



**Can priming influence the judgment of
fashion's ecological impact?
It depends on the informational direction**

Luise Ende



Thank you!

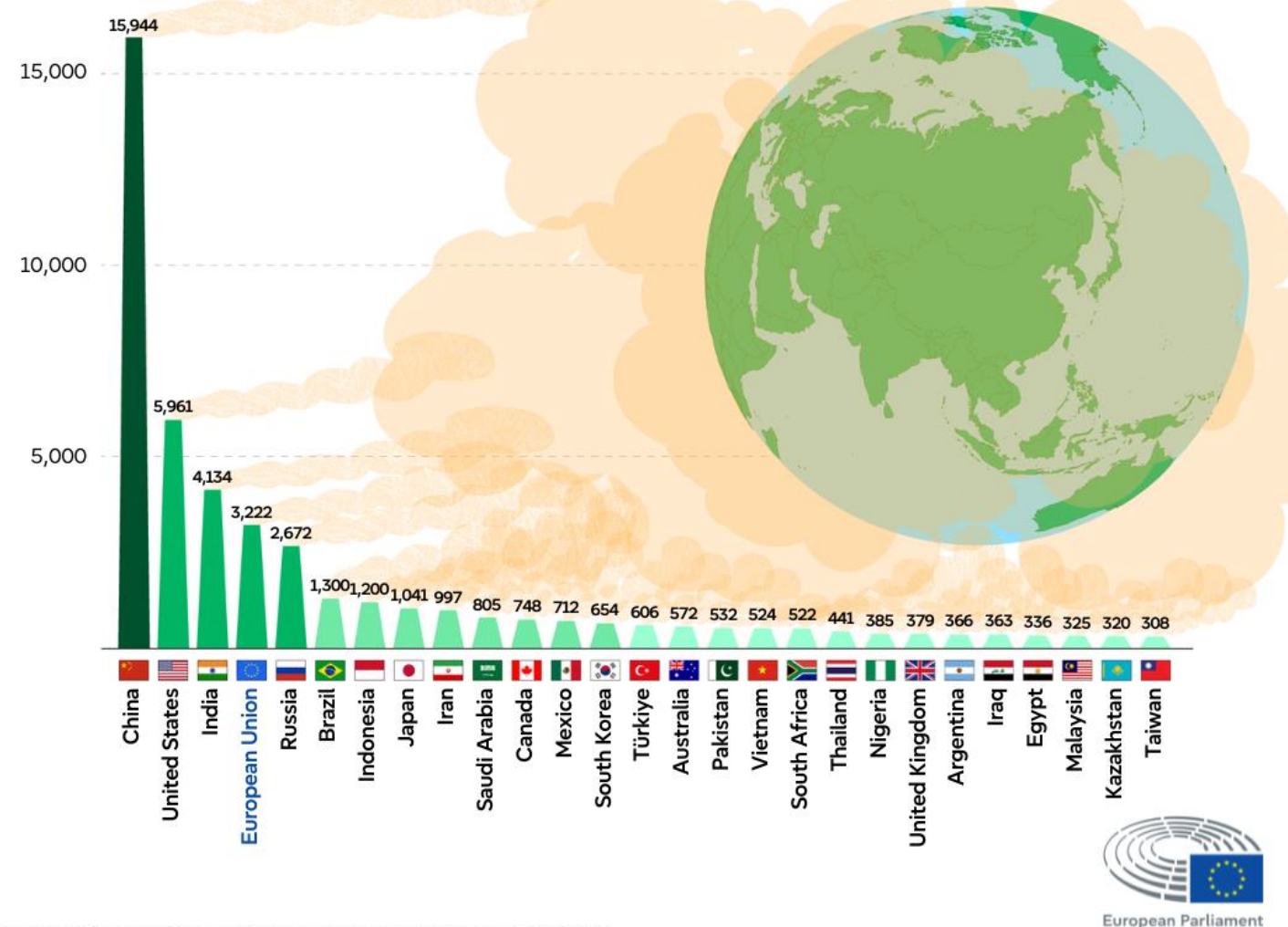
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Top greenhouse gas emitters in the world

