A CRITICAL EVALUATION INTO THE ROLE OF ETHICS IN CLOTHING PURCHASE
DECISIONS

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A critical evaluation into the role of ethics in clothing purchase decisions

Abstract

Consumer awareness and interest in ethical issues is growing with sustained and significant rises in sales of ethical products (L. Vickery (personal communication, January 12, 2007); The Co-operative Bank 2010); despite this, little research has been conducted into how ethical factors affect consumers' choices. The clothing sector accounts for over 12% of UK retail expenditure (Office for National Statistics 2011a), and a wide range of potential ethical issues are present within the industry including very low wages paid throughout the supply chain, poor working conditions and the extensive use of chemicals leading to long term injuries and deaths (World Trade Organisation 2008). Given the importance of the clothing sector, the significance of ethical issues in clothing manufacture and supply, and the recent growth in consumer interest in ethical issues, research in this area is both necessary and timely.

A conceptual framework developed from a comprehensive evaluation of the literature examining consumer behaviour, ethical decision-making, and clothing selection is presented, and informed a sequential mixed methods primary research strategy. In-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to inductively probe the research area before exploring the possible relationships using a quantitative survey (n=384) distributed to a random sample of the UK population.

The research found that the boycotting of brands, stores or products for ethical reasons is important to some consumers. Ethical indicators provided influence in guiding final purchase decisions, and post-purchase reflection on items purchased may trigger positive or negative emotions depending on the product's perceived ethical credentials. Survey data verified these relationships, measuring their importance in clothing purchase decisions. Results also show that while ethical factors are secondary to most consumers, they exert a clear influence on decisions in some situations. Female respondents were found to be more sensitive to ethical issues and those with higher household incomes likely to be less strongly influenced. The key findings from the study are synthesised into a theoretical model which provides a clear account of the role of ethical considerations in clothing purchase decision-making.

This research provides the first thorough examination of ethics within the purchase of clothing. Given the scale of the clothing industry, the findings are of significant academic and commercial interest.

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It has been an extremely stimulating and challenging experience to conduct my PhD studies into clothing choice. There are many people that I would like to thank for their contribution to the completion of this study.

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Declaration

To date, the following journal article has been published from data collected as part of this PhD study:

- Bray, J., Johns, N. and Kilburn, D., 2011. An exploratory study into the factors impeding ethical consumption. *Journal of business ethics*, 98 (4), 597-618 (see Appendix A).

Research findings have been presented at a number of refereed international conferences:

- Bray, J., 2009. An exploratory study into the factors impeding ethical consumerism. *15th European association of education and research in commercial distribution conference*, 15-17 July, Surrey UK (see Appendix B).

- Bray, J., 2009. Ethical dimensions in clothing purchase. *Ethics in everyday life*, 17-20 March, Salzburg (see Appendix C).

- Bray, J., 2008. Ethics in fashion purchasing behaviour: a conceptual framework. In: Timmermans, H., ed. *15th Recent advances in retailing & services science conference. European institute of retailing and services studies,* 14-17th July, Zagreb (see Appendix D).

Additionally, the following non-refereed presentations have been given during the PhD studies:

- Bray, J., 2008. Ethics in clothing purchase decision-making. Invited presentation, August 15. Victoria University, Melbourne Australia.
- Bray, J., 2008. Ethics in clothing purchase decision-making. Invited presentation, August 13. South Australia University, Adelaide Australia.
- Bray, J., 2008. Qualitative data analysis using Nvivo 7. November 5. Bournemouth University staff development session.

Furthermore, in May 2011 a fellowship agreement was forged with Waitrose, the UK based grocery chain, enabling the key findings from this research to be translated to a commercial retail environment, and providing exciting opportunities to further explore the findings in an applied setting.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The retail industry in the UK amasses over £300bn in sales every year (Office for National Statistics 2011a), and employs over 4.7 million people, representing 15% of the country's total employment (Office for National Statistics 2011b); these figures demonstrate the scale and importance of the industry. Through recent decades, the retail environment has been characterised by consolidation which has seen large national and multinational retailers becoming more prevalent at the expense of smaller independent stores. With this evolution, the retail marketplace has become ever more competitive, with the consumer discerningly choosing the stores that they patronise. In light of this, retailers are continually looking to gain a better understanding of the consumers' wants, needs, desires and behaviours to try to ensure that they can present a more appealing range of products and shopping environment than their competitors.

Research exploring the antecedent states, influences on, and evaluative factors within consumer decision-making and behaviour has been conducted from a range of different epistemological perspectives dating back to the 1700's (Richarme 2007). However, the academic discipline of consumer behaviour as we know it now has developed largely over the last 60 years (Blackwell et al. 2006) in response to the increasingly competitive consumer environment in which one retailer, whose offer is just slightly more aligned to the wants and needs of their targeted customer, will flourish over another who has a less complete understanding.

It is in this context that the thesis presented here has developed. During 2005 and 2006, the author observed two counterpoised trends within the UK clothing sector. Firstly, a great deal of media attention was highlighting, and in part promoting, the concept of 'disposable fashion'; clothing that was so cheap that it could be purchased on a whim, and worn only once or twice before being discarded (Sarkar 2005). At this time, low cost, but high fashion clothing retailers such as Primark were demonstrating strong growth and promoted a disposable consumer culture (Mesure 2005). The second trend that was observed in parallel to this was growing media attention being afforded the ethical and environmental impact of the clothing industry. Until this point, Fair Trade and Organic clothing had been the preserve of small independent retailers which used such

environmental and ethical credentials to position their offer to a niche market. Many commentators at the time suggested that the fabrics were coarse and the designs unfashionable, with such lines being characterised as 'clothes for hippies' (Britten 2005). Significant changes in the provision of ethical clothing were apparent around this time with large international clothing chains starting to introduce small ranges of Fair Trade or Organic clothing that was fashionable and held few of the compromises that had been observed in the earlier provision. Notably within this was the announcement in January 2006 that Marks and Spencer were to launch a range of clothing made from Fair Trade cotton (BBC 2006). This initiative from the UK's largest clothing retailer appeared to be a tipping point, with numerous other brands quickly following with their own ranges.

While the rise of low cost 'disposable' clothing was being embraced by many consumers, as evidence by the growth of retailers employing this model, it was less clear how consumers were reacting to the introduction of ethical clothing. This led to the author's growing academic curiosity in this area, and the development of a PhD proposal seeking to explore in detail whether ethical considerations were important to consumers', and in what ways indicators such as Fair Trade and Organic might influence their purchase decisions. It is this genuine open minded academic curiosity that drives this research. The author does not consider himself to be any more an ethical consumer than the typical UK shopper however that might be defined!

In the context of consumer decision making, this study is seeking to explore one specific set of issues that appear to be gaining influence in consumer clothing purchase decisions, namely the ethical concerns associated with clothing items. Achieving a greater understanding of how these issues influence the consumer will enable clothing retailers to provide the most relevant products and marketing to their prospective customers.

1.2 Ethical consumption

The consumption environment and influences on the consumer decision-making process have changed significantly over the past century, and continue to evolve. Consumer behaviour research highlights a number of factors which are currently influencing changes in consumption choices and practices. These include:

- Increasing concern for environmentalism (Thogersen 1999; Holden and Linnerud 2010; Connolly and Prothero 2008),

- Increasing politicisation of the consumer whereby the consumers' assessment of companies' ethical standards proves influential in their consumption choices (Halkier 1999; Stolle et al. 2005; Halkier and Holm 2008),

- Growing awareness of global issues such as resource depletion, and the working practices in developing nations (Ford et al. 2005; Johnstone 2010).

Due to the moral dimensions of these factors, it is commonly stated that ethical consumerism is growing (Berry and McEachern 2005; Davis 2006; Nicholls 2002; Hiller 2010). The term "ethics" is derived from the ancient Greek word "ta ethika", meaning the teaching of correct behaviour or moral principles (Heinrich 1991). Questions of ethics have a long philosophical tradition: The Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, for example, played a seminal role in the discussion and development of this concept through, amongst others, his work Nicomachean Ethics where he states that all human activity is directed towards a good (Aristotle 1925). Ethics is concerned with the decisions that determine our actions and attempts to answer the Kantian question 'what shall we do?'. It teaches us to judge each specific situation in order to decide on the appropriate/moral action (Kant 1964). Since the early work of Aristotle, a large number of philosophers have debated ethical, morality and such concepts as good and evil, right and wrong and virtue and vice. Within the broad area of ethics or, moral philosophy, a number of key strands can be discerned (Blackburn 2001): applied ethics, which provides a philosophical examination from a moral standpoint of everyday decision making (Singer 1986); meta-ethics, which seeks to understand the nature of ethical judgements and statements (Moore 1903); moral ethics, which discusses how individuals develop their morality (Doris 2002); normative ethics which is concerned with how individuals determine what the correct moral action should be (Kagan 1998), and descriptive ethics which examines what people believe is 'right' (Kohlberg 1969).

There is a rich and extensive body of literature in each of these identified areas, however philosophical discussion of ethical strands is not of direct relevance to the aims of this study, and as such cannot be fully explored here. Instead, this study is firmly rooted in the discipline of consumer behaviour seeking to probe and understand consumer decision making processes, and the key influences that ethical considerations exert upon purchase choices. It stops short of providing a full philosophical debate of the nature and development of morality amongst these consumers, which could not be empirically based within the same methodological approach. Literature relating to consumer decision making and ethical issues therein, however, have been examined, synthesised and integrated where appropriate.

In the application of ethics to consumption environments, researchers discuss the wider implications of the consumption of goods and services on society as a whole, often looking through the supply chain to the conditions in factories, farms and the use of primary resources. Research focusing on the role of ethical issues on purchasing behaviour is limited, with much attention being directed at the food sector (DePelsmacker et al. 2005a; DePelsmacker et al. 2005b; Davies et al. 2010; Lang 2010) leaving the clothing sector underexplored.

1.3 The clothing industry

The clothing sector of the retail industry is second in size only to that of food, and commands sales of £47bn each year in the UK, some 12% of total retail expenditure (Office for National Statistics 2011a). The purchase of clothing is highly complex, with many commentators and researchers identifying a multiplicity of functions that clothing performs in Western society. More than just products to keep us warm, Meyer (2001) suggests that clothes protect; define a person's role in their social group, and help a person to express themself or to demonstrate their life-style. Phau and Ong (2007) add to this, purporting that clothes satisfy many human needs, including status, self expression and lifestyle. Further to the role that clothes themselves can perform, the act of shopping for clothes itself has become, for many, a key leisure activity or almost a sport (Mintel 2006), with research highlighting that many consumers enjoy shopping for clothes, with the average shopper spending over £10,000 on clothes in their lifetime that are never worn (Churchill 2006).

