, but it was a fun thing and we did it just like booked it one day before go there overnight, even though it was November so it does not make sense at the end. – Participant A*

This quote indicates that the participant at the current time reflected upon her consumer behaviour. Based on the action which the participant described, it is interpretable that she justified her purchase because the flight ticket was sold cheap. This is similar to the findings of Chatzidakis et al. (2009) who state that impulse buying is influenced by factors beyond their control. In this case, the price was too low. Moreover, this also means that consumers believe they should not be accountable for their actions as they blame others or factors beyond their control.

### **4.3 Reference groups**

In the context of consumer behaviour, Fahy and Jobber (2015) state that reference groups such as family, friends and colleagues may influence consumer behaviour by providing members with information about a service or members may choose to consume a specific service in order for them to fit in. Also, reference groups may influence consumer behaviour through instruction and social persuasion (Cheah & Phau, 2011). To explore the influence reference groups may have on consumers' decision to fly or not to fly, participants were asked four questions. Firstly, participants were asked if there was someone who might influence their decision to fly or not to fly. Secondly, they were

asked what reactions they would have had if a friend or a family member would have chosen to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method during a domestic trip. Thirdly, participants were asked how they believed their friends would have reacted if they took an airplane instead of alternative transportation method during a domestic flight. Lastly, participants were asked if they had heard or seen any new trends while travelling in the last three years.

When the focus groups discussed the influence reference groups have on their decision to fly or not to fly, business travellers stated that reference groups did not have an influence on their purchase decision. For instance, one business traveller expressed:

*No, it is probably those factors we previously mentioned and if there was something else then some sort of corporate decision is required that says “from this day forward we travel by train” and so on [...]. – Participant G*

This quote indicate that business travellers are not influenced by reference groups such as family, friends and colleagues but instead previous mentioned factors such as price, time, and convenience are the main influences on their decision to fly or not to fly. However, they also pointed out that businesses are responsible for their choice of transport as employees follow corporate decisions. Therefore, a new corporate decision is required to change their travel behaviour. Apart from this, business travellers also emphasized they would be indifferent if a friend or family member would have chosen to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method during a domestic trip. Moreover, when business travellers were asked how friends and family members would have reacted if they travelled by airplane instead of an alternative transportation method during a domestic trip, one business traveller expressed:

*They would have probably approved our behaviour. If we would have said that we took the train because it is comfortable to work there, they would have nodded in approval and said yes you can. And if we would have said we flew to save time they would have nodded in approval and said yes that is rather sensible. – Participant G*

This indicates that business travellers are not subject to criticism for their decision to fly. Moreover, the statement also describes that friends and family members do not attempt

to persuade them into choosing an alternative transportation method over flying. Thus, these findings are not in line with the findings of Cheah and Phau (2011) which state that reference groups inform or persuade members to influence their purchase decisions. Furthermore, when participants discussed new trends that had emerged in the last three years, business travellers mentioned “flight-shame”. However, participants did not state whether it had influenced their choice of transport.

In contrast to business travellers, participants in focus group four stated that their decision to fly or not to fly were influenced by friends and family members if they were travelling in group. Besides this, participants expressed they were unlikely to be influenced what other people told them to do. For instance, one participant said the following:

*Like no one has ever said anything to me, like really. Therefore, I base the decision on myself and what the people around me do [...]. – Participant N*

And participant R continued:

*No, I feel like a lot of pressure from the people around you would be required in order for you to change your decision [...] you chose the option which suits you the best. – Participant R*

These two quotes summarize that participants in group four are less sensitive to what other people say as they value their own opinions more. However, the first quote indicates that participants tend to imitate the actions of those in their surroundings. This seems to be in line with the findings of Salazar et al. (2013) which state that consumers imitate the behaviour of peers to comply with the norms of the reference groups. In addition to this, participants stated they would not question friends or family members’ decision to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method during a domestic trip. This is because participants believed it was not a hot topic to discuss among their acquaintances or because they believed it is every individual’s decision to choose what transportation method they like. Similarly, participants also believed friends and family members would not question their decision to fly.

Another interesting finding related to reference groups was also identified when participants in group four discussed new trends in travelling which have emerged in the last three years. For instance, participants stated that more friends had begun travelling

by car or train in Europe. Moreover, one participant mentioned that she felt as if more people have begun travelling more by train instead of airplane because of “flight-shame”. This suggests that “flight-shame” has contributed to a decrease of air travelling.

Similar to participants in group four, the exchange students in group one also stated that their decision to fly or not to fly are also influenced by their friends and family members if they are travelling in group. In addition, one exchange student pointed out:

*And another point is maybe if you are going to do a kind of family trip and you are not the person who are going to pay for it and your parents are going to pay then it is also definitely their choice if you are going to go by train, or car or by plane [...]. – Participant A*

This statement indicates that if you are not the person who pays for the trip, you have to comply with other peoples’ decision to fly or not to fly. However, exchange students stated they would question friends or family members’ decision to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method for a domestic trip. Likewise, participants stated that their friends and family members would also question their decision if they decided to fly for a domestic trip. For instance, participant D expressed that his friends who are more environmentally aware will share their opinion on it. This indicates that participants are subject to criticism by peers who are trying influence their choice of transport. Thus, these findings are accurate with Cheah and Phau (2011) who claim reference groups inform or use social persuasion to influence members purchase decisions.

When participants in group three were asked if there is someone else who influence their decision to fly or not to fly, participants stated that friends and family members try to inform and persuade them to choose more environmentally friendly travel methods than flying. Thus, these findings are also aligned with what Cheah and Phau (2011) found about how reference groups inform and persuade members to purchase a specific service. Moreover, participants in group three also mentioned the media as an influence on why they choose alternative transportation methods over airplane as messages in the media encouraged individuals to care more for the environment. Furthermore, the fear of what other people might say if you flew with an airplane was also a reason for not choosing airplane while travelling. These findings are in line with what Fahy and Jobber (2015) who say that consumers may choose to consume a specific product in order to fit in.

Apart from this, when participants in group three were asked how they would react if a friend or a family member decided to fly instead of taking an alternative transportation method for a domestic trip, participants expressed irritation and would question the behaviour of family and friends. This is because participants perceived airplane as the least environmentally friendly travel method. Similarly, participants also believed friends or family members will question their behaviour if they choose to travel by airplane instead of an alternative transportation method for a domestic trip. Besides this, participants also expressed trends as an influence on their decision to fly or not to fly. For instance, one participant mentioned she had begun thinking about interrailing because people in her surrounding had done it. This seems to be in line with Salazar et al. (2013) who claim consumers imitate the actions of peers.