Million tonnes
of CO₂ equivalent

(2023)



Source: Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR)

Global net GHG emissions by sector (2020)

Transport

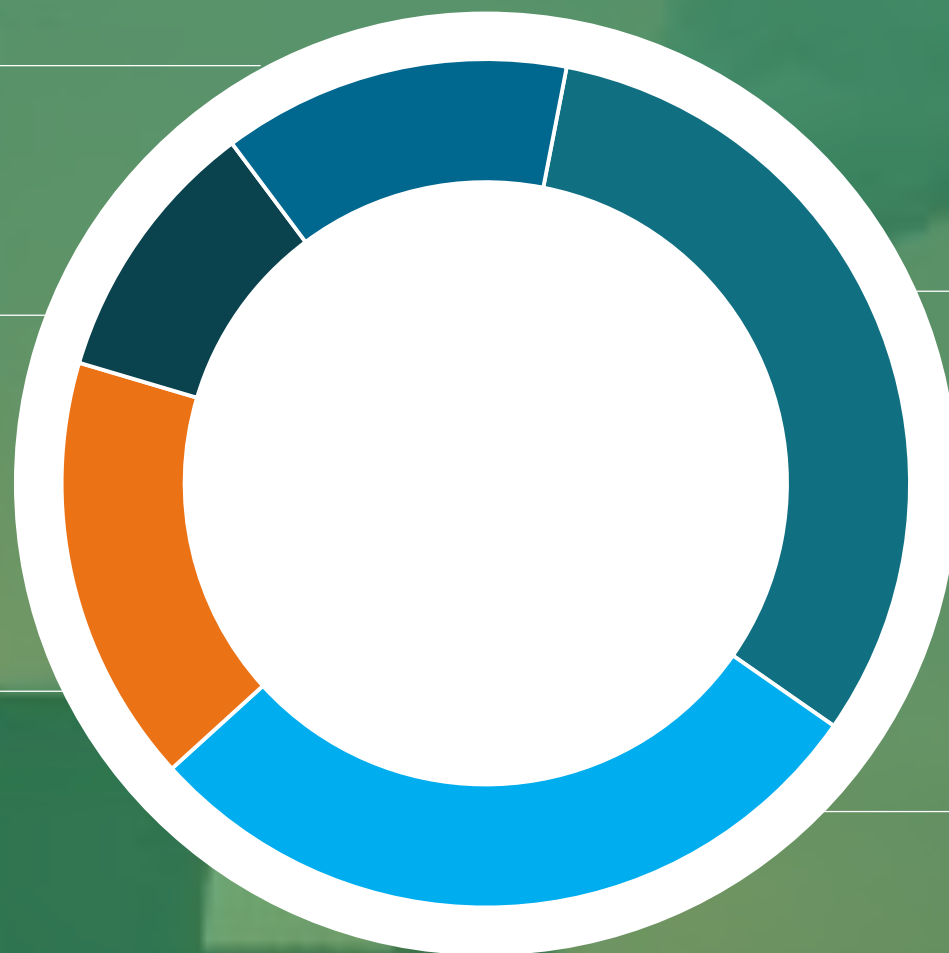
16 %

Buildings

7 %

*Agriculture, land
use and landfills*

18 %



Industry

31 %

Electricity

28 %

Estimated Growth of Emissions from the Fashion Industry, Worldwide, 2019-2030

Measured in million metric tons of CO₂e (MtCO₂e)