The clothing retailing sector has changed significantly in recent years with dramatic unit price deflation feeding consumers' desire for highly fashionable items at a disposable price (Hearson 2006). Lower prices of clothing have been championed by the large supermarket chains introducing discounted clothing ranges, and the rapid growth of speciality retailers such as 'Primark' positioned at the value end of the market. The price deflation that has been witnessed has been largely due to sourcing and manufacturing transferring to lower wage economies in developing nations. On January 1st 2005 the World Trade Organization (WTO) Multi Fibre Agreement, a treaty which had restricted the exports of clothing and textiles from developing countries since 1974 ended (WTO 2008). The abolition of this treaty led to greater sourcing from developing countries, such as

India, facilitating further price deflation in the clothing industry. As prices declined, consumers appeared more willing to view clothing items as disposable, placing greater emphasis on securing the latest trends than buying long lasting quality. Not only value clothing retailers but mainstream players are seeking to serve this trend, with 'H&M' reported to be designing clothes that are expected to be worn less than 10 times (Birtwistle and Moore 2007).

1.3.1 Ethics within the clothing industry

Market research has begun to indicate that "the wow factor of low price clothing is wearing off" and interest in green and ethical issues in clothing is slowly rising (Mintel 2007). Numerous newspaper articles and magazine features have reported increasing demand for so-called ethical fashion, with comments such as; "fashion with a conscience is suddenly in vogue" (Spencer 2004), "standing by your principles is gloriously de-rigour" (Moore 2005), "green is the new black!" (Williams et al. 2005), and "ethical is... fashionable!" (Djula 2010) being typical. Further to this, there are a large number of ethical clothing brands marketed in the UK, with Hamnett identifying 101 of the leading brands in 2006 (Hamnett 2006), and a number of mainstream high street clothing retailers are also beginning to stock specifically ethical ranges (Jacobs 2006; Rigby 2006), for example, Marks and Spencers and Top Shop. There is evidence that the ethics of the clothing industry are increasingly of mainstream interest, with three television programmes covering the issue in the UK in the Spring of 2008 alone, the latest of which attracted some 4.2 million viewers (Dowell 2008).

Despite this widespread interest, there is no common definition of ethical clothing, and a number of terms are used interchangeably to describe the phenomenon including eco fashion (The Co-operative Bank 2010), green fashion (Wallace 2006), eco-clothing (Niinimaki 2010), eco-conscious apparel (Hiller Connell 2011) and ethically assured clothing (McGoldrick and Freestone 2008). Work using any of these terms is relevant to this study and warrants examination. Along with ecological concerns surrounding production practices, human rights issues are also widely discussed, with many current practices seemingly in breach of Article 25.1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Nations 1948). Those most commonly discussed human rights issues include:

1. Very low wages paid to staff in the production of clothing. The levels of pay are often significantly below that of a living wage, and usually make up only 2-4% of the final retail price of clothing (Hearson 2006; Johnstone 2010; Shields 2010).

2. Poor working conditions (often described as 'sweatshops') whereby manufacturing staff work extremely long hours without appropriate health and safety provision (Hurst et al. 2006; Chamberlain 2010).

3. The extensive use of chemicals in the production of cotton. The average cotton t-shirt uses 150g of pesticides to produce (Sims 2006), and the World Health Organization estimates that 20,000 people die each year from chemicals used in cotton production, and 1,000,000 suffer long-term acute chemical poisonings (Sanfilippo 2007; WHO 1990).

The scale of these issues is significant, with the fashion designer and environmental campaigner Katherine Hamnett commenting that "typically 4-5% of the price of a t-shirt goes to the farmer. If all were paid 20% more, 1% would be added to the retail price, but 400m people would be lifted out of poverty" (Hamnett 2006).

From these factors, ethical clothing could be described as clothes that incorporate Fair Trade principles with appropriate labour conditions while utilising Organic and biodegradable practices in the production of raw materials reducing harm on the environment. Some limited attempts have been made to quantify the demand for such clothing, most notably from The Co-operative Bank's annual Ethical Consumerism Report, which finds that the market grew in size from £11m in 2002 (L. Vickery [personal communication, January 12, 2007]), to £177m in 2009 (The Co-operative Bank 2010). Figure 1 highlights the growth of ethical clothing as reported by The Co-operative Bank's annual ethical consumerism reports.

Figure 1. Sales of ethical clothing in the UK
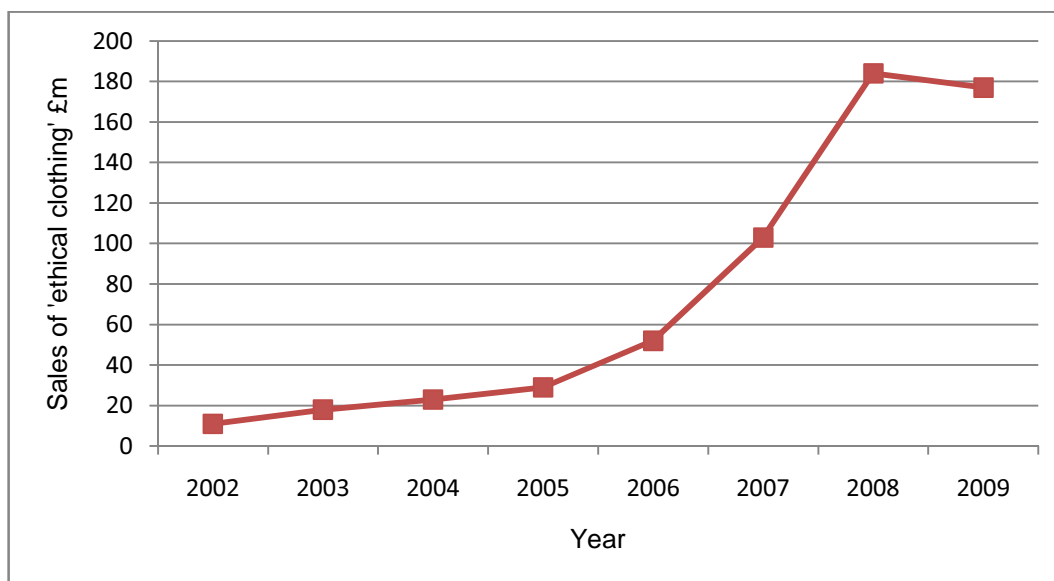
While sales of ethical clothing still represent a small fraction of total clothing purchasing (Office for National Statistics 2011a), it is clear that the market has experienced strong growth over the eight years that The Co-operative Bank has been conducting its longitudinal research. The small decline in sales reported between 2008 and 2009 is notable and had led many media commentators to question whether ethical considerations would be ignored in a recession. However, ethical consumption continues to outstrip the market as a whole (Smithers 2010), and recent research by Carrigan and DePelsmacker (2009) found that socially conscious consumers are still exhibiting ethical consumption behaviour.

Although there is a wide range of academic studies examining consumers' purchasing behaviour, and a large separate body of literature on ethical decision-making, literature exploring ethical consumption practices is more limited. Furthermore, very few studies have focused on the purchase of clothing and textiles. Many authors have acknowledged the need for further research in this area, to help build an understanding of the influence ethical considerations exert on clothing purchase behaviour. Shaw and Shiu (2003) for example commented that very little has been published about the decision-making processes of these ethical consumers and the implications for marketing, while Auger et al. (2007) highlight the significant gap in the academic literature which is surprising given

the increasingly vast sums of money firms are investing in social responsibility programmes. Through gaining a better understanding of the influence that ethical considerations exert on the consumer, and consequently their purchasing behaviour, retailers and clothing producers alike will be able to ensure that their product ranges are appropriate and marketed in an optimal manner.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research is:

To critically evaluate the role of ethics in consumer clothing purchase decision-making.

In order to meet this aim, the research has four main objectives which are to:

1. Establish and critically evaluate the current body of knowledge on:

    a. Consumer decision-making and models of consumer behaviour,

    b. Ethical consumption and the key ethical issues influencing consumers' purchase decisions.

2. Examine purchase decision-making of clothing lines, identifying the process through which consumers make their selections and the key factors that influence their choices.

3. Identify and assess the role of ethical considerations in clothing decision-making through the use of focus group interviews and quantitative questionnaires.

4. Synthesise the data collected to develop a theoretical model, highlighting the relative role of ethical considerations in product selection.

1.5 Methodological overview

This study commenced with a thorough review of the existing literature relevant to both consumer behaviour and ethical decision-making. A comprehensive conceptual framework was developed to summarise the key findings from this literature, and used to guide the subsequent primary research which employed a sequential mixed methodological approach. Initially, a combination of semi-structured, in-depth interviews and three focus groups were used in an inductive manner to identify the key issues, factors and relationships that are important in clothing purchase, and to explore the potential influence of ethical factors within this purchasing process. Analysis of these data enabled the research to enter its deductive phase employing a quantitative randomly sampled postal survey (n=384) to fully probe the identified factors and relationships.

1.6 Structure of thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the research area and highlights the need for further examination. Within this chapter the study's aim and objectives are presented.

The following two chapters of this thesis review the literature on consumer decision-making, clothing purchase and ethics within consumption decisions. The literature review begins with an overview of the approaches to and models of consumer behaviour in **Chapter 2**. These models are critiqued to identify their relevance and key contributions in understanding contemporary clothing purchase behaviour. The chapter goes on to examine clothing purchasing, specifically reviewing the key attributes of product choice.

Ethical attributes in product choice are not currently well covered within the more general consumer behaviour or clothing purchasing literature, and so **Chapter 3** examines these in-depth, firstly from an ethical decision-making perspective, moving through ethical consumption to review the limited range of studies that have explored the role of ethics on clothing purchase. This review of the literature leads to the construction of a conceptual framework which summarises the likely role and relationships that ethical considerations can play in the purchase of clothing. The conceptual framework is found in **Chapter 4** along with a detailed account of the overall methodological approach adopted and the specific methods employed.

Chapter 5 presents the results from the primary research, starting with the initial inductive qualitative phases of the study, before introducing the findings from the deductive quantitative survey data that has been probed with appropriate inferential statistics to help identify the significant and substantive results. The key findings from the primary research are distilled into a predictive model that is presented towards the end of the chapter providing a clear overview of the relationships and processes that have been identified. This model is further developed into the final theoretical model that is presented in **Chapter 6** which integrates the findings from both the primary and secondary research. This model provides a holistic outline of clothing purchase decision-making, illustrating the points in which ethical aspects affect the decision-making process and the key positive and negative influences that such considerations may have. In this chapter the key findings are fully evaluated and discussed in relation to the previous literature in this area.

Finally, **Chapter 7** presents the conclusions to the study and identifies the key contributions that it makes to both theoretical development and practical application. The scope and limits of the study are discussed along with future research directions.

