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Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective and Inequality

International Conference on Consumer Research

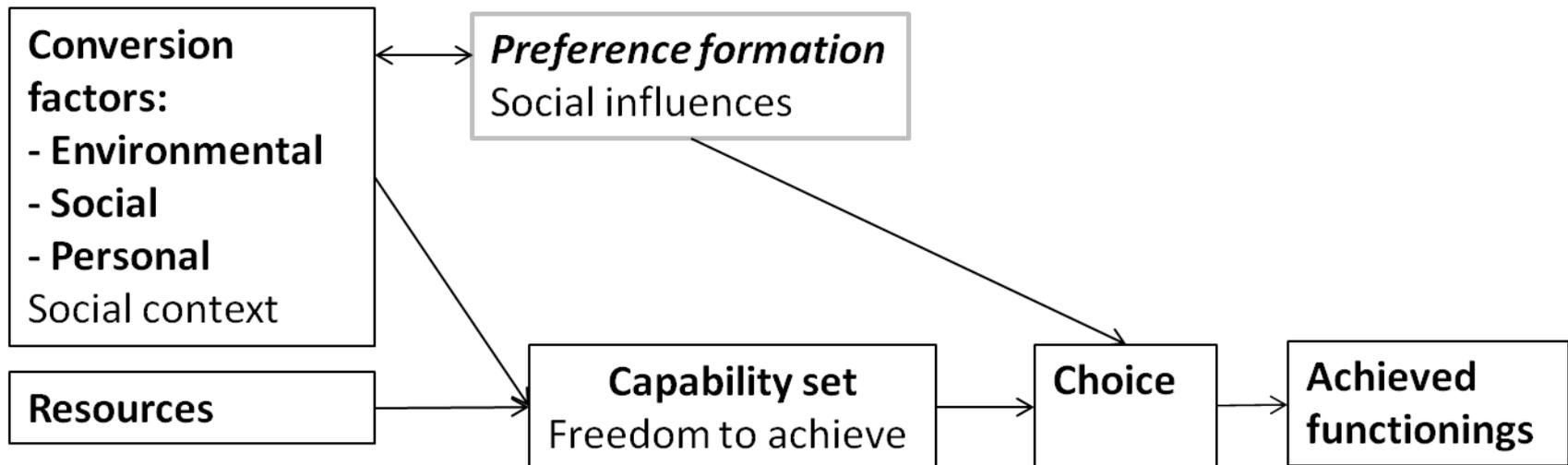
In Bonn

29-30 September 2014

Equality and Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective

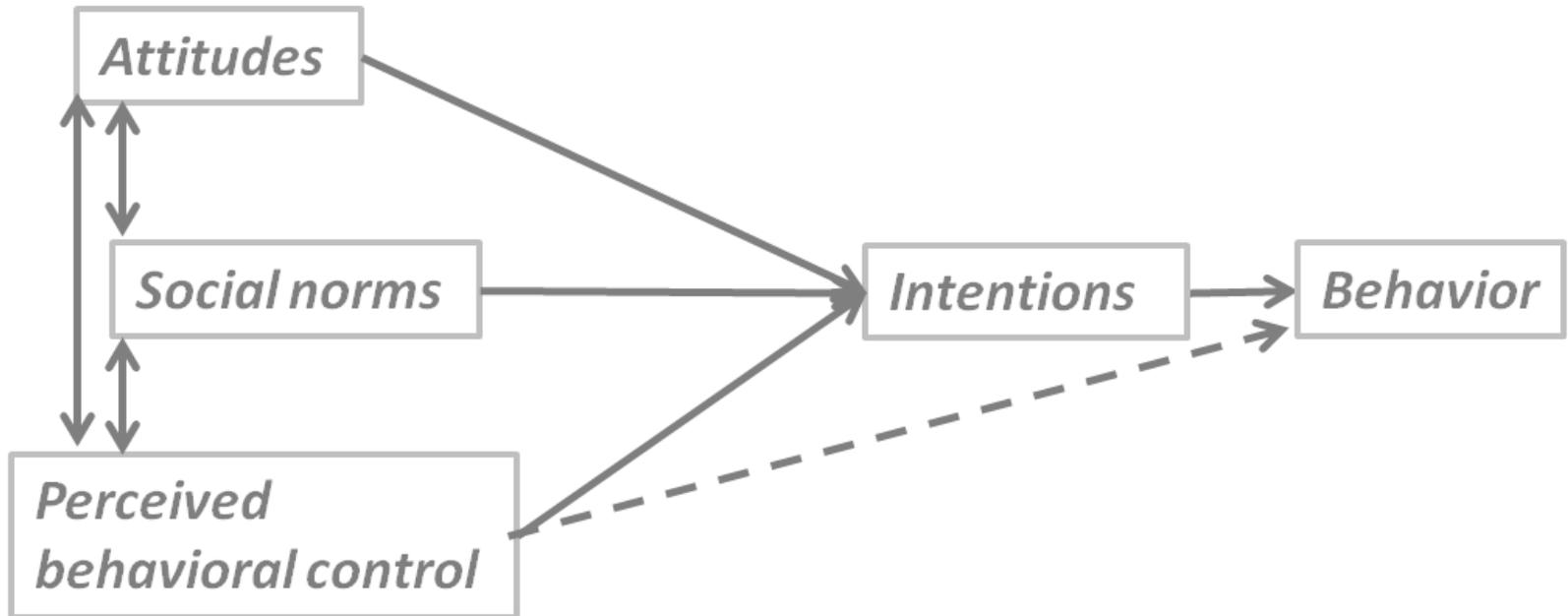
- 1. *The Model of Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective***
- 2. *Data, Questions and Empirical Model***
- 3. *Empirical Results***
- 4. *Precariousness and Sustainable Consumption***
 - I. *Main Challenges for Consumer Research in the European Union***
 - II. *Recommendation for European Policy towards Sustainable Consumption***

Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective: The Capability Approach

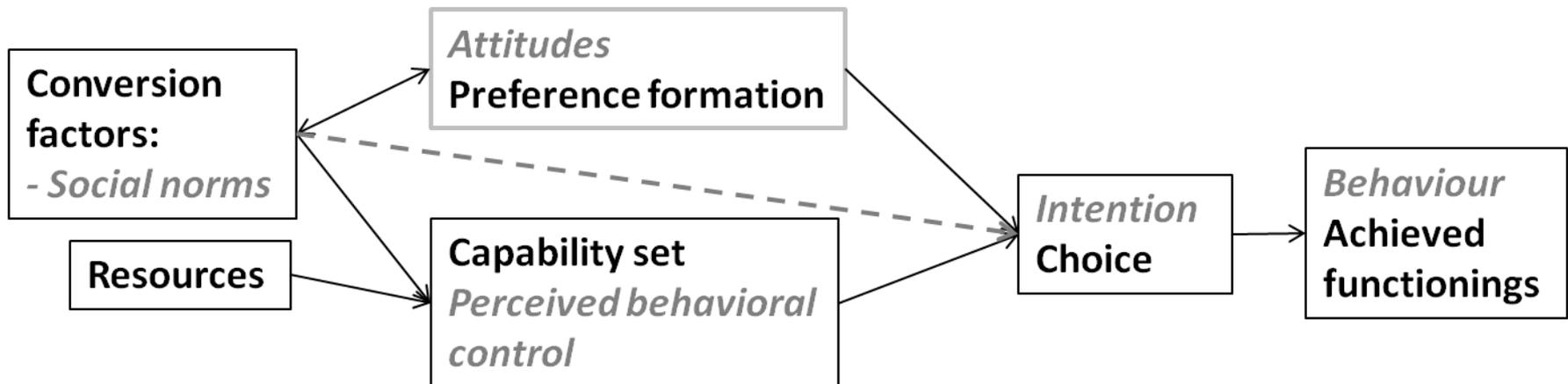


*Sustainable consumption as achieved functionings
No model for studying this empirically available yet*

Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective: The Theory of Planned Behavior



Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective: The Theoretical Model



Capability Approach:

- Conversion factors
- Resources
- (Preference Formation)
- Capability Set
 - Choice
 - Achieved functionings

Theory of Planned Behavior

- Social Norms
- Attitudes
- Perceived Behavioral Control
 - Intention
 - Behavior

Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective: Data

- *Innovation Sample of the German Socio-Economic Panel in 2012*
- *Two behaviors:*
 - *Purchase of organic food (N=536)*
56.9% female; $M_{age} = 51.02$ years, $SD_{age} = 18.53$ years
 - *Use of public transport or bike for inner-city rides (N=363)*
45.6% female; $M_{age} = 52.39$ years, $SD_{age} = 15.89$ years

Variables I – endogenous variables

Intention:

“How often do you intend to [purchase organic food / use public transport & bike for inner-city rides] in the future?”

5-point scale: “no, never” - 5 “yes, very often”

Self -reported behaviour:

“How often have you [bought organic food / used public transport / bike for inner city-rides] within the last 3 months?”

5-point scale: 1 “never” - 5 “very often”

Variables II – endogenous variables

Attitude (2 items):

“[Purchasing organic food / Using public transport & bike] is a good thing to do.”

“[Purchasing organic food / Using public transport & bike] is pleasant.”

5-point scale: 1 “do not agree” - 5 “totally agree”

Perceived freedom of choice:

“How much freedom of choice do you have to [purchase organic food / use public transport & bike for inner-city rides]?”

5-point scale: 1 “very little” - 5 “very much”

Variables III – exogenous variables

Descriptive Norm:

“Most people who are important to me [purchase organic food / use public transport & bike for inner-city rides].”

5-point scale: 1 “do not agree” - 5 “totally agree”

Resource constraints (2 items):

[Purchasing organic food / Using public transport & bike]

... is financially demanding.

...is costly in terms of time.”

5-point scale: 1 “do not agree” - 5 “totally agree”

Variables IV – exogenous variables

Infrastructure barriers (social conversion factors):

“Purchasing organic food is difficult for me because of the lack of shops that offer such products.”

“Using public transport & bike for inner-city rides is difficult for me because of an insufficient public transport infrastructure.”