#### **4.4 Green marketing communication**

Alniacik et al. (2011) found that companies CSR-information have a positive influence on consumer behaviour. This finding state that consumer prefer products and services from companies which engage and communicate more CSR efforts than other companies. In addition, consumers are more willing to look in different stores for more eco-friendly products instead of purchasing products from companies which are known for not engaging or communicating positive CSR efforts. To explore the influence of green marketing communication in the aviation industry has on consumers' choice of transportation, participants were asked whether they perceived it as positive or negative. Moreover, the participants were also asked whether it influenced their decision to fly or not to fly.

When the focus groups discussed green marketing communication in the aviation industry, business travellers in focus group two perceived it as negative and discarded it as complete nonsense. Moreover, business travellers stated that it did not influence their purchase decisions at all. Likewise, participants in group three perceived it as negative and referred to it as a cheap marketing trick with the aim to encourage people to fly more. However, when discussing offsetting schemes and its influence on the participants' decisions to fly or not to fly, mixed answers were given. As an example, one participant stated the following:

*Sometimes I have also thought while booking, “I actually do not know where it goes”. I do not want to pay more when I am not sure what it does but maybe I am very sceptical [...] So therefore when I fly, I have not purchased it because maybe they just earn more money? – Participant I*

Participant H continued on the topic:

*I know that I have purchased it [...] and we purchased it for all flights where it was offered. However, it did not influence the decision to fly or not to fly [...]. – Participant H*

These statements indicate that participants are sceptical to purchase offsetting schemes as specifications on where the money goes is not provided. Hence, green marketing communication by the aviation industry does not influence participant I's decisions to fly or not to fly. Also, based on the second statement, participant H stated that it did not influence her decision to fly or not to fly, but she still choose to purchase it for those flights carbon offsetting is available. This finding is in proportion to Alniacik et al. (2011), who found that consumers prefer more environmentally friendly products over others.

In contrast to business travellers and participants in group three, exchange students and participants in group four perceived green marketing communication by the aviation industry as something positive. However, there were also some scepticism towards it among exchange students. One exchange student stated the following:

*I think as long as they really consider environmental policies and so - like as long as they really act according to this it is totally fine. As long as it is not just marketing like “we are such good company” and that is it, then it is totally fine with me. – Participant B*

Participant D agreed and continued:

*I think so too. If their efforts are really an effort, then fine but I also think it is quite hard for an aviation company to really be like sustainable or anything. They can do effort, but can they be really green? I do not think so. – Participant D*

These statements indicate that exchange students are concerned that businesses actually do care about the environment and that they use green marketing efforts for profit interest. Yet, when asked if it did influence their decision to fly or not to fly, exchange students stated that it probably will. Furthermore, people will choose the airline which market itself as more environmentally friendly. This is accurate with Alniacik et al. (2011) who state that consumers will choose the company which market themselves as more environmentally friendly. In a similar way, one participant in group four expressed:

*If it were an alternative and it was the same service then of course I would have chosen the greener option, but then it is also the factors we previously discussed about time, money, and flexibility. – Participant Q*

This statement indicates that participants are more likely to opt for the company which market themselves as more environmentally friendly than their rivals. Thus, this is also aligned with Alniacik et al.'s (2011) findings.

#### **4.5 Social class**

Fahy and Jobber (2015) state that consumption varies between different social classes. An individual's social class is largely based on occupation, where people with higher income are considered to belong to a higher class than those who earn less. Previously, flying was seen as an activity only the upper class or wealthy did. One participant stated:

*I think because it was upper class to fly when it was new. Since then it has become something that everyone can do, and now it is almost top class to be able to take the alternatives that costs more, like not everyone has the opportunity. – Participant I*

To take the airplane has previously been a luxury thing. However, today it is more normal with low cost companies, and ticket prices has decreased immensely over the years. Participant I continued:

*We have always driven [...] down to Croatia when I was a kid, circa late 90s and early 2000s. And then we started flying when air fares fell. – Participant I*

Another participant stated on the topic:

*Yes, I think some people can afford to fly, and some might not be able to afford it. – Participant O*

Which can still be the case, even though the low-cost companies have emerged. Nevertheless, income is not the only factor that influences behaviour. Deliana and Rum (2019) state that generation is also a big influence on consumer behaviour. This could be that different generations have different prerequisites. For instance, the newer generations have grown up the Internet and a bigger media coverage, that the older generations did not have. Deliana and Rum (2019) suggest that individuals who belong to generation Z and generation Y are more aware than older generations, which may depend on factors such as media and the Internet. Most participants agreed on this. For instance, one participant stated:

*I think generation is a big factor because we are all in this generation that we accept our situation now that we are used to go wherever we want and we are grown up with open borders and most of us are used to travel and do long trips and short city trips. - Participant A*

Another participant agreed and continued:

*I agree the younger generation is more used to taking the train and we have more connections than fifty years ago. – Participant C*

In addition to this, participants thought that the younger generations are more engaged in climate change activities, which may be due to an increased awareness among younger generation. One participant stated:

*Yes many times it is, well, the young generation that get very involved and it is probably not just with air travel but it may apply to quite a few different things, but it is certainly a great commitment among some target groups more than others. – Participant O*

This indicates that generation plays a big part in the decision to fly or not to fly. However, the generational question might depend on the fact that the younger generation is more educated and informed about the consequences flying has on the environment. This aspect will be further explored in the next chapter. Furthermore, participants displayed that it

might not just be a generational question. Rather it has to do with an individual's age, one participant stated:

*Generation in terms of age, then perhaps it is true that all generations in the end still have some similarities, i.e. when you are 20 you make a certain type of decision, and when you are 30 you make a certain type of decision. You fall in these gaps so to speak where you value time and money in a different way. – Participant G*

This indicates that it has to do more with the age of an individual rather than the generation. Other factors such as how a person has been brought up and what their surroundings have taught them also play a role in the choice to fly or not to fly. However, not all participants agreed on this. One participant stated:

*I do not necessarily think it is a generational question. Because you give a 20-year-old unlimited amount of money, it will probably think like a 40-year-old. – Participant E*

Meaning that income, or rather money, is one of the keys to behaviour. What the participant meant was that no matter the age you are, if you have unlimited amounts of money/income you will act the same.