Chapter 2: Process and content of consumer decision-making

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical analysis of consumer behaviour theory, the evaluative content relevant to the purchase of clothing, and the contribution that ethical product attributes may make to these decisions. It commences by reviewing how consumers' behaviour has been modelled over time, discussing the key approaches and constructs that have been explored in order to identify how they may be applied to ethical clothing purchase. Once the main approaches and key theories have been discussed, the attributes that comprise the evaluative criteria of a clothing purchase decision are explored, leading to a more complete understanding of not only the consumer behaviour process, but also of the evaluative content of such decisions. The unique nature of clothing purchase, the complex role that clothing performs in Western society, and the limitations that existing models of consumer behaviour hold in this context are discussed. The last section critically analyses work that has attempted to assess the role that ethical product attributes may play in the evaluation of clothing lines, and how they may influence the consumers' decision-making.

2.2 Consumer behaviour and consumer decision-making

The early work of Nicholas Bernoulli, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern examined consumer decision-making from an economic perspective (Richarme 2007) and focused solely on the act of purchase (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993). Consumers were viewed as rational decision makers only concerned with self-interest (Zinkhan 1992; Schiffman et al. 2008). Where this early theory views the consumer as a 'rational economic man' (Zinkhan 1992), contemporary research on consumer behaviour considers a wide range of factors influencing the consumer and acknowledges a broad range of activities beyond purchasing, including consumption and disposal.

While this evolution towards more comprehensive models has been continuous, it is only since the 1950's that the notion of consumer behaviour has responded to the conception

and growth of modern marketing to encompass the more holistic range of activities that impact upon the consumer decision (Blackwell et al. 2006).

2.3 Theoretical approaches to the study of consumer behaviour

Five key approaches have been adopted in the study of decision-making, drawing on differing traditions of psychology (Zinkhan 1992; Stewart 1994):

- Economic Man,
- Psychodynamic,
- Behaviourist,
- Cognitive,
- Humanistic.

These different traditions are discussed below, and each posits alternate models of man, and emphasises the need to examine quite different variables (Foxall 1990). It is important to consider these approaches as each may hold some contribution to building an understanding of the complex nature of clothing purchase.

2.3.1 Economic man

Early research regarded man as entirely rational and self-interested, making decisions to maximise utility with minimum effort (Persky 1995). This approach suggests a consumer would have to be aware of all the available consumption options, be capable of correctly rating each alternative and be available to select the optimum course of action (Schiffman et al. 2008). These steps are no longer seen to be a realistic account of human decision-making, as consumers rarely have adequate information, motivation or time to make such a 'perfect' decision and are often acted upon by less rational influences such as social relationships and values (Simon 1997), this may be especially notable in the purchase of clothing which performs many functions of only abstract rationality.

2.3.2 Psychodynamic approach

The psychodynamic approach holds that behaviour is subject to biological influence through instinctive forces or drives which act outside of conscious thought (Arnold et al. 1991). The key tenet of the psychodynamic approach is that behaviour is determined by these biological drives, rather than individual cognition or environmental stimuli. Converse to the economic man, this school of thought appears to better accommodate decision-making scenarios where rationality is less clear, and as such may prove to be a useful approach in helping to understand behaviour, such as compulsive and excessive shopping which may verge on addictive behaviour (Dittmar 2000; Black 2010) leading to the observed purchase of clothing that is never worn (Churchill 2006).

2.3.3 Behaviourist approach

Behaviourism suggests that behaviour is explained by external events and causation is attributed to factors external to the individual rather than internal cognitive processes. It is suggested that research on behaviour should rely on logical positivism and the empirical methods used in the physical sciences and other disciplines (Eysenck and Keane 2005).

In contemporary consumption scenarios behaviourism does not account for the great diversity of response generated by a population exposed to similar, or even near identical stimuli, however, the key assumption that behaviour is caused through external events may hold some relevance to clothing purchase with the wearers continually receiving feedback from their peers. Humans, being social animals, will absorb this feedback and become conditioned behaviourally accordingly, influencing future purchases (Peter and Nord 1982; Chiesa 2004).

2.3.4 Cognitive approach

In stark contrast to the foundations of classical behaviouralism, the cognitive approach ascribes observed action (behaviour) to intrapersonal cognition. The individual is viewed as an 'information processor' (Ribeaux and Poppleton 1978). The role of environmental

and social experiences are acknowledged, with consumers actively seeking and receiving environmental and social stimuli as informational input aiding internal decision-making (Stewart 1994).

While there are distinct branches of cognitive psychology, they all share an abiding interest in exploring and understanding the mental structures and processes which mediate between stimulus and response (Kihlstrom 1987). Contemporary cognitive psychology has identified and developed a wide range of factors which are thought fundamental to these intrapersonal processes including: perception, learning, memory, thinking, emotion and motivation (Sternberg 1996).

Early cognitive models suggested linear relationships between stimulus, organism and response, with environmental and social stimuli acting as external antecedents to the organism, assuming that stimuli act upon an inactive and unprepared organism (Eysenck and Keane 2005). Most modern theorists now, however, acknowledge that information processing is conducted by an active organism whose past experience will influence not only the processing of such information but even what information is sought and received.

Cognitivism has the capacity to explain complex behaviours, an acknowledged deficiency of the competing behavioural perspective where it is impossible to ascertain the contingencies that control response (Foxall 1993). However, the cognitive approach is also criticised for a number of reasons. Foxall (1990 p. 96) comments that the cognitive approach "…relies extensively upon the use of abstract and unobservable explanatory variables which seldom prove amenable to empirical investigation and evaluation". Additionally, cognitivism assumes the consumer is rational, discerning, logical and active in decision-making, assumptions that have been questioned by a number of writers (Bozinoff 1982; Solomon et al. 2009; Schiffman et al. 2008).

Despite these criticisms, a cognitive approach is appropriate in the examination of ethical purchasing behaviour for a number of reasons. Firstly, the complexity of such actions cannot be fully accommodated through the alternative models explored above and secondly, the benefits of ethical consumption are largely vicarious in nature, requiring extensive intrapersonal evaluation. Key existing studies into ethical purchasing have all accepted the role of intrapersonal examination (Hines and Ames 2000; Nicholls and Lee 2006; Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006). Other approaches do have merit in this context, though the use of a cognitive framework appears to be the most appropriate method to

accommodate the vast array of possible influences on behaviour that could be drawn eclectically from the full range of traditions.

2.3.5 Cognitive models of consumer behaviour

Two major types of cognitive models can be discerned. Firstly, analytical models which provide a framework of the key elements that are purported to explain the behaviour of consumers: these models identify a plethora of influencing factors and intimate the broad relationships between factors in consumer decision-making.   Due to their wide ranging scope such models are often labelled the grand models (Kassarjian 1982). Typically they tend to follow a six step classification outlining problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice, use, and outcome evaluation as the key stages in consumer decision processes (Erasmus et al. 2001; Schiffman et al. 2008). While a number of similar models have been presented since the late 1960's (Nicosia 1966; Howard and Sheth 1969) the Consumer Decision Model proposed by Blackwell et al. (2006) has been widely cited and updated regularly to provide the fullest account of the influences on consumer behaviour. This model is outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Consumer decision model

Input   Information Process   Decision Process   Influencing
**   Variables**
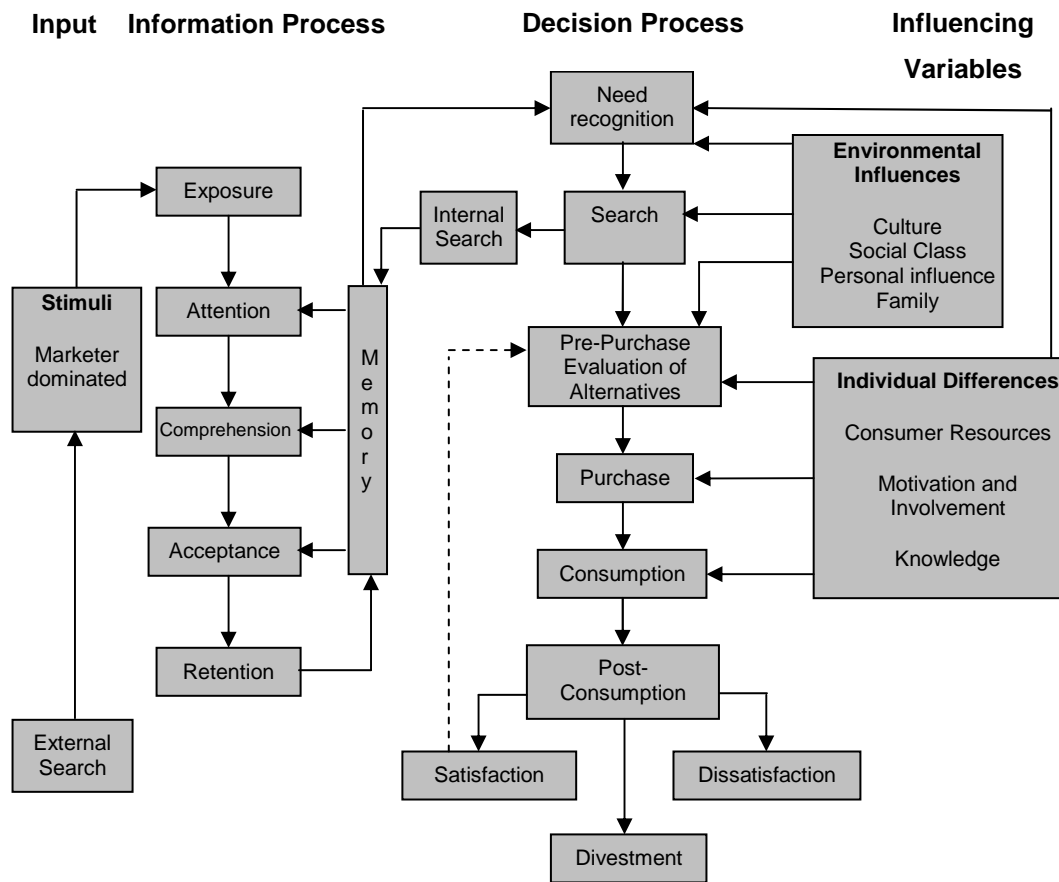
Adapted from: Blackwell et al. (2006)

The second major type of cognitive models can be described as prescriptive and provides guidelines or frameworks to organise how consumer behaviour is structured (Moital 2007). These models include the order in which elements should appear and prescribe the effect that should be observed given certain causal factors. As such they promise to be useful to practitioners who can measure what stimuli should be modified or emphasised to attract a certain consumer response. The most widely applied prescriptive model is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1985), depicted in Figure 3. This model evolved from the Fishbein model (Fishbein 1963) of attitude formation, which proposed that a person's overall attitude toward an object is derived from their beliefs and feelings about various attributes of an object or action, through the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) which added the concept of 'subjective norm', acknowledging the power of other people in influencing behavioural intentions. In addition to these constructs, the Theory of Planned Behaviour added the notion of 'perceived behavioural control', combining the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of a behaviour and the perceived power of each of these factors. Actual

behavioural control refers to the extent to which a person has the skills, resources, and other prerequisites needed to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen 1985).