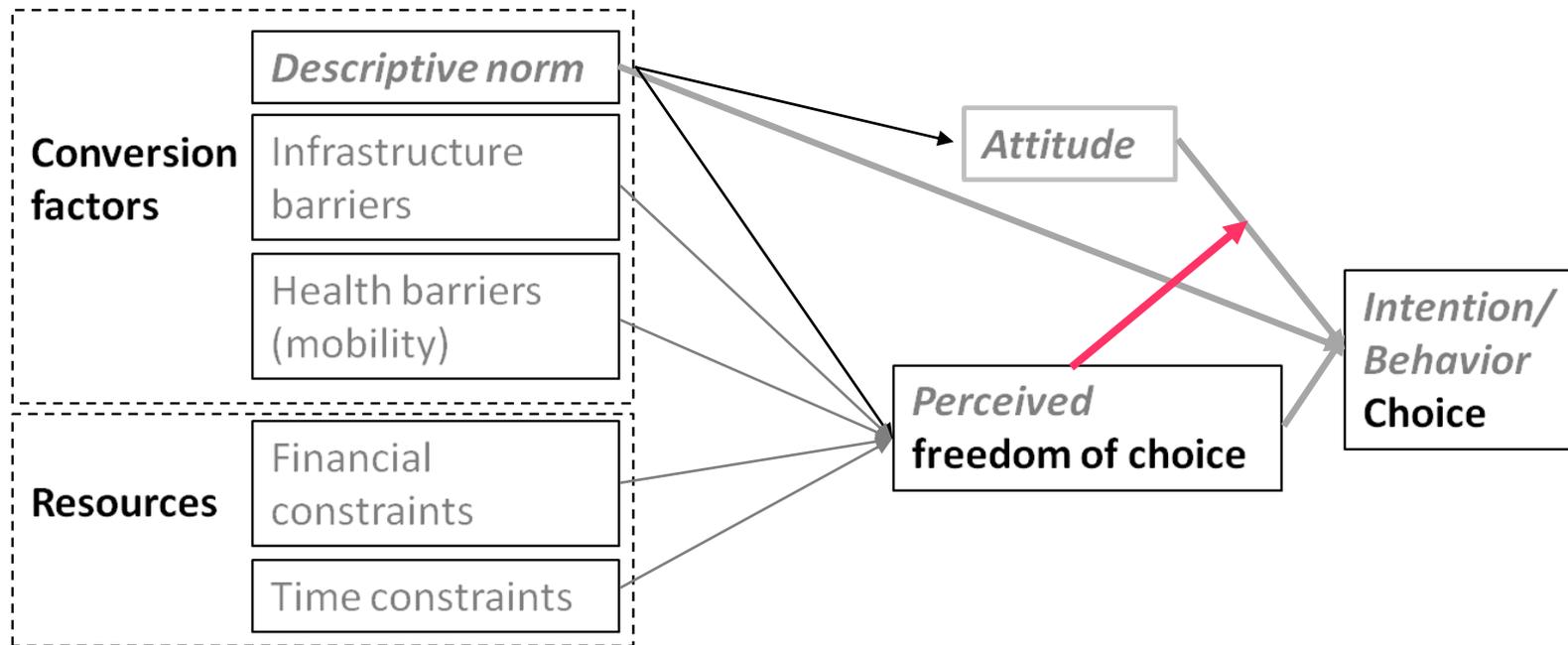
5-point scale: 1 “do not agree” - 5 “totally agree”

Health barriers (personal conversion factors):

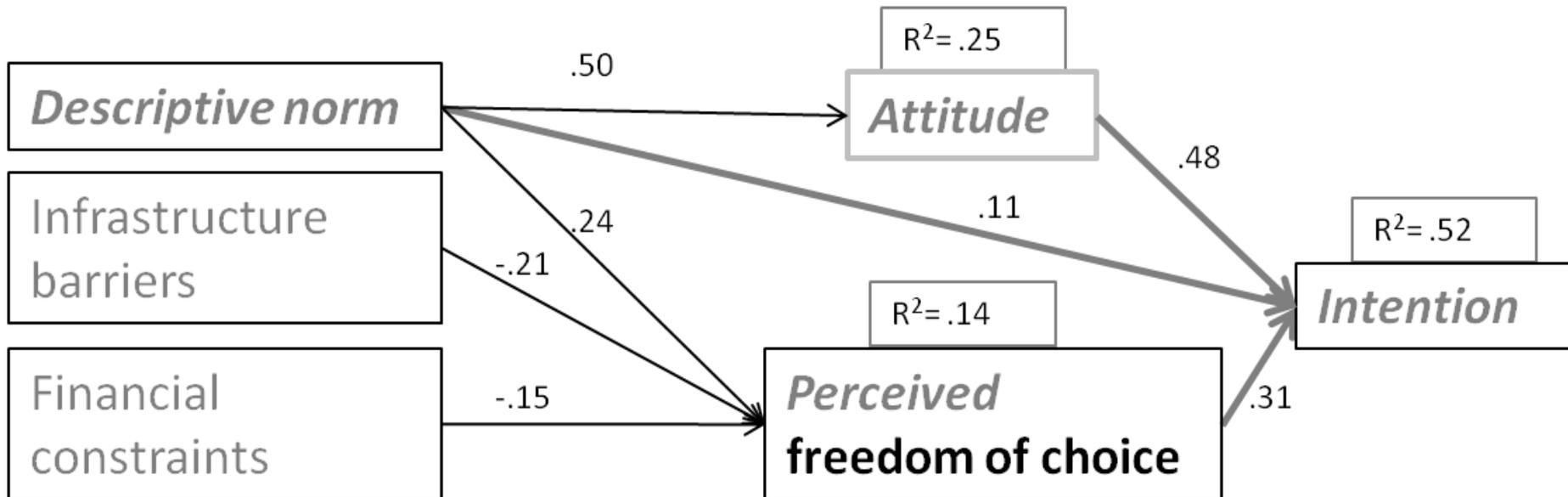
“Using public transport & bike for inner-city rides is difficult for me because of my health.”