#### **4.6 Consumer knowledge about the environment**

One factor that can influence consumer green purchase behaviour is an individual's knowledge about the environment. This type of knowledge can be seen in two forms. Cheah and Phau (2011) states that the first form is the way consumers are educated on the way products are made, while the second form is the way consumers are educated on the impact products have on the environment. Previous research also highlights that individuals who display low levels of environmental knowledge might feel that it is hard to be green (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). The findings from this study is in line with this. One participant stated:

*Both yes and no, of course we understand the impact it has on the environment, but how much is hard to say. – Participant E*

Another one stated:

*I think that most of them know and have a vague idea that it is bad, but no definitive figures on things like that. – Participant K*

This indicates that people have knowledge about the environmental impacts the aviation industry has on the climate, but not the extent of the effects. Individuals who are aware of the impact but has little knowledge of the actual effect might feel that it is hard to break the mould that has already been shaped. Thus, they choose to fly instead of other alternatives. Furthermore, knowledge about the environment can also, like social class, be a generational question. One participant stated:

*I think it is a generational issue, I think the younger ones are more informed and read more about it. – Participant Q*

Indicating that the younger generation is more informed and educated in the consequences of climate change. This in turn leads to the younger generation being more engaged when it comes to the climate, with many engaging themselves in strikes for the climate. During the focus groups discussion, it was discussed that the older generation has more of a habit when it comes to flying. Thus, habits become a barrier that prevents knowledge to be a factor that contributes to a behavioural change in the older generation.

However, is knowledge a contributing factor to people flying more or less? When the participants were asked this question, they all had different opinions. One participant stated:

*I think it can be a contributing factor to people flying less because you become more aware [...] you get a little “Aha” experience and that I can drive this much instead of taking a plane. – Participant M*

In this case the people received their information and knowledge from media and commercials showing how many car and train rides a person can take in relation to one airplane ride on the same distance. These types of marketing communication open up people's eyes to the effect airplanes have on the climate, which contributes to people wanting to learn more so that they in turn can reduce their carbon footprint. However, not everyone agreed that knowledge contributes to personal changes. One participant stated:

*I think it definitely influence you, but I am not sure it is really changing you right now, because we mentioned the advantages of taking the plane,*

*so trains [...] must be better and start competing with the planes and to that is influencing you and changing your decisions. – Participant A*

This indicates that airplanes are still the easiest way to connect with other people or to explore the world even on shorter distances. In order for there to be a change in behaviour, other methods, such as trains, needs to start competing in other ways to attract customers. Furthermore, another participant stated:

*I agree and personally I feel quite sceptical of the issue because I myself know a lot about the climate and climate change and so on, but I cannot say that I travel less because of it. On the other hand, I have friends who limit their travel because they have a lot of knowledge, so it may depend on one's morals. – Participant R*

This is not in line with what Jansson et al. (2010) states. They state that individuals who are more aware ascribe responsibility to themselves in order to take preventive actions. However, this quote shows that being aware does not necessarily contribute to a person flying less. Furthermore, the above quote indicates that the choice to fly or not to fly based on an individual's knowledge is very individual. Some might choose to still travel by airplane, while others try to limit or fully stop flying. In contrast to the others, one participant stated:

*No, I do not think you necessarily fly more or less, but I think the airlines are marketing differently. – Participant E*

Meaning that for the individual, knowledge does not influence the choice to fly or not to fly. Rather it influences how the aviation companies market themselves. This can explain the increase in carbon offsetting schemes, and the growing trend to pay extra to carbon offset. Along these lines, another participant thought that knowledge contributes more when it comes to corporate decisions. The participant stated:

*I think it [knowledge] can be a contributing factor to the fact that when it is a company that control. I believe that the knowledge you have and how you have adapted to the environment means that many business trips have become more environmentally friendly and maybe now then they*

*also become more digital to completely erase the travelling. So that is what I think it has affected. – Participant P*

Meaning that companies and businesses have, thanks to more knowledge, learned and are now trying to adjust their policies so that employees have to choose more environmentally friendly options when travelling on the job.

One group brought up the on-going Corona pandemic as one thing that will contribute to more knowledge. One participant stated:

*I really think this Corona crisis [...] I really think this will affect the way now that you realize you may not need to fly as much. As Skype meetings then [...] will probably be some changes now to come, to reduce flights within the job. And maybe that makes it to the private market as well. – Participant N*

Meaning that the knowledge that companies and individual people acquire from this period will contribute to less travelling. The digitalization plays a big part here, especially for companies. Companies have now experience that it is not necessary to fly half the world for a meeting, since it is easier to have meetings over Skype, Teams or Zoom. However, we do not know if the Corona pandemic will have any impact over an individual's behaviour.

## 5. Discussion: Different types of travellers

*In this chapter, we present one typology with three different types of travellers that was created from the findings presented in chapter four. The findings highlighted similarities and differences among participants, and it was possible to identify three main types of travellers. These are Do not care, Care but still fly, and Care and tries to change.*

In the previous chapter similarities and differences between travellers with different motives for travelling were presented. From these findings it was identified that some travellers share similar characteristics despite their different travel motives. Moreover, some participants in the focus groups did not always share the same views or behaviour as other participants within the same focus group. Thus, in-group differences and similarities were also identified. Based on these findings, one typology with three different types of travellers were created (see Table 3). These types are: *Do not care*, *Care but still flies* and *Care and tries to change*. These three types and their characteristics will be presented in the next coming chapters.

Table 3. Types of travellers

Type of Traveller	Characteristics
<i>Do not care</i>	Aware Not influenced by others Values consumer needs highly Frequent flyer
<i>Care but still flies</i>	Aware Compensate in other ways Constrained by factors such as time and income
<i>Care and tries to change</i>	Aware Limits air travel Influenced by others Influence others Values the environment

### 5.1 Do not care

The *Do not care* travellers are individuals who are indifferent towards the environment. These individuals would choose to travel by airplane rather than travelling by alternative methods. For instance, one participant stated:

*Yes, I would have taken the plane. I am a real climate thief here [...]. But I do not have as much patience with the kids in the car, so I like to hop on an airplane for a couple of hours [...]. If one can have such egoistic thoughts. – Participant F*

This quote demonstrates that the *Do not care* travellers can sometimes be egoistic and they value factors such as price, time, convenience, and comfort to be more important to fulfil than the environmental impact of their travel. As a result, the *Do not care* travellers often choose to fly when travelling because it is cheaper and faster than other transportation methods. Another participant stated:

*You usually fly because it is smooth and because you are far away, but you have the opportunity to stay in different places so absolutely [...]. I would set flights quite high. – Participant P*