Figure 3. Theory of planned behavior
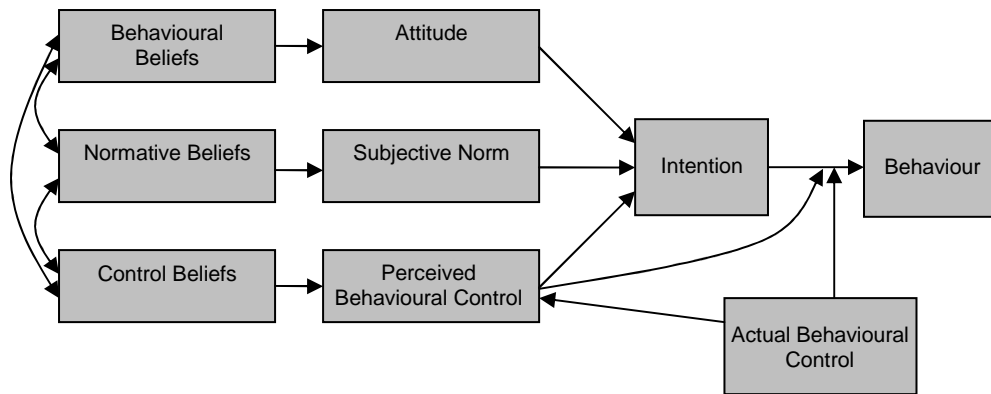
Adapted from: Azjen (1985)

2.3.6 Humanistic approach

The cognitive models appear well covered in generic consumer behaviour texts and are often portrayed as providing the best available explanation of consumer decision-making (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; Blackwell et al. 2006). Despite this, there are a growing number of academic writers highlighting limitations of the cognitive approach and publishing new research attempting to further understanding of specific aspects of behaviour. These approaches can be described as humanistic as they seek to explore concepts introspective to the individual consumer rather than describe generic processes (Stewart 1994).

The three most pressing areas for research were identified by Nataraajan and Bagozzi in 1999. Firstly, cognitive approaches rely upon the assumption that the consumer is a rational decision maker; this appears to neglect the role of emotion in decision-making. Secondly, emerging work has started to examine the concept of volition (Perugini and Bagozzi 2004; Shaw et al. 2006; Thomson et al. 2006; Carrington et al. 2010); this new work is seeking to understand and address the gap between consumers' stated purchase intentions and their actual final purchase behaviour by understanding the volitional stages to decision-making. Thirdly, they highlight the almost universal acceptance of egoism in

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marketing theory at the expense of altruism, commenting on the lack of research that has examined the influence of altruistic motives on any consumer behaviours (Nataraajan and Bagozzi 1999).

2.3.6.1 Volition

Of the three key areas that Nataraajan and Bagozzi identified (1999), it is the study of the volitional stages of decision-making that has received the most theoretical attention through the theory of trying (Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990) which outlines the key steps preceding purchase and attempts to explain why purchase intentions may not always be translated into purchase action. In a flip to the theory, Gould et al. (1997) published research into the reasons for consumers failing to try to consume, which may have some relevance in the field of ethical clothing whereby consumers may fail to try to consume due to a lack of knowledge and awareness of either ethical issues in clothing or the ethical alternatives that exist in the marketplace. More recently, Carrington et al. (2010) have presented a model conceptualising the roles of implementation intentions, actual behavioural control and situational context in the behaviour of ethically minded consumers, probing the volitional stages of decision-making.

2.3.6.2 Emotion

Possibly the most significant theoretical work that has attempted to explicitly introduce the role of emotion in consumer decision-making is the theory of goal directed behaviour (Bagozzi et al. 2002). This theory draws heavily on the theory of planned behaviour (Figure 3), proposing additional constructs including positive anticipated emotion and negative anticipated emotion acting on desire as an antecedent to purchase intention. In parallel with this, studies have reported consumers expressing negative emotions, usually in the form of guilt in ethically questionable consumer situations (Marks and Mayo 1991; Steenhaut and VanKenhove 2005; Steenhaut and Kenhove 2006). These studies have examined ethically questionable situations explicitly such as the non-disclosure of false change being given by a cashier and so are not directly applicable to the selection and purchase of clothing lines. However, Hiller (2008) found that the purchase of a jumper by one of his study's participants had induced feelings of post-purchase guilt due to its ethically questionable provenance, and The Co-operative Bank in their longitudinal surveys of consumption practice have reported a growing consumer conscience with 17% of all respondents reporting having felt guilt about an unethical purchase in 2000 (Hines and Ames 2000), rising to 34% in the latest 2010 survey (The Co-operative Bank 2010).

Research has found that consumers report feeling emotionally better through the purchase of ethical or more environmental products, highlighting the relevance of emotion in this context (Meyer 2001; Kant 1964).

These emotions, both positive and negative will often occur when reflecting on a purchase that has been made, impacting on the overall consumer satisfaction of the item (Westbrook and Oliver 1991; Barsky and Nash 2002). Importantly, there is a clear link between satisfaction and future behavioural intentions (Barsky and Nash 2002; Martin et al. 2008) with consumers learning from their purchase experiences and changing their future purchasing habits in accordance. These studies have examined service settings rather than any emotion engendered due to the provenance of a product, however, the notion that emotion is likely to impact satisfaction and then future purchasing intention is likely to hold for a range of consumption contexts including the purchase of clothing. It is acknowledged that any such emotion will depend upon the consumer perceiving a positive or negative ethical indicator, something that is unlikely to be present in relation to clothing lines. Only when an item or retailer is specifically labelled in some way to denote its positive sourcing practices or the retailer has been the subject of negative ethical media coverage is this likely to be the case.

2.4 Attributes of clothing choice

While the discussion above outlines the key processes involved in consumer behaviour, it is also important to consider the evaluative content of such decisions. There are a number of inherent challenges with studies into clothing purchase due to the diversity of purchase motives and the variety of roles that clothing can perform (Niinimaki 2010). Studies have shown, for example, that the key attributes of choice differ between casual clothing and smart clothing (Birtwistle and Tsim 2005); that body shape influences preferences (Chattaraman and Rudd 2006); that significant differences exist when looking at a product in-store or observing it in a catalogue (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995); and that demographic variables alter the key attributes assessed (Shoham 2002).

The variety of product attributes considered can be categorised in a number of different ways. Birtwistle and Tsim (2005) segregated attributes into two categories: functional and symbolic, while Terry et al. (1999) proposed product referent, outcome referent and user referent groupings, and Swan and Combs (1976) identified instrumental and expressive attributes. Although these different categorisations vary in their terminology,

two groups can be identified, those which relate to the functional features of the product, and those that relate to the symbolic value to the user (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995). It is acknowledged that many attributes will have both symbolic and functional elements, making such classification difficult.

2.4.1 Functional features

Common functional considerations include price, quality, size/fit, comfort (Birtwistle and Tsim 2005; Taylor and Cosenza 2002; Hsiao and Dickerson 1995; Niinimaki 2010), with studies identifying additional factors such as coordination with wardrobe (Eckman et al. 1990) and fabric (Hsu and Burns 2002). While some research found price to be the most significant (Hsiao and Dickerson 1995; Hawkes 2007), others have found quality to be predominant (Birtwistle et al. 1998), the fit of the item (Niinimaki 2010), or even fabric as holding the most significant influence among the functional considerations (Eckman et al. 1990). These factors are likely to interrelate heavily with each other; with price being very strongly related to perceived quality for example (Tull et al. 1964).

2.4.2 Symbolic attributes

Symbolic attributes identified commonly include style, colour, brand and the look of the item (Birtwistle and Tsim 2005; Taylor and Cosenza 2002; Hsiao and Dickerson 1995; Niinimaki 2010). Again studies provide inconsistent findings on the relative importance of these factors with some highlighting style as being paramount (Hsu and Burns 2002) and others reporting branding to be the most influential factor (Taylor and Cosenza 2002). Similarly, findings from previous studies are not clear on the relative importance of functional attributes versus symbolic attributes, however, studies researching the views of younger consumers appear to have found greater relative support for symbolic factors suggesting that these groups are more concerned with what the item of clothing communicates about them than their physical utility (Taylor and Cosenza 2002; Herbst and Burger 2002). This characteristic makes the consumer susceptible to impulse purchases (Dittmar 2000), where the consumer is more influenced by emotional attraction than rational judgement, making more hedonistic decisions (Phau and Lo 2004). The immediate possession of goods is important, and complex factors requiring cognitive effort may not always be processed (Taylor and Cosenza 2002) factors that may hold significance when considering the possible impact of any ethical attributes of choice that by their nature require the consumer to think about the issues raised.

There are a number of striking differences in the key attributes identified by different researchers; hence, for example, Birtwistle and Tsim (2005) found that comfort was the most important attribute, followed by quality, where Eckman et al. (1990) found that these factors were only mentioned 2 and 8 times respectively across a total of 21 studies on clothing choice attributes that they reviewed. Eckman et al. (1990) identified 27 attributes from previous studies; their own research elicited 16 attribute categories, seven of which differed from earlier work. These incompatible research findings are likely to be caused by different contexts, samples, temporal factors, international differences in the role of clothing, translational difficulties, or the specific research design. Many studies have surveyed only a small number of criteria that have been preselected and manipulated by the researcher (Hsiao and Dickerson 1995; Hsu and Burns 2002), limiting the range and possibly the credibility of their findings. Only very few studies have elicited a free response range of attributes grounded in the consumers' own vocabulary (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995).

While it is not possible to generalise which type of product attributes are dominant, Sirgy et al. (2000) suggest that they perform different roles for the consumer, with symbolic factors providing the initial cues that attract consumers to a store, and then, product selection is based on functional attributes. Eckman et al. (1990) provide a model of the in-store clothing decision-making process which suggests that consumers go through a staged selection process. Through free response interviews, Eckman et al. (1990) identified two groups of product attributes playing dominant roles in different stages of the purchasing process. Firstly, attributes that generated initial interest in the item encouraging shoppers to try the item on, at which point different attributes would be considered when deciding whether or not to purchase the item as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Model of in-store apparel purchase decisions

Dominant attributes of choice

Colour/pattern
Styling
Fabric

Phase I: Interest

Fit
Appearance
Styling

Phase II: Trial

Phase III: Buy Reject
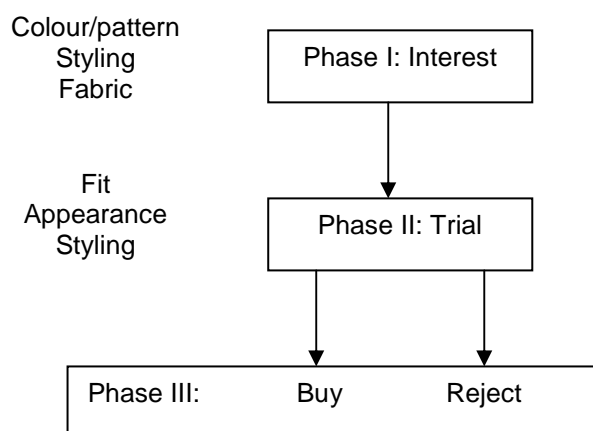
Adapted from: Eckman et al. (1990)

While not depicted in their model, Eckman et al. (1990) acknowledge that there is likely to be an additional stage of product selection in which shoppers pre-select stores that are likely to hold merchandise of interest to them rather than assess every possibility on the market. As such, the store brand is initially used as a heuristic factor to increase the efficiency of shopping. Stores are assessed by consumers based upon their prior experience of the brand (Eckman et al. 1990), with consumers making assumptions of the price range of merchandise, style and ethical stance (Hawkes 2007), using this assessment to determine which stores to visit. This staged approach is useful in understanding the consumers' shopping process.