Greenhouse
gas emissions



Waste
generation



Chemical
usage

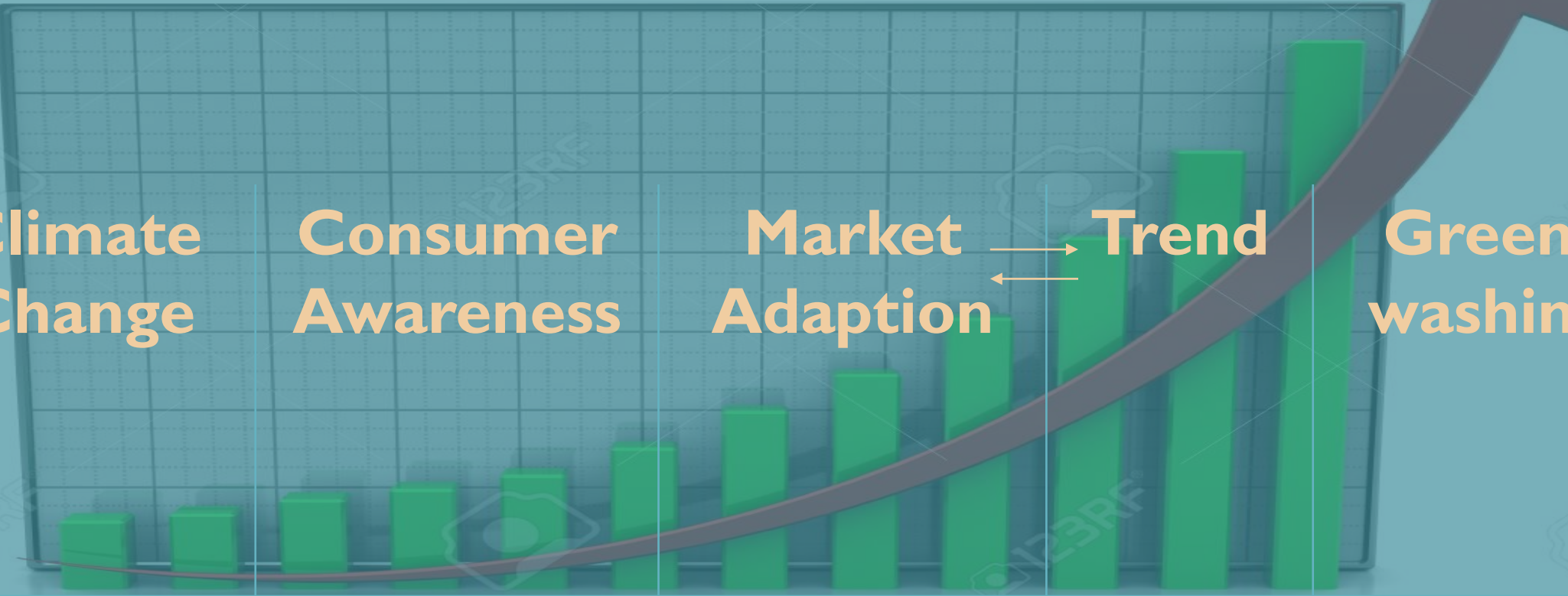


Water consumption
and pollution



Environmental
degradation

A perspective on the appearance of greenwashing B2C



Climate Change **Consumer Awareness** **Market Adaption** **Trend** **Green-washing**

What is “Greenwashing”

- ✓ Misleading consumers regarding the environmental impact of activities, products, services
- ✓ Change of perception, attitudes, intentions, decisions, and behavior
- ✓ Different channels of perception; here focus on framing by written information



Priming as influencer

- ✓ Presenting a first stimulus that influences the perception of a following stimulus
- ✓ Top-down perception process
- ✓ Biased attitude

Here: Combination of priming attitudes (informational texts about fashion) with the context of ecology (rated ecological impact)



The current study

Hypothesis 1

The negative priming leads to a lower rated ecological impact than the positive and the neutral priming

- < + and =

Hypothesis 2

The positive priming leads to a higher rated ecological impact than the negative and the neutral priming

+ > - and =

Hypothesis 3

The neutral priming leads to a higher rated ecological impact than the negative priming but a lower rated ecological impact than the positive priming

= > -

= < +

Positive priming

To meet society's growing desire for environmental protection and sustainability, many fashion companies are contributing to sustainable development. This includes reducing water consumption and pollutant emissions. They also manufacture clothing in a resource-efficient manner and use recycled materials. Socially responsible production conditions and fair trade are also important. Changes like these are making the fashion industry more environmentally friendly.