This quote also demonstrates that taking the airplane when travelling is easy and smooth, which are factors that the *Do not care* travellers' value high. Moreover, airplanes are also considered to be more convenient and comfortable than other transportation methods. The individuals who fit in under this type of travellers are rarely or never influenced by other people or factors, such as the climate debate and the phenomenon "flight-shame". For this reason, they take the alternative that fits their situation the best. One participant stated:

*I would say it is always the plane, because like I just said I like to travel to countries that are far away. Yeah, so the train is not really a possibility. Yeah, so that is always the plane and since I am not the guy who is good at planning, I would say that it is the plane. – Participant B*

Most of the individuals within this type of traveller likes to travel to far of distances, which contributes to the choice to travel by airplane. However, the airplane is not only for far of distances. These individuals, as stated previously, chooses the transportation method that suits them best, which one participant stated:

*No, everyone chooses what suits them best. – Participant Q*

This shows that the *Do not care* travellers mostly chooses airplanes when travelling. Furthermore, the *Do not care* traveller see green marketing communication as nonsense and do not engage in climate offsetting schemes.

The majority of those who belong to this group are often full-time workers and individuals who belong to older generations, such as generation X. Therefore, the *Do not care* travellers have higher income than the other types of travellers. Even though this type of travellers is indifferent towards the environment, they are still aware of the negative impacts flying has on the environment. However, they still value consumer needs as more important to fulfil and therefore, these travellers contribute to higher carbon emissions than the other types of traveller.

## 5.2 Care but still flies

The *Care but still flies* travellers care about the environmental impact their travels have. However, they still fly because of other factors such as consumer needs. Although they are willing to change their behaviour, they sometimes feel constrained by factors such as time and income and therefore, they do not consider the environment as much they want. One participant stated:

*If you assume that we talk about the distances that are where you can choose a little. If we return to what I told about Malaga before, then there is also no alternative to drive there or it is very far to drive there so to speak and the train is not so advantageous, so to speak [...]. We take for example about driving to the alps, or something like that which is doable within a day then we probably also have no major problems with getting in the car and driving. Just because you have a little more flexibility both travelling there with toddlers and the like, and also at the destination itself [...] Then it is clear it is quite good to get on a flight and then you arrive two hours later. That is it. There is a reason why people fly and that is mainly the time gain I would say. – Participant G*

Another one stated:

*There is a lot of talk about night train in Europe. We have tested it; me and my wife. In some way, it is very grateful on the continent [...]. If it is a charter trip to an island in the Mediterranean we fly, otherwise we drive. – Participant E*

Similar to the *Do not care* travellers, these travellers sometimes also like the feel of airplanes. However, sometimes it is not just about the destination as the *Care but still flies* travellers also see the entire journey as a part of the travel. For instance, one participant stated:

*[...] I am also a person who really likes to travel by plane because it also gives me kind of a feeling that I am really travelling. Like taking my suitcase with me and this sound of the wheels and stuff like this. It is giving me already a feeling of vacation [...]. But for me it is sometimes also when I go for like city trips maybe also just within Germany [...] then I am also open to go by train, because then it is also about doing something together [...]. – Participant A*

This indicates that if they travel with friends, the *Care but still flies* traveller can adjust the travel methods to suit the company and the journey. The individuals who fit in this type are educated on the consequences and impacts travelling have on the environment. However, as they sometimes feel constrained, they do not always act on the knowledge they possess. For this reason, these individuals try to compensate in other ways.

The *Care but still flies* travellers perceive green marketing communication by the aviation industry in different ways. Some see it as positive while others see it as negative. Most of the negativity towards green marketing communication comes from the scepticism towards climate offsetting schemes. One participant stated:

*But BRA has it on their flights, you can get some green twig next to your ticket if you add 300 SEK to climate compensate. But how they do it is, like, extremely unclear. But I do not believe it for a moment. -  
Participant E*

Another participant stated:

*If their efforts are really an effort then fine, but I also think it is quite hard for an aviation company to really be like sustainable or anything. They can do effort, but can they really be green? I do not think so. - Participant D*

These quotes indicate that the *Care but still flies* travellers are sceptical towards green marketing communication as they believe it is used for marketing purposes. Moreover, it also indicates that they question whether the efforts airline companies make are sustainable. Furthermore, the *Care but still flies* travellers tries to take alternative transportation methods when travelling domestically but are sometimes forced to fly due to budget or time aspects. This type is characterized by individuals that belong to generation X and Y. These generations are a little different, but in this case the main difference is their occupation. Some in this type have full-time jobs, while other are students. These are factors that might explain both the budget constraints and the time aspects of travelling.

### **5.3 Care and tries to change**

The *Care and tries to change* travellers are individuals who want to make a difference and change their travel behaviour. These travellers are more influenced by the climate debate and “flight-shame” and therefore they try to limit their air travels to reduce their environmental impact. In most cases the *Care and tries to change* travellers prioritize their values about the environment over their personal consumer needs like price and time. For instance, one participant stated:

*Most cases I am travelling within Europe, I like to go to Scandinavia, to Copenhagen for example [...] I just have to change one time, so I just need twelve hours for example to go to Copenhagen. So actually, twelve hours are quite acceptable for me. Otherwise I also use most of the long-distance busses [...] they are even more cheap than train or plane. But of course, you have to sit a longer time in the bus, but I accept the longer time than paying more money for fights. I can go by bus or train. - Participant C*

Another stated:

*It probably depends a little on where you are going, what mode of transport you use. In Europe I thought either car or train would have been perfect. Yes, this summer I took the Trans-Siberian Railway and really caught my eye on how nice it can be to go by train a longer distance. So, I almost prefer it [...]. – Participant K*

These two statements indicate that *Care and tries to change* travellers prefer more environmentally friendly travel methods such as train and bus over airplane. Moreover, it shows that values have more influence on their decision to fly or not fly than consumer needs like price and time.

Besides that, the *Care and tries to change* travellers prioritize their values about the environment over consumer needs, they are often influenced by others such as friends and family members to not fly and instead choose an alternative transportation method. Likewise, they also try to influence others to choose an alternative transportation method over airplane. Apart from this, the media is also an influence on their choice of transport. For instance, one participant pointed out:

*But you are affected [...] It has become very large medial. A great medial thing to protect the environment and most of them are not avoided to be affected by it even though they may not care very much so you have to think about it when it is everywhere all the time. – Participant K*

This quote indicates that the climate debate and “flight-shame” is in focus for media coverage. This follows that the *Care and tries to change* travellers are more aware about the impacts the aviation industry has on the environment than other types of travellers. Therefore, their knowledge about the environment influences them to choose more environmentally friendly travel methods than airplane.