2.5 Ethics as an attribute of clothing choice

As Hearson (2006) comments, the clothing industry and consumer demands are changing rapidly. The growth of consumer interest into the ethicality of their clothing purchases has been well documented in recent years (Bartlett 2007; Beard 2008; Hiller 2008). However, ethics has not been highlighted in the general literature on clothing evaluative considerations. Hsiao and Dickerson (1995) did find country of origin to be of significance, but it is not clear whether this was for ethical reasons. A small number of studies have examined the influence of ethical attributes on clothing choice specifically; notably all of these studies have been published in the last 10 years, highlighting the contemporary nature of these concerns. One recent study found commitment to social

and environmental issues to be very important to consumers (Hawkes 2007), with 82% of the 1,185 respondents believing that retailers are not doing enough to tackle social and environmental issues; however, this variable was identified by the researchers, possibly leading the respondents to give a socially desirable answer (Clavin and Lewis 2005; D'Souza et al. 2006).

The most recent work conducted in this area involved an on-line survey of 243 Finnish consumers which used a brief series of questions to classify respondents' level of interest in ethical consumption (Niinimaki 2010). Possibly unsurprisingly, those respondents identified as ethically uninterested were not influenced at all by the use of eco-materials in clothing lines, however, even those respondents who demonstrated the greatest interest in ethical consumption (labelled as ethical hardliners) reported the use of eco-materials to still be of lower importance in their clothing choice than the quality of the item, its durability, the colour, fit and the need for the item (Niinimaki 2010).

Other studies have focused on the influence of ethical or green claims in the advertising of clothing brands or lines (Phau and Ong 2007; Kim and Damhorst 1999; Kim et al. 1997) examining the motivations to purchase from an alternative (ethical) clothing brand (Kim et al. 1999); and investigating the role of prior experience of ethical shopping (D'Souza et al. 2006). Earlier studies have generally found that consumers did not respond more positively to adverts with environmental or ethical messages (Kim and Damhorst 1999 p. 18), where more recent studies found greater influence to be present, with D'Souza et al. (2006 p. 148) finding that "environmental labelling stands as a criterion to make an informed initial choice". This trend in studies further evidences growing consumer interest in ethical and environmental messages.

A consistent finding across all studies is that ethical or environmental factors are secondary to other product attributes for most consumers, with shoppers unwilling to compromise or reduce personal benefit to purchase more ethical products (Phau and Ong 2007; Hartmann et al. 2005; Niinimaki 2010). Further to this, Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) comment that consumers may avoid ethical products as they are perceived to be of inferior quality. Other studies have however found that consumers are responsive to ethical products when these products do not require a compromise in other areas (D'Souza et al. 2006; Meyer 2001). The situation is complex though, with Irwin (1999) highlighting that ethical values are often in conflict with at least some of our other goals, for example Fair Trade items are favourable from an ethical perspective but are likely to be more expensive, introducing a conflict in our potential choices. Furthermore, given the

complexity of some ethical issues, Irwin (1999) suggests that one ethical attribute may even be in conflict with another adding further difficulty to the purchase decision and that stopping to consider the ethical nature of products is likely to be effortful and not necessarily pleasurable, decreasing the likelihood of the consumer engaging in such processes.

Despite these challenges it does appear that ethical considerations do hold some impact on the purchase decision with some consumers experiencing guilt when selecting the less ethical alternative (Nicholls and Lee 2006), and feeling emotionally better (having higher self-esteem) when purchasing the ethical or more environmental choice (Meyer 2001). It is acknowledged that the scale of this influence is likely to be dependent on the individual consumer's beliefs and attitudes.

2.6 Retail marketing

As demonstrated, it is important for retailers to carefully build and communicate appropriate brand values to ensure customers visit their stores. Once in the store, consumers will assess the individual products in a staged manner according to a range of symbolic and functional attributes. Ethical attributes are only likely to exert strong influence for a small number of shoppers, with most being unprepared to compromise other attributes to acquire more ethical goods (Nicholls and Lee 2006). This suggests that retailers should stress the superiority of their products on different product attributes, using any ethical message to complete rather than underpin the positioning.

Nicholls and Lee (2006 p. 383) suggest that the marketing of many ethical products currently adopts an "advocacy approach, centring on improving consumer understanding about producers, conditions of production and trade injustices" and that the marketing focus should shift from creating awareness of these issues to building a distinctive brand image if these products are to achieve a wider market share. 'Cafedirect' saw their sales increase significantly as a result of shifting their marketing away from advocacy towards a more lifestyle approach, emphasising product differentiation and quality in addition to the inherent ethical value (Wright 2004; Nicholls and Opal 2005). In clothing, the Fair Trade clothing brand 'People Tree' are building a successful brand based upon the emphasis of the quality and style of their products firstly, with the Fair Trade and ethical attributes playing a more supporting role in the positioning of the brand (Nicholls and Lee 2006). Other research suggests that this approach is sensible, with (Meyer 2001 p. 323) finding

that "the environmental performance of clothes becomes a buying criterion for most customers only if two products are equivalent in terms of overall cost and benefits".

2.7 Chapter summary

As this discussion has shown, a number of different approaches to modelling consumer decision-making can be adopted. It is likely that each of these approaches provides some contribution to a full understanding of consumer decision-making and so should not be ignored; however, the cognitive approach has been adopted almost universally in the study of ethical consumer behaviour, and grand cognitive models such as the consumer decision model (Blackwell et al. 2006) provide a robust framework of decision-making that can easily accommodate a range of diverse influences that may be drawn from other psychological traditions. Further, the vicarious nature of ethical consumption practices is likely to rely on extensive intrapersonal evaluation upon which the cognitive approach is grounded. The study of consumer behaviour is dynamic and it is expected that new insights and approaches still lie unexplored, providing a potentially rich area for study.

Both the cognitive consumer behaviour theories and studies of the attributes of clothing purchase describe a staged process that consumers pass through before making decisions, with different factors and considerations holding influence at each stage. Two key groupings of product attributes can be discerned, functional and symbolic, with some research suggesting that the symbolic factors are important in the initial stages of decision-making, generating interest into the produce, with more functional attributes then being considered. Existing research on the attributes of clothing purchase have produced dramatically different findings on the importance of specific factors. These differences can probably be attributed to contextual, temporal or linguistic differences, but serve to highlight the need for work in this area to provide an up-to-date account of the attributes of clothing choice in the UK, grounded in the consumers' vocabulary. With a few notable exceptions, the role of ethics, social responsibility and altruism are largely ignored by existing consumer behaviour theory; which, given the dramatic rise in such concerns, highlights the need for research integrating these factors.

While studies into the evaluative content of clothing purchase decisions have not identified any ethical considerations, suggesting that these aspects are not important, recent studies focusing upon ethics have found significant consumer interest in ethical factors leading to emotions such as guilt when purchasing a product evaluated as

unethical, or consumers feeling better when purchasing ethical or more environmental products. Such studies may have been vulnerable to socially desirable responses being given, however, it does appear clear that ethical issues may exert some influence on consumers, but that these factors are deemed to be secondary to those relating to the look and usability of the item.

Chapter 3: Ethics in consumer decision-making

3.1 Introduction

The dominant perspective of consumer behaviour embraced by marketing theories is that of egoism, whereby exchanges are motivated by consumers' self-interest. The purchase of something ethical could increase personal satisfaction in line with this perspective, or consumers may now be acting partially altruistically. Nataraajan and Bagozzi (1999) argue that people do not always act according to rational self-interest and at times consumers act against their own self-interest for the benefit of others. The traditional models of consumer decision-making not only fail to account for such occurrences but in fact preclude them. Consumer behaviour might better be described as a dialectic tension between selfish and altruistic motives, when self-rationality is competing with more emotional aspects guided by social principles. Moral principles predispose people to act in certain ways and combine complexly with emotions and rational decision-making to influence choices and behaviour (Nataraajan and Bagozzi 1999).

The view that ethical products may be purchased altruistically is challenged by others who suggest that their purchase simply represents psychological egoism (Baier 1993), and that all actions are aligned to self-interest, with the purchase of ethical products resulting in the consumer feeling good (or avoiding guilt) by doing good (Hemingway and Maclagan 2004). Similarly, a consumer with a genuine interest in being ethical for the sake of society may also have a strong self-interest in being seen in this light (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008).

Whichever perspective is adopted, it is imperative to introduce and examine the key theoretical work describing ethical decisions and discuss key contributions that aid understanding of these complex processes.

3.2 Definitions of ethical decision-making

Many authors have commented on the difficulty in defining ethical behaviour (Singhapakdi et al. 1999; Holtzman 1960), business ethics (Lewis 1985), ethical retailing (Whysall 1998) and ethical consumption (Howard and Nelson 2000; Cherrier 2005; Clavin and Lewis 2005). There are a plethora of issues which could be questioned ethically, however, such assessments can be highly subjective and complexly interlinked (Cherrier 2005; Kent 2005). A white paper from KPMG/SPSL Retail Think Tank (2007) comments that ethical considerations could even be contradictory, for example the desire to reduce food miles and support developing countries. Despite these challenges, a number of common ethical issues do emerge from the literature: Fair Trade principles (Loureiro and Lotade 2005; Nicholls and Opal 2005; DePelsmacker and Janssens 2007; Davies, Doherty et al. 2010), use of Organically grown and processed materials (Tomolillo and Shaw 2004; Shaw et al. 2006; Tsakiridou et al. 2008; Tsakiridou, et al. 2008) working practices in developing nations (Dickson 1999; Anniss 2003; Joergens 2006) and depletion of natural resources (Howard and Nelson 2000; Sanfilippo 2007). Within each of these rather broad ethical areas are a large number of more specific actions that can be questioned.

Cooper-Martin and Holbrook (1993 p. 113) define ethical consumer behaviour as "decision-making, purchases and other consumption experiences that are affected by the consumer's ethical concerns". Within the context of clothing purchase, Meyer (2001) has commented on the lack of a common understanding of what ethically benign clothes are, and Joergens (2006 p. 361) has defined ethical fashion as "fashionable clothes that incorporate Fair Trade principles with sweatshop-free labour conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and Organic cotton."

Even with such clear definitions, the area remains difficult to research as consumers may purchase ethical products for non-ethical reasons (Clavin and Lewis 2005).