5-point scale: 1 “do not agree” - 5 “totally agree”:

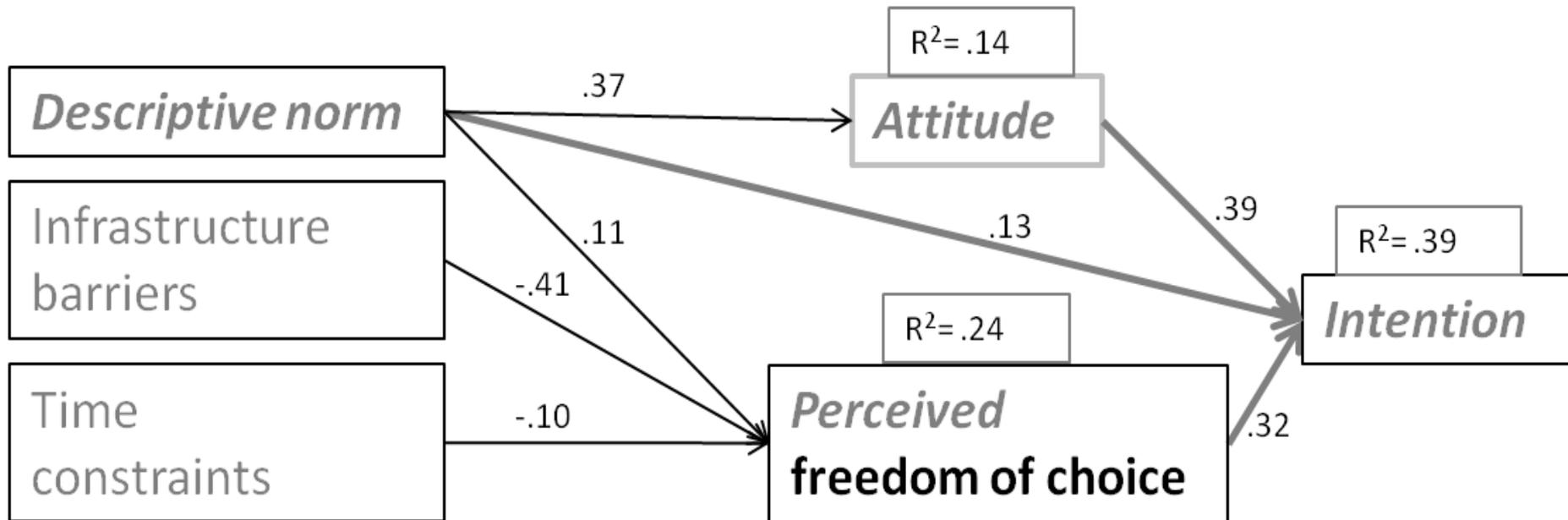
Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective: Empirical Model and Hypotheses



Path model I – Purchase of organic food



Path model II – Mobility behaviour



Empirical Results – Discrepancy Analysis between Attitudes and Freedom of Choice

score discrepancy analysis

(gap of two score points or more)

- *attitudes >> perceived freedom of choice*
 - *29.2 % in mobility sample*
 - *20.9 % in food sample*
- *perceived freedom of choice >> attitudes*
 - *5 % in mobility sample*
 - *5.6 % in food sample*

Precariousness and Sustainable Consumption – precariousness as a new category of stratification

- *Robert Castel (1995), Richard Sennett (1998), Klaus Dörre/Robert Castel (2009), Guy Standing (2011)*
- *“Precariousness” describes the situation of people in a “zone” (layer) who are*
 - *Not poor, but threatened of becoming poor*
 - *Not fully integrated in society, but aiming for it*
- *Precariousness = economic and social insecurity*
- *Life-course and household context are important*

Precariousness and Sustainable Consumption – indicators of precariousness in our data-base

- *Temporary employment*
- *Possibility to save money on a monthly basis*
- *(high) Number of jobs in the last ten years*
- *unemployment spells in the last ten years*
- *Probability of unemployment in the next two years*
- *Part-time employment*
- *No problems in paying the rent*
- *Number of friends to entrust one's key*

Precariousness and Purchase of Organic Food - Results

- *Preliminary findings show that precariousness affects behaviour of respondents*
 - *People in a precarious situation buy less organic food than the others with whom they share*
 - *the environmental concern*
 - *the age*
 - *and other characteristics*

Sustainable Consumption in Capability Perspective and Inequality

Thank you!

- *For more information:*
- *<http://www.soeb.de>*
 - *Berichterstattung zur sozioökonomischen Entwicklung in Deutschland reporting on socio-economic development in Germany*
- *<http://www.geneca.ufz.de>*
- *<http://ipa.hsu-hh.de/lessmann>*



What are the main challenges for consumer research in the European Union?

... with regard to sustainable consumption

- *Broad conception of sustainable consumption that includes non-market-based pro-environmental behavior (PEB)*
- *Insert SD-questions into household panel questionnaires such as the German SOEP.*

What recommendations do you have for European Policy on Sustainable Consumption?

Take an integrated and targeted approach toward social policy and sustainable consumption.