Neutral priming

There are few items of clothing as versatile as a T-shirt. Most people have several in different styles in their wardrobe. They differ not only in colour and pattern, but also in cut. Historically, T-shirts were primarily worn as undershirts in cold weather; nowadays, however, they are primarily used as tops or sportswear in warm weather. The exact origin of the T-shirt is disputed, but it became popular in Europe after the Second World War. Since then, T-shirts have always been a popular choice. Age doesn't matter either: T-shirts can be found in wardrobes of all ages. T-shirts are therefore an essential item for every wardrobe.

Negative priming

For many years, it has been known that the fashion industry has a variety of negative consequences for people and the environment. These include high water consumption, pollutant emissions, waste of raw materials, and chemical poisoning. To meet society's growing desire for environmental protection and sustainability, many fashion companies publicly claim that their clothing is produced in an environmentally friendly manner. However, these ecological claims often do not reflect reality. This practice is known as greenwashing, and demonstrates how fashion companies are trying to deceive consumers.

3 x 2 Mixed Method Design,
143 participants: 108 female, 34 male, 1 diverse
Mean age: 32 years, $SD = 15$ years (from 18 to 77)

Procedure

1

Introduction & informed consent & demographic data 1 (age, sex, language level)

2

Presentation of the priming text (positive vs. neutral vs. negative)

3

Presentation of 20 blue T-shirts & rating scale (1 = *not ecological*, 7 = *very ecological*) & confidence scale

4

Explorational questions (criteria for decisions, assumptions about the study's purpose, technical difficulties) & manipulation check & demographic data 2 (current employment, highest educational achievement, monthly income)

5

Short information about the study's purpose

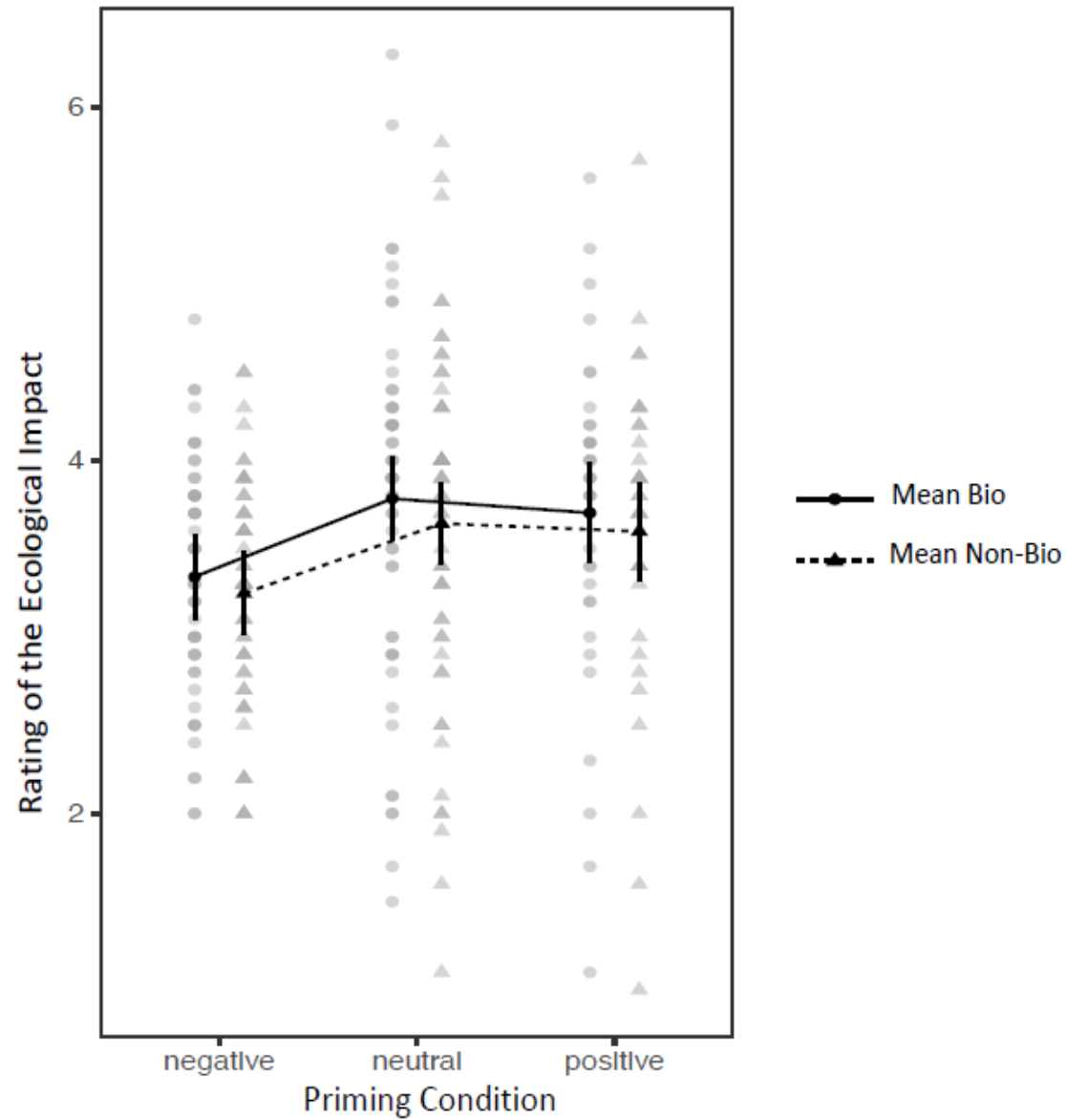
T-shirt 1	T-shirt 2	T-shirt 3	T-shirt 4	T-shirt 5
				