3.3 Ethical decision-making models

A number of models of ethical decision-making have been proposed covering the broad area of business ethics (Nicholls and Lee 2006 p. 371), however, the majority approach the issue from an organisational perspective and often lack empirical examination (Ford and Richardson 1994). Little attention has been given to the role that ethics can play in individual purchasing behaviour (Nicholls and Lee 2006; Vitell et al. 2010). Of the limited work that has attempted to develop an understanding of individual ethical decision-making, the two most prominent approaches have been Hunt and Vitell's general theory of marketing ethics (Hunt and Vitell 1986), and models that draw on the key work on attitudes presented by Ajzen and Fishbein, and Ajzen (Chatzidakis et al. 2006).

3.3.1 Hunt and Vittel's model

While Hunt and Vittel's general theory of marketing ethics (Vitell and Muncy 1992; Hunt and Vitell 1986), presented in Figure 5, was constructed to explain the ethical behaviour of marketing practitioners, it has been more widely applied, notably in attempts to understand ethical consumer behaviour (Marks and Mayo 1991; Vitell et al. 2001). The model is conceptually based upon a discussion of the philosophical approaches of deontology (obligations or rules) and teleology (guided by the consequences of actions). Its original publication offered no empirical support, however, the theory has become widely applied and numerous empirical studies have tested its hypothesised relationships.

Figure 5. General theory of marketing ethics
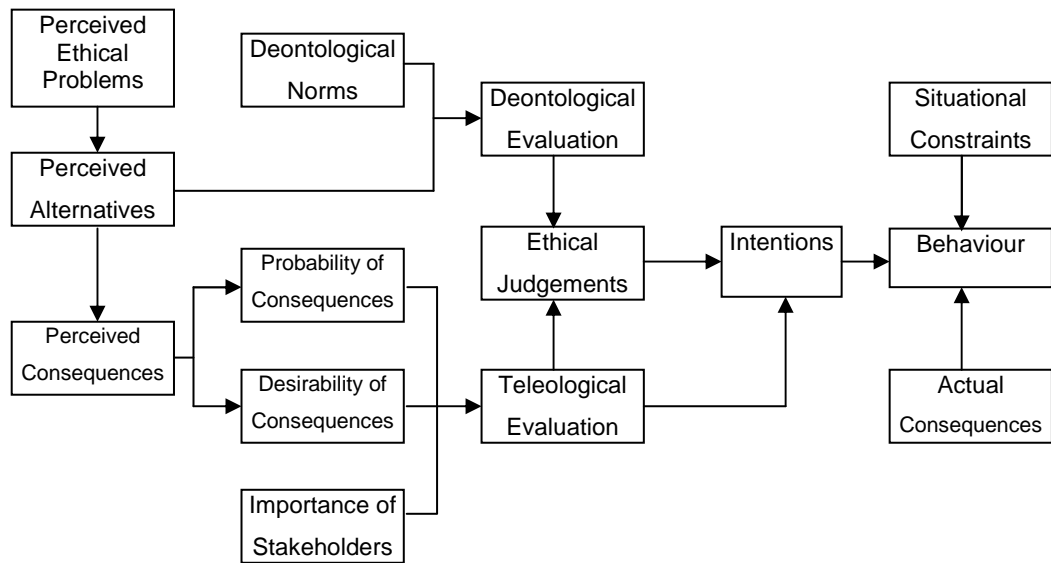
Adapted from: Hunt and Vitell (1986)

Hunt and Vitell's model proposes that ethical decision-making begins with the consumer perceiving an ethical problem. This perception will be influenced by cultural, industrial, organisational and personal variables. The model then suggests that the consumer will make deontological and teleological assessments of all the perceived alternative behaviours in order to arrive at an overall ethical judgment which will guide intention and thus behaviour. The consumer's teleological assessment will impact not only the ethical judgement, but also directly on the intention to behave, thus accommodating the possibility of the actor choosing a behaviour which is not deemed to be ethically optimum due to other positive outcomes being identified. Finally the consequence of the consumers' behaviour becomes part of their learning (Hunt and Vitell 1986). This final step is important as the consumer may experience enhanced satisfaction when purchasing ethically sourced goods or guilt if consuming a less ethical alternative (Chatzidakis et al. 2006).

One of the key limitations of Hunt and Vitell's model is that its application is entirely reliant on the actor perceiving an ethical issue (Hunt and Vitell 1986). In a consumption context it is thought that the ethical issues are not necessarily clear and would not be perceived by all consumers, rendering this model less useful. Similarly it appears that inadequate thought is afforded to any other considerations that might intervene in the decision process; in any decision the ethicality of the possible choices is likely to be only one of the considerations. Despite these constraints, the key elements and relationships

outlined are of use in developing an understanding of the likely decision-making processes that occur in such situations. Specifically, Hunt and Vitell's model forwards the application of the philosophical theories of deontology and teleology. Deontology involves the examination of specific actions, and holds that some actions are inherently right and others are inherently wrong. Counter to this, teleology examines the perceived consequences of such action and is normally focused on minimising negative consequences (Vitell et al. 2001). The philosophical approaches of deontology and teleology have been used in a variety of studies on ethical consumer behaviour, proving a useful taxonomy of ethical effects (Chan et al. 2008).

3.3.2 Attitude behaviour models

Influenced heavily by the earlier work of Ajzen and Fishbein on the role of attitudes on behaviour, Rest (1986) proposed a model of ethical decision-making that suggested individual consumers pass through four consecutive stages towards final purchase, namely: recognition of the ethical issue, application of ethical judgement, resolution to place ethical concerns ahead of others and finally action on the ethical issue. This model has become one of the most widely cited in the area, with a number of researchers suggesting additions or adaptations over the years. Possibly most notable, Jones (1991) suggested that moral assessment is likely to be contingent on the specific issue in question, and that the characteristics of the moral issue (moral intensity) is likely to impact upon all stages of the model proposed by Rest (1986). This is an important contribution as it recognises that even if two moral issues are acknowledged by the consumer, they may exert differing levels of influence over the decision process. Despite its age, Loe et al. (2000) concluded that Jones' model provided the most comprehensive synthesis model of ethical decision-making.

At the same time as the key work of Rest (1986), Trevino (1986) published a competing model of ethical decision-making. Her model is similar in many of its assertions, however, it differs notably in explicitly highlighting the influence of individual and situational factors. Ferrell and Gresham (1985) also recognised the role of individual and situational factors as influencing ethical decisions, and they saw ethical issues and dilemmas as emerging from the social and cultural environment, acknowledging that many moral issues are heavily dependent upon culture and influenced by our social surroundings. Figure 6 provides a synthesis of these models, with the contributor of each element identified.

Figure 6. Synthesis of early ethical decision-making models
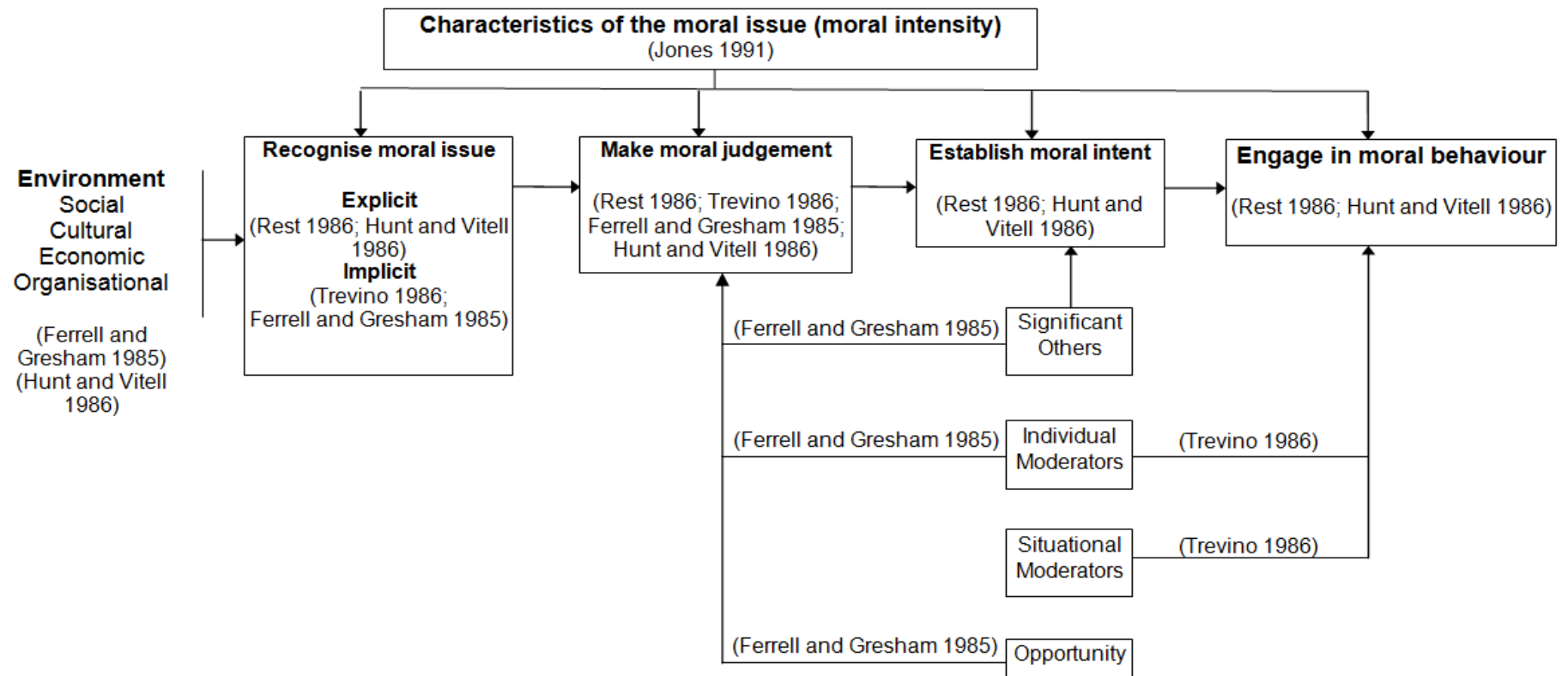
Adapted from: Jones (1991)

It can be seen that both the models of Rest (1986) and Jones (1991) loosely follow the framework of key consumer decision theory models such as the theory of planned behaviour which also posits a four stage decision process moving through knowledge formation, attitude/judgement formation, behavioural intentions to actual behaviour. However, these extended models, as described, focus around the ethicality of the decision process and do not readily embrace decision settings where the ethicality of the decision may be secondary to other more important attributes. Furthermore, these contributions were intended to model general decision-making and were not specifically aligned to a consumption setting. Since the mid 1990's, a small body of work has attempted to extend this work specifically into consumer behaviour.