*Care and tries to change* travellers have a negative perception towards green marketing communication by the aviation industry. For instance, they believe it is a cheap marketing trick to encourage travellers to travel more by airplane and that airlines do not care about the environment. Hence, the *Care and tries to change* travellers are not influenced by the green marketing communication by the aviation industry. Another reason why they are not influenced by it is because of marketing communications which address the climate

impact of airplanes in relation to trains. For instance, commercials by train travel companies which show how many trains a person can take in relation to one airplane ride on the same distance open up people's eyes to the effect airplanes have on the climate. This follows that care and try to change travellers tend to choose trains over airplane. Furthermore, *Care and tries to change* travellers are also characterized by individuals who belong to generation Y and Z. Moreover, travellers who belong to this type are mainly students.

## 6. Conclusion

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*This chapter starts with a summary of the thesis to draw conclusions about the influences on consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. Furthermore, both theoretical and practical implications of the study are presented. Lastly, the limitations to the study and implications for future research are presented.*

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### 6.1 Summary of thesis

The aim of this thesis was to explore how the climate debate and the phenomenon “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry. In addition, the aim was also to explore differences and similarities in the consumer behaviour between leisure travellers and business travellers. To answer the research questions, participants with different travel motives were asked questions confronting what factors influence their decision to fly or not to fly during focus group discussions. This data was later analysed through a thematic analysis to identify topics which related to the research questions.

First, the findings in this study indicate that consumers have become more environmentally aware due the climate debate. Also, consumers who value the environment higher will show this in their actions. In particular, this is demonstrated by participants in focus group one and three who choose alternative transportation methods like bus and train over airplane. However, the study also shed light on that values are often overshadowed by consumers needs such as price, time, and comfort. Moreover, some participants also highlighted that their choices do not always mirror their values due to budget and time constraints. This followed that airplanes were chosen over alternative transportation methods.

Second, reference groups were also found to influence consumers’ decision to fly or not to fly. However, the way consumers were influenced depended on travel motives. For instance, participants in group three were more willing to not fly than any other group as they were influenced by the opinions of friends and family members. Moreover, it was found that business travellers’ decision to fly or not fly was not influenced by reference groups but instead corporate decisions.

Third, it was found that participants had different perceptions of green marketing communication by the aviation industry. Moreover, green marketing communication was found to influence participants differently. Participants in group two and three perceived the green marketing communication as negative and stated it did not influence their decision to fly or not fly. Similarly, participants in group one was sceptical towards it but expressed a preference for airlines which engaged and communicated more CSR information than other airlines. In contrast, participants in group four were positive towards it and expressed a preference for airlines which engaged and communicated more CSR information than other airlines.

Fourth, in regard to social class, all groups agreed that income played a part in the decision to fly or not to fly. For instance, participants in group one pointed out that alternative transportation methods such as train and car could often times be more expensive than airplane. This follows that participants choose to fly instead of travelling by car or train. Moreover, participants expressed that younger generations such as generation Y and Z are more engaged in the environmental debate.

Fifth and last, this study also highlights that participants were aware of the climate impact the aviation industry has, but not to what extent. Moreover, participants were divided whether knowledge about the environment influenced their decision to fly or not to fly. For instance, business travellers believed it was more likely to influence marketing strategies of companies than consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. Similarly, participants in group four believed it influenced companies more than private individuals as companies try to sustain an image as environmentally friendly. In contrast, participants in group three pointed out they have become more aware of the climate impact made by the aviation industry due to the media and marketing communications and therefore they are more willing to choose alternative transportation methods over airplane.

From these findings, we created one typology with three different types of travellers. These are *Do not care*, *Care but still flies* and *Care and tries to change*. Within the different types, travellers act differently which mainly depends on the individuals motive to travel. The three different types also highlight how different groups are influenced by factors such as the climate debate and “flight-shame”. The *Do not care* travellers are rarely or never influenced by these factors and take the alternative that best suits their situation. In contrast, the *Care but still flies* and *Care and tries to change* travellers are

more influenced by the climate debate and “flight-shame”, but on different levels. For instance, the climate debate and “flight-shame” have more influence on the consumer behaviour of the *Care and tries to change* travellers than the *Care but still flies* travellers. Moreover, the climate debate and “flight-shame” have more influence on consumer attitudes towards the aviation industry than consumer behaviour among the *Care but still flies* travellers. Thus, the climate debate and “flight-shame” have a small influence on consumer behaviour. However, these aspects have had more of an influence on consumers attitudes towards the aviation industry. One reason the climate debate has not had a bigger influence on consumer behaviour could be that the debate has increased in recent years. This also applies for “flight-shame”. The phenomenon “flight-shame” is new and therefore has not yet had a greater influence on consumer behaviour. Both the climate debate and the phenomenon “flight-shame” will probably have a bigger influence on consumer behaviour in the next coming years.

Furthermore, in this study we did not find any distinct differences between leisure travellers and business travellers. The main difference is their travel motives, as business travellers’ biggest motive for travelling is for work. In addition, the climate debate and “flight-shame” have had an influence, but not on business travellers personally. Here the influence has been more on the corporations, as they have added in new policies in order for their employees to take alternative methods. Between leisure travellers, the climate debate and “flight-shame” have had more influence on individuals who fly less, but also among exchange students. These two groups displayed a higher willingness to take alternative transportation methods. Furthermore, all groups showed awareness of the impact the aviation industry has on the climate. This in turn showed an attitudinal change, rather than a behavioural change.

## **6.2 Theoretical implications**

Previous research connected to consumer behaviour in the aviation industry has shown that consumers still chose to fly even though airplanes have a negative effect on the environment (Hares et al., McDonald et al., 2015). Through exploring the underlying factors which influence consumers’ decision to fly or not to fly, this study adds deeper insights into the underlying factors which influence consumers to still fly. Moreover, previous research called for further research to explore how consumer behaviour in the aviation industry varies among individuals (Gössling et al., 2019). From the findings of

this study, we add deeper insights of how consumer behaviour in the aviation industry differs between business travellers and leisure travellers. This study adds that “flight-shame” influences consumer behaviour in the aviation industry as some individuals choose alternative transportation methods over airplane when travelling. Moreover, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how factors such as consumer needs and values influence consumers’ decision to fly or not to fly. The study also extends the theoretical field of how factors such as green marketing communication, social class influence and knowledge about the environment influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry.