- *For consuming sustainably it is necessary to be able to make plans for the future - precariousness impedes this.*

Improve opportunities for sustainable consumption to lower the gap between attitudes and behaviour

Logistic Regressions I – Purchase of organic food (N = 536)

Dependent V. / Independent V.	Purchase of organic food	Perceived freedom of choice to purchase organic food	(Perceived) Norm to purchase organic food
Sex (0= male, 1= female)	(+) ^{***}	(+) ^{**}	n.s.
Household income (log)	(+) ^{**}	(+) ^{***}	(+) [*]
Education	(+) ^{***}	(+) ^{***}	n.s.
Age	(+) [*]	n.s.	(+) ^{**}
Children in HH (0= no, 1= yes)	(+) [*]	(+) ^{**}	n.s.
Migration (0= no, 1= yes)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Single HH (0= no, 1= yes)	(+) [*]	n.s.	n.s.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Logistic Regressions II – Mobility behaviour (N = 363)

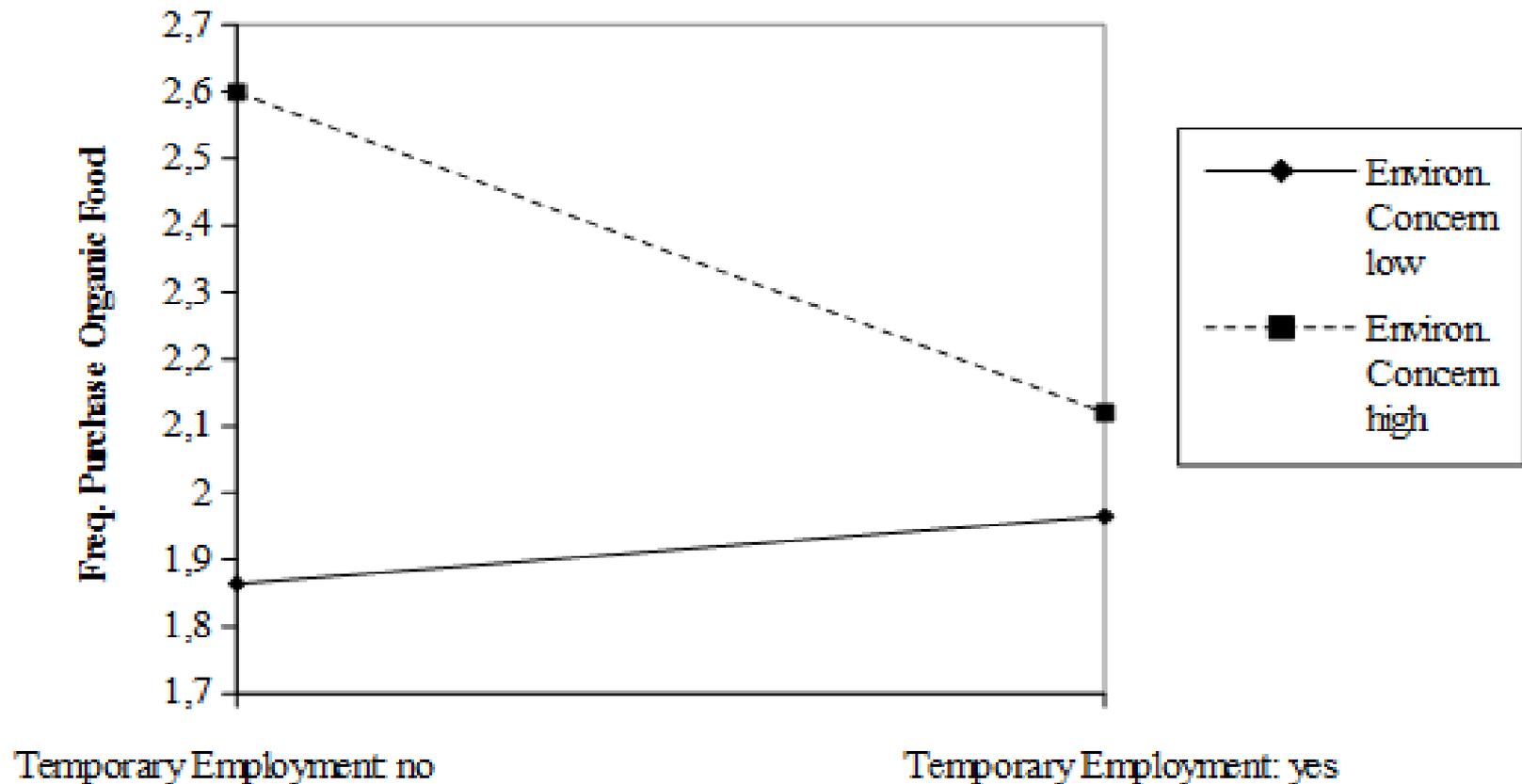
Dependent V. \ Independent V.	Use of public transport & bike	Perceived freedom of choice to use public transport & bike	(Perceived) Norm to use public transport & bike
Sex (0= male, 1= female)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Household income (log)	(-)*	n.s.	n.s.
Education	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Age	n.s.	n.s.	(+)**
Children in HH (0= no, 1= yes)	(+)*	n.s.	n.s.
Migration (0= no, 1= yes)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Single HH (0= no, 1= yes)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