Shaw and Clarke (1999) provided one empirical study examining ethical purchasing specifically. Their research followed on from that of Strong (1996), developing a model based on the theory of planned behaviour which accepted the role of individual beliefs in attitude formation and their link to behavioural intentions, but aimed to provide greater explanation though exploring how these underpinning beliefs were formed. Two main influencing factors identified as impacting on ethical purchase behaviour were information, especially when embedded in trustworthy labels and normative social factors, such as the influence of peers, family and, in some cases, religion (Shaw and Clarke 1999).

Using the theory of planned behaviour as a theoretical starting point, Fukukawa (2002) proposed the addition of a fourth construct affecting intentions, namely perceived unfairness. However, this construct proved significant in the prediction of ethically questionable behaviours of a Machiavellian nature (Fukukawa 2002) and so is not directly applicable to this study. In the ethical consumerism field, Shaw and her colleagues have conducted significant research leading to ethical obligation and self identity being supported as useful additional constructs in predicting behaviour (Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2002a; Shaw and Shiu 2002b). Further, earlier research had suggested that ethical obligation and self-identity may serve as antecedent to attitude as well as acting directly on intention (Sparks et al. 1995; Sparks and Guthrie 1998). Shaw and Shiu (2002a) examined these proposed relationships and found not only that both constructs did influence attitudes, but that the direct contributions of ethical obligation and self-identity were more significant than the original constructs of attitudes and subjective norm, leading them to comment that this serves to highlight the deficiency of a model that is underpinned purely by self-interested motives. However, there are some inherent limitations to these studies, most notably in the research samples used. The research was attempting to model and understand the decision-making of highly ethical

consumers, and as such surveyed subscribers to the Ethical Consumer magazine. The use of this extreme (Shaw et al. 2000) sample is likely to preclude the research being more widely applicable to typical behaviours. Furthermore, the research has focused on the purchase of Fair Trade grocery lines, and it is not clear whether findings in this specific context would apply to other settings.

The theoretical approaches discussed here rely upon the consumer becoming actively engaged with the ethical issue and affording it significant consideration, a condition that is unlikely to always occur as many consumers are not fully aware of the ethical issues involved in their consumption choices. Even if such awareness exists, these issues are likely to be secondary or latent to other attributes of choice. Mirroring this, it can be seen that previous attempts to model ethical consumer behaviour have universally approached the phenomenon from a cognitive approach, suggesting that consumers cognitively process information about an ethical attribute. In the context of clothing purchase, which is often characterised by hedonistic and impulsive behaviour, this active engagement may be questioned.

3.4 Ethical purchasing gap

Models suggest that consumers make decisions through a process of knowledge formation, the construction of attitudes or judgments about a particular consumption activity's ethical impact, the formation of purchase intentions and finally purchase. They do not, however, provide clear indication of whether any key decision factors would apply more or less strongly to ethical purchases, nor do they serve to explain the ethical purchasing gap that many researchers highlight (Cowe and Williams 2000; Black 2010; Papaoikonomou et al. 2010; Stanforth and Hauck 2010). The ethical purchasing gap is described as the large gap between the number of people who have formed clear ethical attitudes, and those that actually purchase ethical alternatives (Nicholls and Lee 2006; Chatzidakis et al. 2006). In a survey of 30,000 UK residents, Cowe and Williams (2000) found that while approximately 30% of the population claim to care about ethical standards, products satisfying such standards rarely achieve a market share in excess of 3%, leading to their naming of the 30:3 problem.

A small number of studies have focused on explaining this important gap between attitudes and behaviour. While all of these studies have suggested some causes of this difference, Papaoikonomou et al. (2011) have proposed a useful dichotomy identifying

that some factors are internal to the consumer and others are external. Those causes that are internal to the consumer include; opting for the easy choice (Nicholls 2004), lack of time (DePelsmacker et al. 2005), consumer trade-off against other product attributes (DePelsmacker et al. 2005), consumer mistrust of ethical claims (Nicholls 2002), consumer expectation that prices will be significantly higher for a product that is ethically positioned (Stanforth and Hauck 2010), unavoidable compromise in everyday life (Papaoikonomou et al. 2011) and slow process of change to adopt ethical consumer habits (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008). Factors that are external to the individual include: limited availability of ethical products (Carrigan and Attalla 2001), high cost of ethical lines (Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004), ethical alternatives being inefficient (Papaoikonomou et al. 2011), and social obligations and pester power (Papaoikonomou et al. 2011).

In their study of children's attitudes toward Fair Trade items, Nicholls and Lee (2006) found that in focus group discussions participants were aware of and had developed positive attitudes towards Fair Trade products, however, this did not translate into purchase intentions. This failure by the participants to take the final step to consume was purported to lie largely in the marketing of such Fair Trade products whose marketing messages have historically focused on raising awareness of Fair Trade processes rather than building an attractive brand image in its own right. This challenges a body of research that has assessed consumer reaction to environmental or ethical labelling of products (D'Souza et al. 2006; Grankvist et al. 2004; Dickson 2001; Sneddon et al. 2010), and the use of environmental or ethical claims in marketing materials (Kim et al. 1997; Phau and Ong 2007). Such actions may be received positively by the consumer, but it cannot be assumed that this will lead to a change in the customer's purchasing.

3.5 Neutralisation theory

In light of this attitude behaviour gap it is important to consider how individuals cope with the psychological tensions that arise when they behave in ways that are in apparent contradiction to their expressed ethical concerns (Chatzidakis et al. 2006). The concept of neutralisation attempts to explain this by exploring the justifications that soften or eliminate the impact that norm-violating behaviour might have on self-concept and social relationships (Grove et al. 1989). When a consumer makes a decision that they view positively in one direction but negatively in another, it creates cognitive dissonance and some pressure is exerted encouraging the actor to resolve the conflict in some way.

Neutralisation theory assists in this by providing means to reduce the mental conflict and reduce anticipated guilt (Steenhaut and Kenhove 2006).

Neutralisation is possible in five ways (Chatzidakis et al. 2006; Chatzidakis et al. 2007; Harris and Daunt 2010) which have varying relevance to the context of ethical consumption practices:

1. Denial of responsibility,
2. Denial of injury,
3. Denial of victim,
4. Condemning the condemners,
5. Appeal to higher loyalties.

Although neutralisation is likely to co-occur with other purchasing scenarios requiring reasoning and effortful cognitive processing, Chatzidakis et al. (2007) conclude that it is likely to be particularly pertinent in cases where the consumer is motivated to maintain self-esteem, resonating with likely clothing purchase behaviour. While neutralisation theory has rarely been applied to consumption contexts, it appears to make a useful contribution in understanding the attitude behaviour gap.

3.6 Consumer segmentation

Much research has attempted to delineate consumers to identify those most sympathetic toward ethical issues. This research, however, often presents conflicting and confusing findings, with Cherrier (2005, p. 125) commenting that "efforts to delineate this group have been controversial".

Studies have found that ethical considerations seem to grow with consumers' age (Hines and Ames 2000), that female consumers are more sensitive to such issues (Parker 2002; Bateman and Valentine 2010), that "ethics is the preserve of the affluent" (Barnett et al. 2005), and even that lower levels of education indicate greater likelihood to be sensitive toward ethical issues (Dickson 2005). However, a similar number of authors find no such correlations and suggest that demographic factors are poor predictors of ethical views (DePelsmacker et al. 2005; O'Fallon and Butterfield 2005).

Shaw and Shiu (2003) suggest that consumers make ethical decisions because ethical values have become part of their self-identity. This suggestion is supported by a number of recent publications which emphasise these individual factors (Al-Wugayan and Rao 2004; Pepper et al. 2009; Doran 2009; Domeisen 2006). Notably, studies have used the work on individual values of Rokeach (1973) in their attempts to describe and predict those likely to prioritise ethical issues (DePelsmacker et al. 2005; Dickson 2000). These studies have started to explore the role of self-identity and individual values in guiding a consumer's likelihood to embrace ethical products, however, research in this area is complex and further work is needed before such indicators can be used to reliably inform retail practice. However, early indications do suggest that examining individual values may have greater predictive ability than more simplistic demographic segmentations.

Whichever approach is adopted, it is clear that consumers are not equally concerned with ethical issues. Taxonomies which identify key groups of consumers have been developed based upon surveys of purchasing attitudes or behaviours. Dickson (2005) conducted a large survey of American clothing consumers and based upon the responses gained grouped respondents as either ethical (15%) or self-interested (85%). Examining general ethical consumption, Cowe and Williams (2000) developed a more sophisticated taxonomy through the use of four focus groups and almost 2,000 face-to-face interviews with consumers. This study identified five key segments, each of which is profiled on both demographic and value led criteria. Five percent of consumers have been classified as 'global watchdogs', 18% as 'conscientious consumers', and 49% as 'do what I can', demonstrating varying levels of engagement with ethical issues. Only 22% of respondents are identified as relatively unconcerned about ethical issues, labelled by Cowe and Williams (2000) as 'look after my own'. The final segment identified was described as the 'brand generation', with this group being the most consumerist, highly concerned about image and brand values, possibly overriding any concern that they have toward ethical issues (Cowe and Williams 2000). Each of the segments proposed have been afforded brief demographic profiles which suggest that ethical interest increases with income level, a finding that is in stark contrast to some other studies attempting to understand the ethical consumer (Muncy and Vitell 1992), further demonstrating the difficulty in seeking demographic patterns. Avoiding the potential pitfalls of demographic analysis, Niinimaki (2010) used survey data to delineate consumers into four key groups, namely, the 'not interested', those that 'do what I can', the 'conscientious consumer' and 'ethical hardliners'. Niinimakis' (2010) study was limited by a small student sample size; however, the clear groupings developed do usefully highlight the differing levels of engagement with ethical issues that is present amongst the population.

In attempts to understand the ethical consumer, other studies have examined the journey that an individual may pass through to develop moral or ethical attitudes and translate these attitudes into purchase behaviour. Most widely cited in this area is Kohlberg's stages of moral maturity (1969) which proposed that individuals' moral attitudes develop through their lives. While it is acknowledged that different people will progress through these stages at different speeds, with some people not progressing to an advanced level at all, six key stages were identified:

1. Obedience and punishment orientation (how can I avoid punishment),
2. Self-interest orientation (what's in it for me?),
3. Interpersonal accord and conformity (social norms),
4. Authority and social order maintaining orientation (law and order morality),
5. Social contract orientation,
6. Universal ethical principles (principled conscience).

Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) have accepted the notion of the consumer passing through stages of development, leading towards more ethically focused choices and have applied the 'Stages of Change' construct from within the 'Transtheoretical' model originally developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) to the ethical consumption context. In essence, the Transtheoretical model examines individual's behaviour change; assessing readiness to alter behaviours, identifying the stages of change, and suggesting strategies and processes that can aid individuals through their change (Prochaska et al. 1994). More specifically, the 'Stages of Change' construct assumes that behavioural change occurs in a series of incremental steps where individuals pass through the six stages of precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance and relapse (Prochaska et al. 1994; Freestone and McGoldrick 2008). These stages are presented in Figure 7 along with a brief application to the context of ethical purchase behaviour.