Previous studies connected to environmentally friendly products show that reference groups such as family and friends influence consumer behaviour strongly through instruction (Cheah & Phau, 2011). This study sheds light that family and friends also influence consumers to choose a more environmentally friendly travel method than airplane. Moreover, the study also indicates that what is covered in the media also influences consumer behaviour. In this case, the climate debate and “flight-shame” informed individuals about the negative environmental impact of the aviation industry. This followed that some individuals choose more environmentally friendly travel methods over airplane.

This study also adds that some travellers share similar characteristics despite their different travel motives. Also, the study found in-group differences in consumer behaviour. These findings suggest that air travellers’ consumer behaviour may differ regardless of their motives for travelling. Based on these findings, this study introduces a newer way to conceptualize air travellers through one typology with three different types of air travellers: *Do not care*, *Care but still flies* and *Care and tries to change*. *These types have different characteristics and consumer behaviour*. For instance, the *Do not care* travellers are frequent flyers who value their consumer needs over reducing their environment impact. In contrast, the *Care but still flies* are travellers who are willing to reduce their air travelling but are constrained by factors such as time and income. Lastly, the *Care and tries to change* travellers care for the environment and try to limit their air travels. Moreover, they prioritize their values about the environment over price and time.

### **6.3 Practical implications**

This study indicates that the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry as some travellers have begun to choose alternative transportation methods over airplane when travelling. However, this behavioural change is not widespread as other travellers still choose to fly over alternative transportation methods. As stated by one participant, it is too early to see the Greta-effect in the aviation industry. This suggests that more efforts are required by the climate debate and “flight-shame” to influence other travellers to choose alternative transportation methods over airplane in the future.

This study also suggests that alternative transportation methods such as trains must become cheaper and faster for travellers as these factors are the main consumer needs which influence consumers’ decision to fly or not to fly. At the current state, airplanes are cheaper and more time-reliable than trains and therefore travellers tend to choose airplanes over trains. In addition, the study also highlights that companies should include environmental aspects in their marketing communications as the climate debate intensifies. This is shown by participants’ preference for airlines which offer carbon offsetting schemes. Moreover, this can also be shown by participants preference for travelling with train instead of airplane after they have seen commercials which address the negative environmental impact airplanes have in comparison to trains.

### **6.4 Limitations and future research**

This study presents deeper insights of how the climate debate and “flight-shame” influence consumer behaviour and consumers’ decision to fly and not to fly. Moreover, it explores if there are any differences in consumer behaviour depending on travel motives. However, this study is not without limitations. During the writing process of this thesis the world was hit by the Corona pandemic which limited our choice of method. The method used may not have been the best to fulfil the purpose of the study. For instance, the answers recorded in the focus groups are based on what participants say they do, and this may not be in line with their actual behaviour. Moreover, the social phenomenon was not studied through an observation method at airports which are the travellers’ natural settings. As a result, the travellers’ behaviour could not be verified. For this reason, it is suggested that future researchers stand at airports and use a combination

of research methods like interviews and observations to explore if what participants say they do are in line with their behaviour. Apart from this, the Corona pandemic may also have influenced participants answers because individuals were asked to isolate and remain social distancing. This follows that participants have become less interested in travelling and their attitudes towards travelling have become different from what they were before the corona pandemic. For this reason, future research is suggested to extend and address the generalizability of the findings when the Corona pandemic is over.

In this study it was also found that the media also influences consumers' purchase decisions as participants stated it encouraged them to not fly. However, this factor was not further explored to see how different media outlets such as newspapers, news sites, and social media influence consumer behaviour. Moreover, marketing communications by train travel companies were also mentioned in the study to influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly. However, the way other travel companies market themselves in relation to airline companies were not further explored. For this reason, we suggest future research to explore how different media outlets influence consumer behaviour in the aviation industry, but also how other travel companies such as train companies and ferry companies influence consumers' decision to fly or not to fly.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Letter of information to participants

Hej!

Vi är två studenter som läser Ekonomprogrammet vid Högskolan Kristianstad och arbetar just nu med vår kandidatuppsats (c-uppsats). Under vecka 19 och 20 kommer vi att ha fokusgrupper för att samla in vår empiriska data. Därför behöver vi din hjälp genom att du tillsammans med andra deltagare diskuterar konsumentbeteende inom flygindustrin. För att delta behöver du tillhöra en av tre grupper:

1. flugit i genomsnitt 3–4 gånger om året under de senaste tre åren
2. flugit i genomsnitt 0–2 gånger om året de senaste tre åren
3. vara affärsresenär, dvs. du flyger minst varannan månad inom jobbet
4. vara en utbytesstudent

Diskussionerna kommer äga rum digitalt via programmet ZOOM och kommer ta ca en timme. Det ni som deltagare behöver ha är en dator med webbkamera och mikrofon, men att använda sin telefon fungerar även det utmärkt.

Vi är väldigt tacksamma om ni vill hjälpa oss och vi hoppas på en givande stund för både er och oss! :)

Hör gärna av er om ni har några frågor: [johanna.gullbrandsson0110@stud.hkr.se](mailto:johanna.gullbrandsson0110@stud.hkr.se) och [ludwig.lofkvist\\_andersson0010@stud.hkr.se](mailto:ludwig.lofkvist_andersson0010@stud.hkr.se).

**Bästa hälsningar**  
Johanna och Ludwig

## Appendix 2 – Additional Information

Hej,

Vad kul att du är intresserad av att delta i en av våra fokusgrupper!

Diskussionerna kommer att spelas in för att underlätta vår analys. För att skydda din integritet kommer vi inte använda några namn i uppsatsen, samt att det inspelade materialet kommer raderas efter att vi transkriberat materialet.

Hör gärna av dig om du har några fler frågor. Vi är otroligt tacksamma för att du vill ställa upp!

Med vänliga hälsningar,  
Johanna Gullbrandsson och Ludwig Löfkvist Andersson

## Appendix 3 – Focus Group Guide

### Hej och Välkomna:

Vi vill börja med att tacka er alla för att ni har tagit er tid att medverka i vår fokusgrupp.

### Praktisk information:

För att underlätta vår analys av svaren kommer intervjuerna att spelas in. Era svar kommer att transkriberas, men för att skydda er integritet kommer vi inte att använda era namn i uppsatsen, samt att det inspelade materialet kommer raderas efter att transkriberingarna är färdigställda. Syftet med denna fokusgrupp är för att vi ska få ta del av era tankar gällande konsumentbeteende inom flygindustrin. Vi som moderatorer kommer endast att fungera som vägledare genom diskussionen och därmed inte delta aktivt.