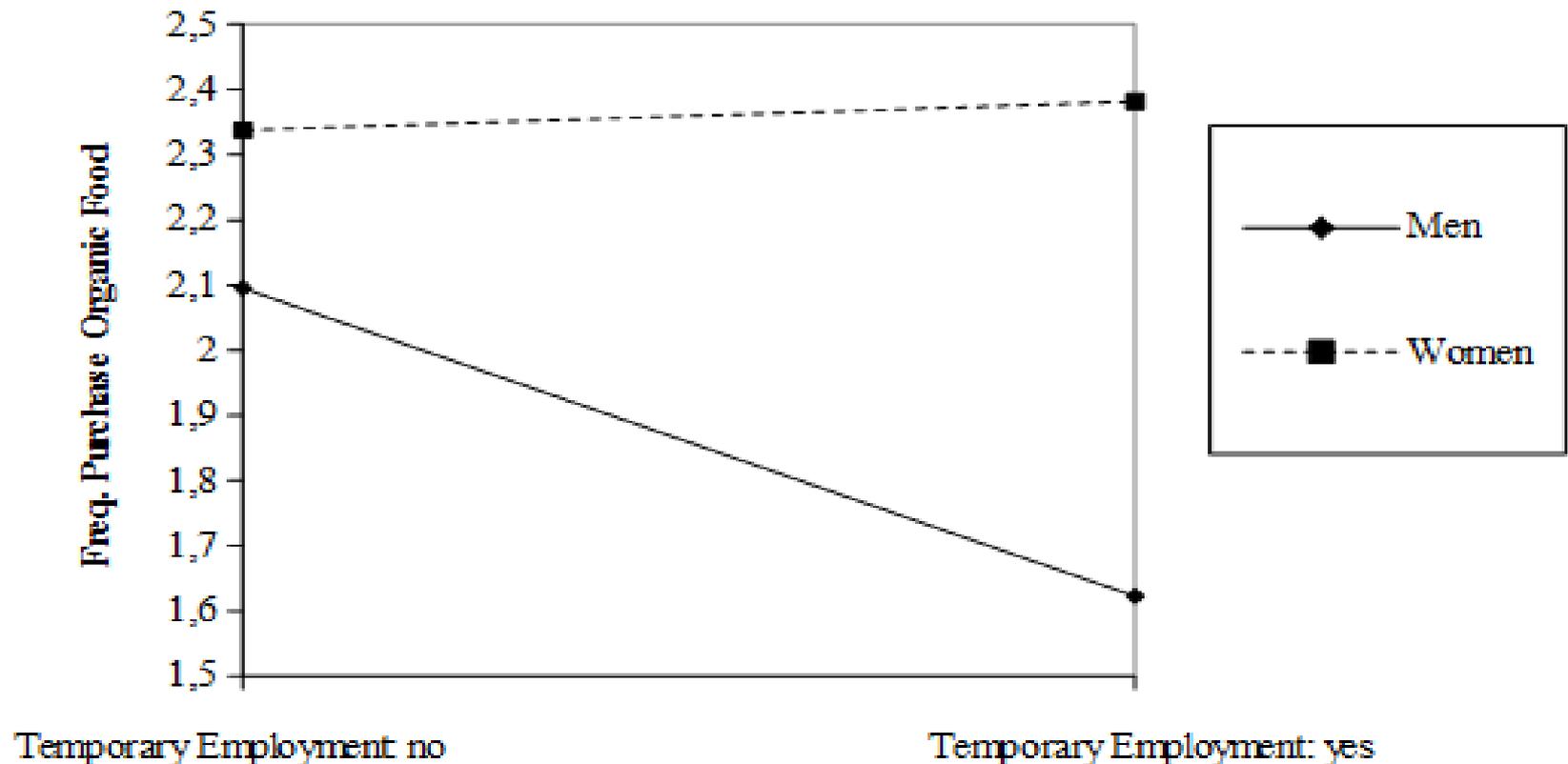
Regression analysis – synopsis behavior, freedom of choice and norms

- *Stronger correlation of socio-economic factors with food purchase than with mobility behaviour*
- *Central variables: household income and education*
- *Purchase of organic food: effect of income on purchase behaviour only significant when education was low (but not when educ. was high)*
- *Relatively few effects of socio-economic factors on perceived norms (i.e., perceived environmentalism of important others)*