T-shirt 6	T-shirt 7	T-shirt 8	T-shirt 9	T-shirt 10
				
T-shirt 11	T-shirt 12	T-shirt 13	T-shirt 14	T-shirt 15
				
T-shirt 16	T-shirt 17	T-shirt 18	T-shirt 19	T-shirt 20
				

Note. T-shirts 1-10 are bio, T-shirts 11-20 are non-bio.

Results

Condition	Status			
	Bio		Non-bio	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Negative	3.34	0.66	3.25	0.64
Neutral	3.78	1.01	3.64	1.00
Positive	3.70	0.92	3.60	0.88

Note. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.



Main effect priming

$F(2, 140) = 8.55, p = .004, \eta^2p = .06$

- Positive vs. negative:

Non-significant, $t(140) = .357, p = .119$

- Positive vs. neutral:

Non-significant, $t(140) = .063, p = .934$

- Negative vs. neutral:

Significant, $t(140) = -.420, p = .029, d = -.51$



Main effect bio-status

- Bio T-shirts higher rated as ecological

$(142) = 3.017, p = .003, d = .25$

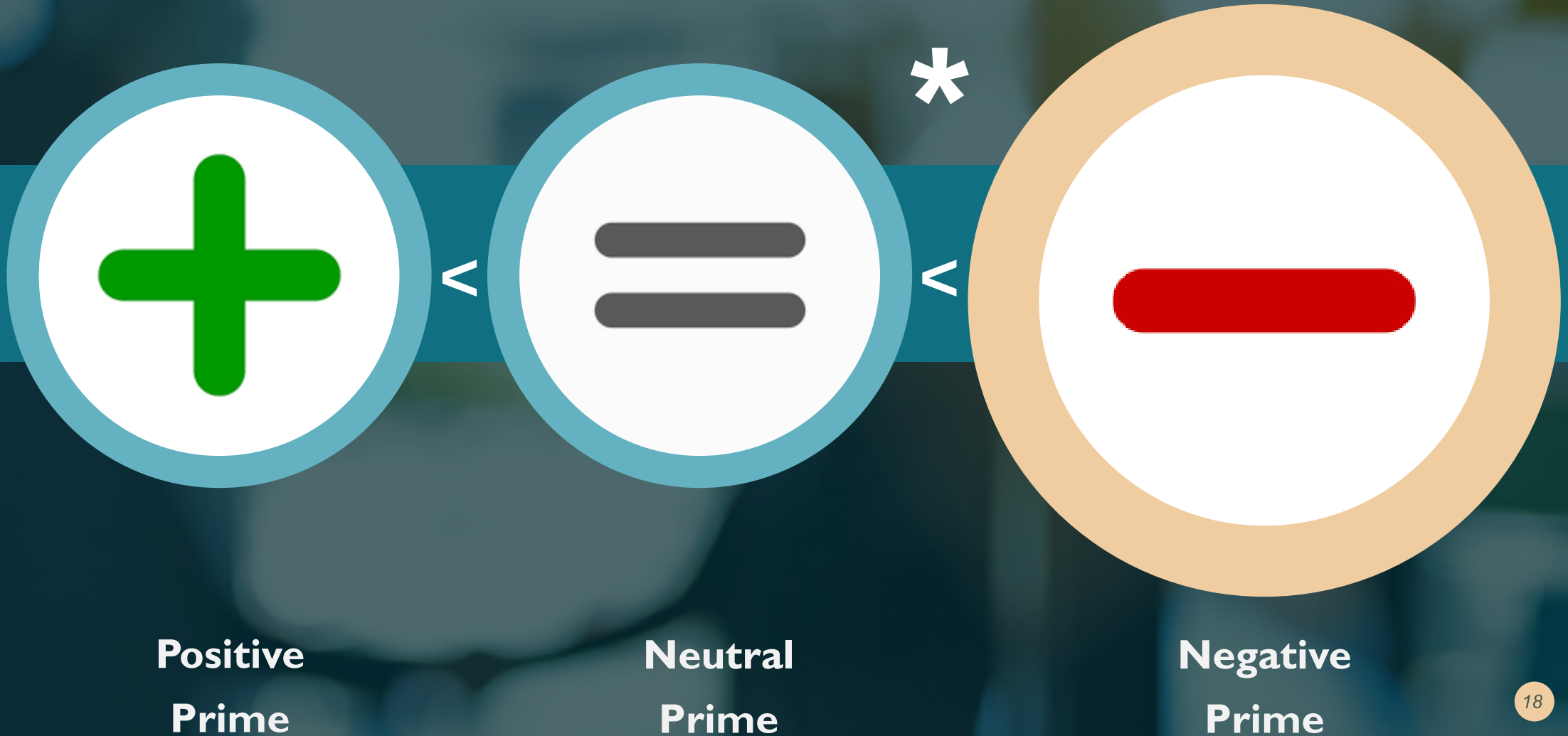


General negative judgmental bias

All means of the rated ecological impact are < 4
($M = 3.54$)

Note. Errorbars depict 95% confidence intervals.

In conclusion



Discussion



Negative priming was effective, positive not

- Awareness
- Scepticism
- „Too good to be true“ – veiling



Limitations:

- Online judgment decision by click behavior
- No control of attentiveness, motivation, attitude, and prior knowledge



Further research

- Investigation of the interaction between the effect of the condition and the status (Does negative priming lead to more accurate estimations concerning the bio and non-bio status of the T-shirts?)
- Variation of the kind and the intensity of the prime
- Measurement of willingness to purchase

Implications

- ✓ Informational texts can have an impact
- ✓ Clear and true communication should be targeted
- ✓ Be aware of scepticism in consumers



Abstract

Can priming influence the judgment of fashion's ecological impact? It depends on the informational direction

The present study investigated the hypothesis that priming influences participants' ratings of the ecological impacts of T-shirts. As priming method was used an informational text which compassed positive, negative or no information concerning the ecology of the fashion industry. A final sample containing 143 participants was tested in an online experiment. Subsequent to the priming stage, they were tasked with the evaluation of the ecological impact of 20 blue T-shirts, with 10 of these being of a bio-based origin and the remaining 10 being non-bio. Participants in the negative priming condition allocated a higher degree of negativity to the ecological impact in comparison to those in the neutral priming condition. No significant differences were identified between the positive and the neutral, or the positive and the negative priming conditions.

THANK YOU!



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