### Fas 1

#### Introduktion:

- Be alla introducera sig (namn, ålder, och sysselsättning)
- Vad är din favoritdestination?
- Vilka var din senaste resa?

Vi vill börja med att presentera tre case där vi vill att ni diskuterar möjliga alternativ och lösningar:

#### Case 1:

Du planerar en semesterresa för dig och familjen/vänner till valfri destination utanför Sverige. Ni får välja mellan olika färdmedel bil, tåg eller flyg för att ta er dit på bästa sätt. Vilket alternativ hade ni valt och varför?

#### Case 2:

Om resmålet istället hade legat inom Sverige t.ex Malmö till Stockholm eller annan destination, hade ert val av transportmedel varit annorlunda och varför?

#### Case 3:

Det är dags för den årliga konferensresan som hela avdelningen åker med på och företaget står för alla kostnader. Resan kommer gå från Malmö till Stockholm och där finns flera olika transportalternativ att välja mellan. Det går att välja mellan tåg, flyg och bil som ni antingen kan köra själva eller samla ett gäng kollegor och åka tillsammans. Vilket hade ni valt och varför? Här vill vi gärna att ni kommer fram till ett gemensamt beslut.

### Fas 2

Allmänna frågor om konsumentbeteende:

- Vilka faktorer tror ni påverkar konsumentbeteende?
- Tror ni att de olika faktorerna beror på vad det är för val eller köp?

Nu kommer vi gå in på lite övergripande reflektionsfrågor som ni kommer få diskutera

Values, beliefs, and norms	<p>F1: Vilket/Vilka ord tänker ni på när ni hör flyg?</p> <p>F2: Kan en persons värderingar, normer, eller övertygelser/tro vara faktorer som påverkar en individs val av att flyga eller inte flyga? På vilket sätt?</p>
Consumer needs	<p>F3: Vad tror ni det är som bidrar till att en person väljer flyg istället för alternativa transportmedel?</p> <p>F4: Vilka fördelar finns det med att välja flyg framför andra transportmedel? Är dessa faktorer avgörande för er?</p> <p>F5: Finns det några aspekter som andra transportmedel saknar gentemot flyg?</p>
Reference group	<p>F6: Finns det någon som påverkar er att välja flyg eller alternativ till flyg? Vem/Vilka/Vad?</p> <p>F7: Vad hade er reaktion varit om en vän eller familjemedlem hade valt att flyga under en inrikesresa istället för att välja annat transportmedel? Varför känner ni så?</p> <p>F8: Hur tror ni era vänner hade reagerat om ni hade valt att flyga under en inrikes resa istället för annat transportmedel. Varför?</p>
Green marketing communication	<p>F9: Många företag marknadsför sig gärna på gröna sätt, ex. många flygbolag gör reklam för klimatkompensation. Ser ni det som positivt eller negativt?</p> <p>F10: Tror ni att "grön" marknadsföring påverkar konsumenter? På vilket sätt?</p>
Social class	<p>F11: Kan valet att flyga eller inte flyga beror på inkomst, vilken generation man tillhör, ens yrke etc?</p>
Consumer knowledge about the environment	<p>F12: Tror ni att konsumenter är medvetna om flygindustrins påverkan på miljön?</p> <p>F13: Finns det några nya trender inom resande som ni lagt märke till de senaste tre åren? Diskutera gärna.</p>

	F14: Tror ni att kunskap om miljö och klimatet kan vara en bidragande faktor till att personer flyger mer eller mindre? Varför? På vilket sätt?
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## Avslutning

Hoppas ni tycker att denna tid har varit givande.

Om det är någon av er som är intresserade av slutresultatet i denna c-uppsats, vänligen skriv er e-post i chattfunktionen.

Om ni kommer på något ni vill tillägga är ni välkomna att höra av er till oss.

Tack för att ni tagit er tid att medverka!

## Appendix 4 – Thank you e-mail

Hej igen!

Vi tänkte bara säga ett stort TACK för att just du var med och deltog i vår fokusgrupp. Hoppas du också tyckte att diskussionen var givande och intressant!

Om du har något du kommit på i efterhand som glömdes att diskuteras i fokusgruppen, får du gärna höra av dig till oss 😊

Tack för ert engagemang!

Mvh,  
Johanna och Ludwig

## Appendix 5 – Summary of Quotes

Table A. Collection of Participant Quotes

Theme	Sub-theme	Participant Quotes
Value, Beliefs, and Norms		<i>Like if you are environmentally focused or something like if you have values that are not good to fly, or something like that. Yeah of course I think so. – Participant D</i>
	<i>Environmental Values</i>	<i>[...] I would consider the environment if I am travelling to Stockholm because I feel it would be insensible to take the flight. I feel like... I can choose the train because of the environment even though the train is more expensive than taking the plane – Participant I</i>
	<i>Time aspects</i>	<i>I agree to some extent. There might be a slight difference if it is inside Sweden. You can feel like one to two hours longer with the train might be worth it if you compare to the airplane which is faster. Otherwise, I would say it is the other factors [...] - Participant H</i>
	<i>Budget Constraints</i>	<i>In winter I was going to Stockholm from a Thursday to Sunday and wanted to take the train, and I am a student, and thus do not have very good finances. I really wanted to take the train and checked on all possible alternatives, but the flight was so much cheaper [...] I really wanted to take the train, but I felt I was saving so much money to take the flight [...] But I went against my own values. - Participant I</i>
		<i>It is value against values. If you put them in a row against each other, it immediately becomes much more difficult. - Participant F</i>
	<i>Budget Constraints</i>	<i>So right now, when you are a student then you have to be honest and say that it is clear that you are looking at what is the cheapest, absolutely. So, for my part where I am, my true values may not be as clear in my choices. – Participant N</i>
	<i>Environmental Values</i>	<i>It may take a few years before the Greta-effect has really set in the values. It is probably a little early yet, I think. – Participant F</i>
		<i>So, I think everyone should be aware, but if you had asked me two years ago, I probably would have chosen flights every day of the week. But then, we live in a different time</i>