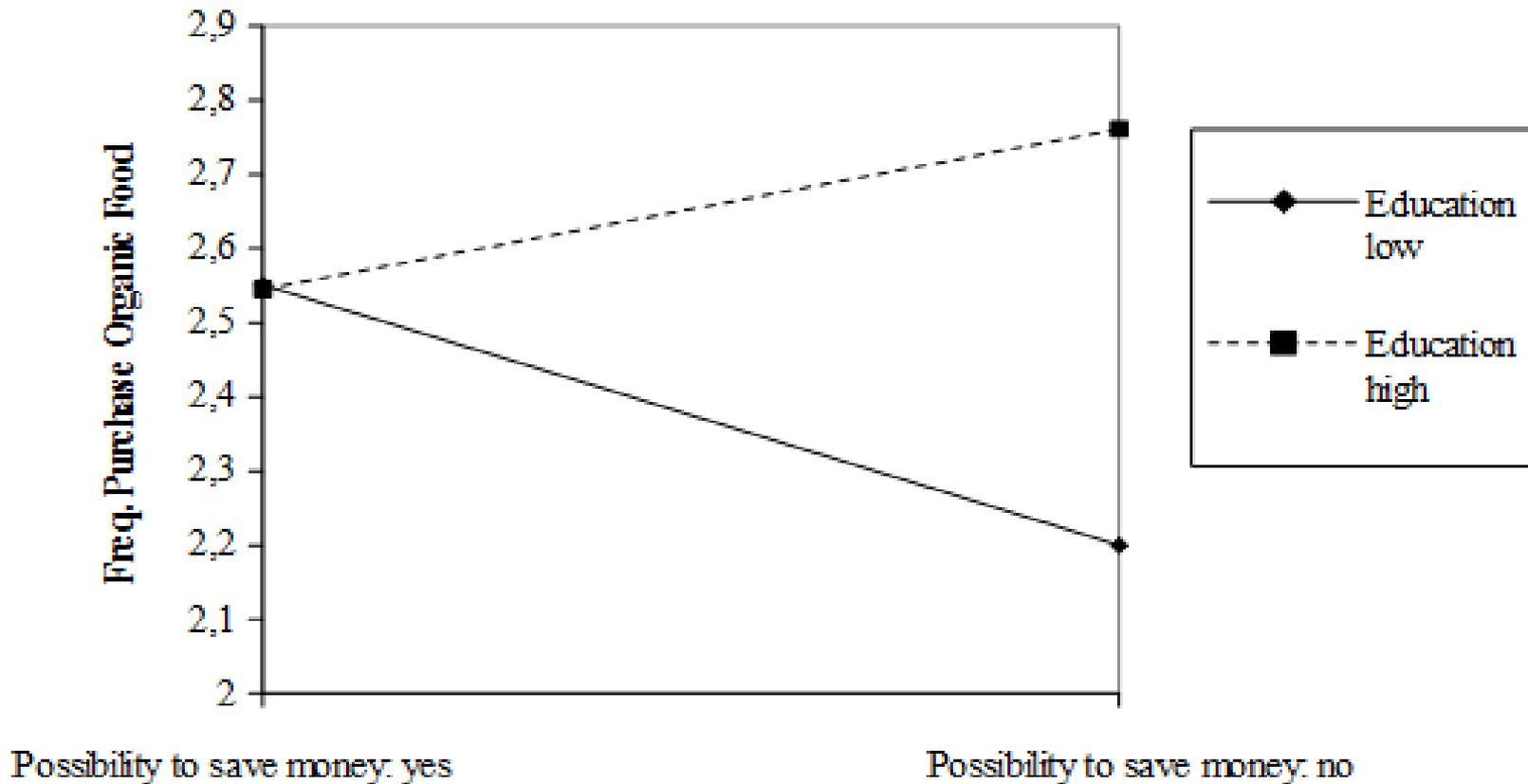
Regression analysis with interaction test: Concern for Environment - Temporary Employment (N = 251)



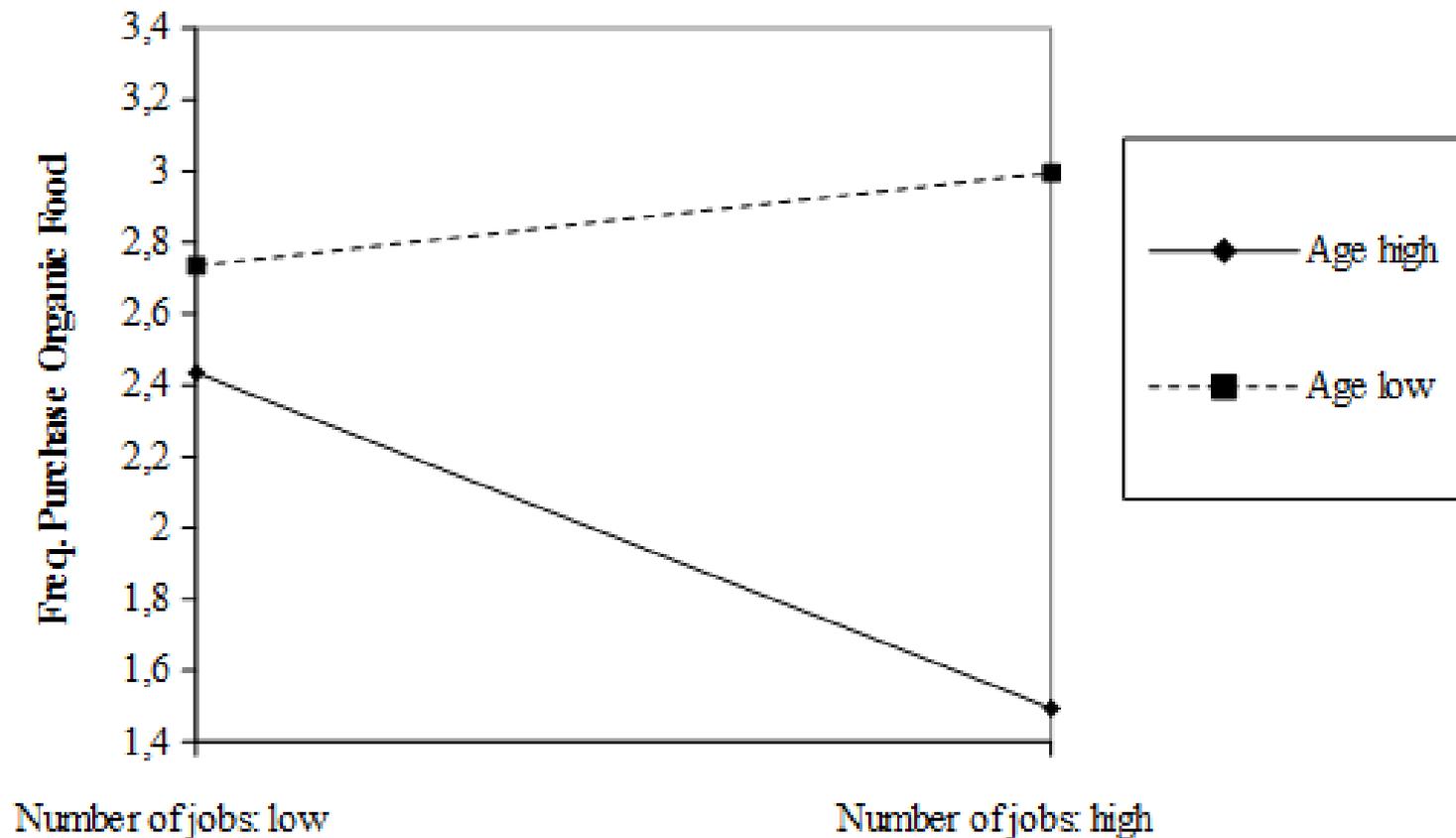
Regression analysis with interaction test: Gender - Temporary Employment (N = 251)



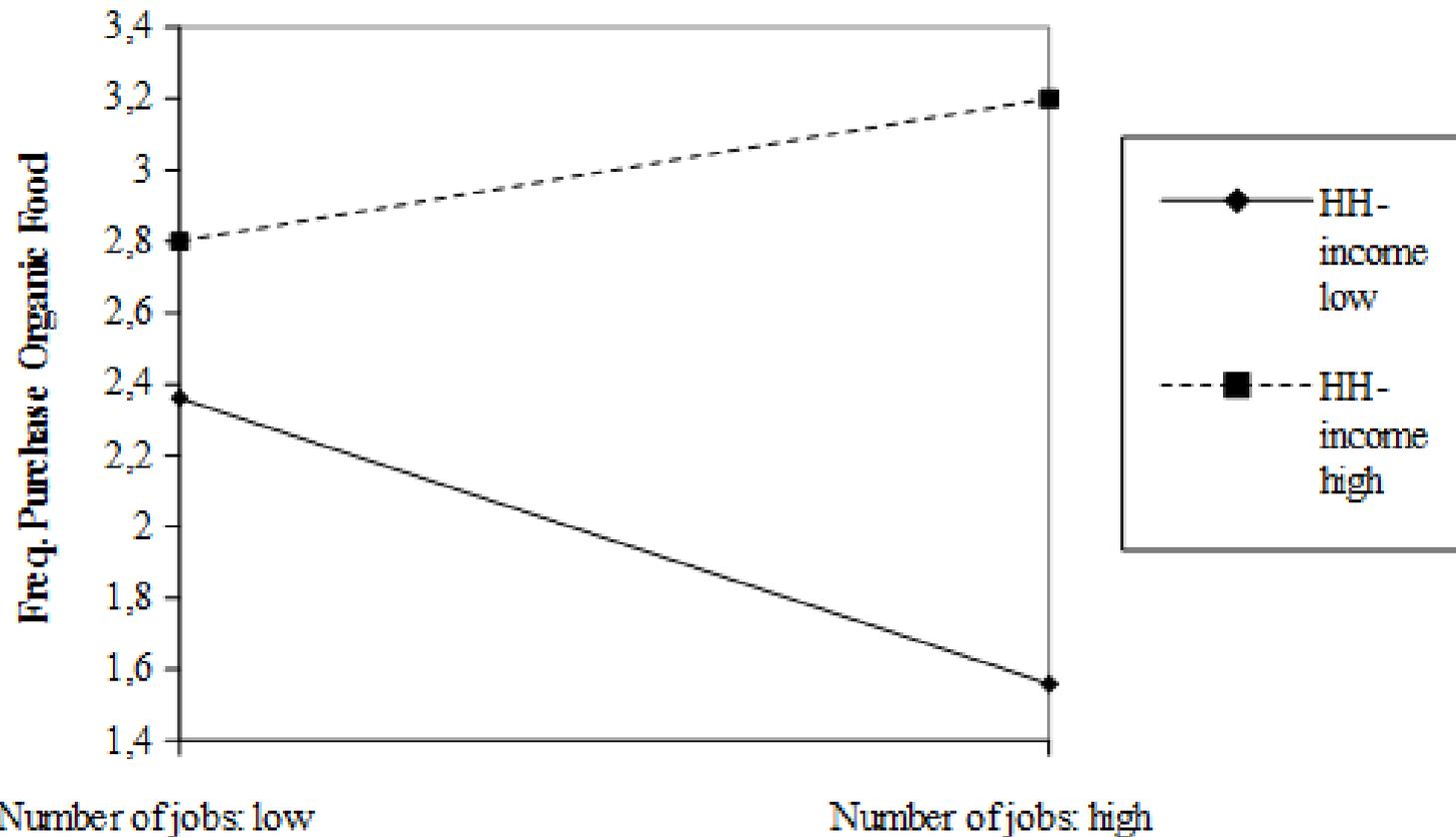
Regression analysis with interaction test: Education - Possibility to save money (N = 306)



Regression analysis with interaction test: Number of jobs last 10 years I (N = 335) → High environ. concern



Regression analysis with interaction test: Number of jobs last 10 years II (N = 335) → Older respondents



Precariousness and Purchase of Organic Food - Results

- *Similar interaction effects of precariousness indicators and socio-demographic characteristics on perceived freedom of choice to purchase organic food as well as on environmental attitudes / environmental concern, e.g.:*
- *3-way interaction effect of HH-income, number of unemployment periods (last 10 years) and age ($p < .05$) on perceived freedom of choice*
- *3-way interaction effect of environmental concern, age and number of jobs (last 10 years) on attitude towards organic food ($p < .05$)*