		<i>and we become more and more aware, and it is my values and norms that has changed me. So that is why I feel it has affected my behaviour – Participant J</i>
Consumer needs	<p><i>Travel time reliability</i></p> <p><i>Convenience and comfort</i></p> <p><i>Impulse purchase</i></p>	<p><i>It is mostly in time instead of like trains in Germany, [...] It is one of the most, yeah, crucial parts for me because I am always so annoyed of the trains and them... they are all the time to late. – Participant A</i></p> <p><i>Currently, I would agree with what participant E says about reliability, airplanes are more reliable and then it is also the total time. – Participant G</i></p> <p><i>[...]. Then it can also depend on departures and what fits into the schedule, [...] it is a little bit harder to work on a plane than on a train. It is not as comfortable. – Participant G</i></p> <p><i>Right now, when I am thinking about one thing, I did with two of my old roommates, there was this Ryanair situation that they sell flights for like kind of no money. So, we went to Mallorca for 4 euros both ways. So, when I think about this now, this was kind of not really sustainable, but it was a fun thing and we did it just like booked it one day before go there overnight, even though it was November so it does not make sense at the end. – Participant A</i></p>
Reference Groups	<p><i>Corporate decision</i></p> <p><i>Social pressure</i></p> <p><i>Social pressure</i></p>	<p><i>No, it is probably those factors we previously mentioned and if there was something else then some sort of corporate decision is required that says “from this day forward we travel by train and so on” [...]. – Participant G</i></p> <p><i>They would have probably approved our behaviour. If we would have said that we took the train because it is comfortable to work there, they would have nodded in approval and said yes you can. And if we would have said we flew to save time they would have nodded in approval and said yes that is rather sensible. – Participant G</i></p> <p><i>Like no one has ever said anything to me, like really. Therefore, I base the decision on myself and what the people around me do [...]. – Participant N</i></p> <p><i>No, I feel like a lot of pressure from the people around you would be required in order for you to change your decision [...] you chose the option which suits you the best. – Participant R</i></p>

		<i>And another point is maybe if you are going to do a kind of family trip and you are not the person who are going to pay for it and your parents are going to pay then it is also definitely their choice if you are going to go by train, or car or by plane [...]. – Participant A</i>
Green Marketing Communication	<i>Scepticism towards green marketing communication</i>	<i>Sometimes I have also thought while booking, “I actually do not know where it goes”. I do not want to pay more when I am not sure what it does but maybe I am very sceptical [...] So therefore when I fly, I have not purchased it because maybe they just earn more money? – Participant I</i>
	<i>Carbon offset schemes</i>	<i>I know that I have purchased it [...] and we purchased it for all flights where it was offered. However, it did not influence the decision to fly or not to fly [...]. – Participant H</i>
	<i>Scepticism</i>	<i>I think as long as they really consider environmental policies and so - like as long as they really act according to this it is totally fine. As long as it is not just marketing like “we are such good company” and that is it, then it is totally fine with me. – Participant B</i>
	<i>Scepticism</i>	<i>I think so too. If their efforts are really an effort, then fine but I also think it is quite hard for an aviation company to really be like sustainable or anything. They can do effort, but can they be really green? I do not think so. – Participant D</i>
	<i>Carbon offset schemes</i>	<i>If it were an alternative and it was the same service then of course I would have chosen the greener option, but then it is also the factors we previously discussed about time, money, and flexibility. – Participant Q</i>
Social Class	<i>Income</i>	<i>I think because it was upper class to fly when it was new. Since then it has become something that everyone can do, and now it is almost top class to be able to take the alternatives that costs more, like not everyone has the opportunity. – Participant I</i>  <i>We have always driven [...] down to Croatia when I was a kid, circa late 90s and early 2000s. And then we started flying when air fares fell. -Participant I</i>

	<p><i>Generation</i></p>	<p><i>Yes, I think some people can afford to fly, and some might not be able to afford it. – Participant O</i></p> <p><i>I do not necessarily think it is a generational question. Because you give a 20-year-old unlimited amount of money, it will probably think like a 40-year-old. – Participant E</i></p> <p><i>I think generation is a big factor because we are all in this generation that we accept our situation now that we are used to go wherever we want and we are grown up with open borders and most of us are used to travel and do long trips and short city trips. - Participant A</i></p> <p><i>I agree the younger generation is more used to taking the train and we have more connections than fifty years ago. – Participant C</i></p> <p><i>Yes, many times it is, well, the young generation that get very involved and it is probably not just with air travel but it may apply to quite a few different things, but it is certainly a great commitment among some target groups more than others. – Participant O</i></p> <p><i>Generation in terms of age, then perhaps it is true that all generations in the end still have some similarities, i.e. when you are 20 you make a certain type of decision, and when you are 30 you make a certain type of decision. You fall in these gaps so to speak where you value time and money in a different way. – Participant G</i></p>
<p>Knowledge about the environment</p>	<p><i>Aware</i></p> <p><i>Generation</i></p> <p><i>Marketing Communication</i></p>	<p><i>Both yes and no, of course we understand the impact it has on the environment, but how much is hard to say. – Participant E</i></p> <p><i>I think that most of them know and have a vague idea that it is bad, but no definitive figures on things like that. – Participant K</i></p> <p><i>I think it is a generational issue, I think the younger ones are more informed and read more about it. – Participant Q</i></p> <p><i>I think it can be a contributing factor to people flying less because you become more aware [...] you get a little “Aha” experience and that I can drive this much instead of taking a plane. – Participant M</i></p>

	<p>Marketing Communication</p>	<p><i>I think it definitely influence you, but I am not sure it is really changing you right now, because we mentioned the advantages of taking the plane, so trains [...] must be better and start competing with the planes and to that is influencing you and changing your decisions. – Participant A</i></p> <p><i>I agree and personally I feel quite sceptical of the issue because I myself know a lot about the climate and climate change and so on, but I cannot say that I travel less because of it. On the other hand, I have friends who limit their travel because they have a lot of knowledge, so it may depend on one's morals. – Participant R</i></p> <p><i>No, I do not think you necessarily fly more or less, but I think the airlines are marketing differently. – Participant E</i></p> <p><i>I think it [knowledge] can be a contributing factor to the fact that when it is a company that control. I believe that the knowledge you have and how you have adapted to the environment means that many business trips have become more environmentally friendly and maybe now then they also become more digital to completely erase the travelling. So that is what I think it has affected. – Participant P</i></p> <p><i>I really think this Corona crisis [...] I really think this will affect the way now that you realize you may not need to fly as much. As Skype meetings then [...] will probably be some changes now to come, to reduce flights within the job. And maybe that makes it to the private market as well. – Participant N</i></p>
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