Figure 7. Stages of change constructs and their application to an ethical decision-making context

Stage	Description
Precontemplation	Consumer is unlikely to have given thought to the ethical issues. They may be unaware or not bothered by the issues.
Contemplation	Consumer becomes aware of the issues. Signs of concern but negative aspects of taking action outweigh the positive aspects.
Preparation	The consumer is preparing to take action. The pros begin to outweigh the cons.
Action	The consumer takes an action. May also seek to influence others.
Maintenance	Action regarding the ethical issues is maintained and still regarded as worthwhile.
Relapse	Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) do not consider relapse to be a key element when applying the stages of change construct to ethical decision-making, however, it may hold some salience in understanding why consumers may cease an action in this regard.

Adapted from: Prochaska et al. (1994); Freestone and McGoldrick (2008)

Both the application of the stages of change construct (Prochaska et al. 1994) to the ethical decision-making context, and Kohlberg's (1969) stages of moral maturity suggest that as consumers age they will become more interested in, and committed to ethical aspects, again a finding that is not universal in studies examining demographic indicators (O'Fallon and Butterfield 2005).

The variety of different approaches that have been adopted in attempts to delineate consumers' ethical orientations demonstrates the difficulty of this task. While the use of demographic factors has proved inconsistent (O'Fallon and Butterfield 2005), and further research is required to fully understand the role that self-identity and individual values may play, the only universally accepted notion is that different consumers care and engage in ethical aspects of consumption to differing degrees, and that a taxonomy like the one proposed by Niinimaki (2010) provides a clear idea of these different levels of engagement.

3.7 Motivations of the ethical consumer

In work attempting to understand the motivations of the ethical consumer, Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) employed the Decision Balance Scale to examine the trade-off between anticipated gains (benefits) and losses (costs) consequent of ethical consumption, and how this balance of costs and benefits changes as a consumer progresses the five stages represented in the stages of change model - Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Maintenance - (Prochaska and DiClemente 1984). Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) identified a number of positive and negative motives to consume ethically that are of personal and social relevance. Unsurprisingly, individual respondents in the precontemplative, unconcerned stages proved more likely to view the negative motivations as greater than the positive motivations in the decision balance. In addition, a tipping point exists whereby the positive motivations start to outweigh the negative considerations where concern is leading to action (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008). The motivational statements that proved most significant are summarised in Table 1.

Personal Positives	Personal Negatives
I feel better if I take action against firms that violate this issue (5.77)*.	It would make shopping less convenient (3.86).
This is an issue that I like to be associated with (5.21).	Too much hassle to buy only from firms not violating issue (3.44).
Social Positives	Social Negatives
It would help if people bought from firms addressing this issue (6.26).	People would be annoyed if pressured on this issue (4.65).
People could make fairer choices if aware of which companies (6.25).	People are too busy today to be concerned with this issue (4.56).

* Mean ranking on 1-7 Likert type scales, where seven represents the greatest degree of agreement with the statement.

Adapted from: Freestone and McGoldrick (2008)

Table 1. Summary of the most significant motivations towards ethical consumption

This research was conducted in respect of a small number of rather broadly defined ethical issues, and the precise findings are likely to vary depending on the product context the consumer is evaluating. Given the social relevance of clothing purchase, it is reasonable to expect motives related to social conformity and image to take on an enhanced role in this situation. Notably D'Astous and Mathieu (2008) in their study on

Fair Trade food products found that knowing products were popular among relevant others (friends, family or respected role models) had a significant impact on likelihood to purchase. One additional consideration that did not fit within the personal, social taxonomy identified by Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) was monetary issues, with the possible additional cost of ethical products acting as a negative motivator (Irwin 1999).

Related to this work, studies have commented on consumers' willingness to pay a little more for ethical products, but perceive such lines to be substantially more expensive, with this perception serving to discourage consumption (Mintel 2009; Stanforth and Hauck 2010). Only limited research has focused on examining the willingness of consumers to pay extra for ethically sourced products, a so-called ethical product premium (McGoldrick and Freestone 2008). Research has approached this question in a number of survey based and experimental ways, with there being inherent limitations with the survey based approach due to the attitude behaviour gap discussed earlier and a possible social desirability bias leading respondents to give what they deem to be the 'right' answer rather than accurately reporting their own behaviour (Clavin and Lewis 2005). It is the sale of fairly traded coffee that has received the greatest attention, with both Loureiro and Lotade (2005) and DePelsmacker et al. (2005) adopting survey approaches and finding that consumers were willing to pay an ethical product premium of 2.4% and 10% respectively. A clear explanation for the large difference in findings cannot be discerned, highlighting the challenges of researching in this area. A recent large scale study surveyed the ethical product premium consumers were willing to pay on a number of product categories (McGoldrick and Freestone 2008). The six product categories surveyed included: fruit and vegetables, detergent and cleaners, packed food and drink, meat and fish, electrical goods and, most interestingly to this study, clothing. The average ethical product premium that McGoldrick and Freestones (2008) respondents were prepared to pay for each of these six product categories is presented in Table 2, clearly highlighting that respondents are less willing to pay a price premium for ethical clothing lines than in other product areas.

Product category	Mean ethical product premium
Fruit and vegetables	12.4%
Detergent and cleaner	12.6%
Packed food and drink	12.2%
Meat and fish	16.0%
Clothing	11.2%
Electrical goods	13.5%

Source: McGoldrick and Freestone (2008)

Table 2. Mean ethical product premium respondents willing to pay for different product categories

McGoldrick and Freestone's research (2008) suggests that consumers are prepared to pay a greater ethical product premium than earlier studies have shown, possibly reflecting growing awareness and interest in ethical issues. Further, McGoldrick and Freestone (2008) broke down these findings, highlighting a diversity of consumer response to the survey as highlighted in Table 3.

EPP* willing to pay (n=988)	Nil	1-5%	6-10%	11-15%	16-20%	21-25%	26-30%	30%+	Mean
%	8.4	33.1	22.4	14.7	7.6	6.8	2.8	4.2	11.2

* Ethical product premium

Source: McGoldrick and Freestone (2008)

Table 3. Percentage of respondents willing to pay ethical product premium on clothing products

A more recent study has found consumers willing to pay a slightly higher ethical product premium for eco-clothing than that reported by McGoldrick and Freestone (2008). Niinimaki (2010) found that just 3.7% of their respondents would not be prepared to pay any extra for eco-clothing, and that the average ethical product premium tolerated was 12.3%, however, the small online student sample limits the confidence in and generalisability of these findings.

The only study conducted in an experimental setting: Home Depot, the American DIY chain, found that only 37% of its shoppers were prepared to pay 2% more for ethically sourced timber (Devinney et al. 2006), demonstrating how survey based studies may over report the phenomenon.

3.8 Ethics in clothing purchase

A small number of academic studies have examined the role that ethical issues within the clothing industry play in consumer decision-making. Research has notably focused on the influence of ethical trading policies (Iwanow et al. 2005) and the use of sweatshop style manufacturing processes (Dickson 2001). These studies have reported only minimal impact of the ethical aspects considered on consumers' purchasing intentions. Only two qualitative studies have attempted to examine the holistic role of ethical considerations within clothing purchase decision-making (Joergens 2006; Hiller Connell 2011). Joergens' (2006) study attempted to define ethical fashion, analyse awareness of ethical issues in clothing, examine consumer attitudes towards these issues, and provide some cross-cultural assessment between German and English consumers. Little evidence was found that ethical issues have any effect on consumers' clothing purchase behaviour; however, the sample employed by Joergens may have limited the study, consisting of a total of nine respondents all between the ages of 21-26, clustered into two focus groups. Hiller Connell (2011) found some indication of ethical considerations impacting consumers' clothing purchase decisions, with three key effects being suggested: firstly that some consumers adhered to acquisition limits, reducing their consumption volume due to concern for the environment; secondly favouring the purchase of products identified as ethically favourable and thirdly favouring stores and purchase routes that were deemed to be ethically favourable such as second-hand stores. This was a qualitative study employing a purposive sample of 26 American consumers who had previously purchased eco-conscious apparel and as such it is not possible to glean how other consumers may view these issues.

3.9 Literature review summary

One of the key limitations of the cognitive consumer behaviour models is the implied rationality and egoism of the actor. In reviewing specifically ethical decision-making literature, the role of emotion, moral principles and altruism has been explored.

Both the Hunt and Vittel model (1986) and models based upon the theory of planned behaviour, for example Shaw and Clarke (1999), are established on the fundamental premise that an individual's intentions are consistent with ethical judgements in most cases (Fukukawa 2002). They focus solely on the ethicality of the decision in question, perhaps failing to recognise that ethical aspects are likely to be only one of many

considerations being evaluated. With ethical product attributes not being prominent in consumers' clothing purchase decision-making (Phau and Ong 2007; Hartmann et al. 2005; Niinimaki 2010), these theories are not useful in accounting such behaviour directly. Despite this, the steps in ethical decision-making proposed by both groups of models provide guidance into the likely contribution that such elements may hold. The concepts of deontology and teleology introduced by Hunt and Vitell (1986) for example, contribute to an understanding of how these aspects might be considered, however, even these broad concepts rely upon the consumer perceiving the ethical issue, which in itself is not likely to be universal.

Many studies have observed large differences between consumers' purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour; further, reported attitudes towards ethical product choices and actual purchase behaviour differ greatly. These findings highlight the limitations of many existing studies in this area that have examined intentions as a proxy to behaviour, and may serve to demonstrate that in many cases ethical attitudes form only one part of the decision process, with sub-optimal products being chosen according to higher assessment on other non-ethical attributes. These issues stress the importance for research to focus on actual consumption choices rather than stated intentions. In addition to this, given the moral aspects of ethical decision-making, research participants are likely to provide socially desirable responses to surveys thus introducing further bias to the findings.

With at least some consumers' purchasing products that conflict with their ethical attitudes, some degree of psychological tension has been identified, with this cognitive dissonance being displayed through guilt, and neutralisation being attempted to reduce this mental conflict. A range of studies have attempted to delineate consumers' likelihood to purchase ethically, however, the findings of these studies are conflicting and confusing, making it difficult to discern those consumers that are more likely to embrace such issues with any accuracy. It is clear though that a wide range of individual and situational factors are likely to influence decision-making, the likelihood of ethical options being considered, and the willingness to pay an ethical product premium for these items.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As the review of the literature has shown, while many rich theoretical areas contribute to an understanding of the role ethics may play in clothing purchase decisions, primary research is required to fully probe the area. This primary research is needed to establish the relationships and linkages between contributing concepts, up-date literature on the attributes of choice, and provide a holistic model of clothing purchase decision-making. Research in this area is complicated by the likelihood of social desirability bias and the variety of roles that clothing can perform, adding complexity to such decisions.

This chapter details the methodological approach adopted for the primary research. The choice of specific methods and the manner in which they were operationalised is then explained and justified. The chapter starts by presenting the conceptual framework used in this research that combines the concepts and relationships posited by previous research. The chapter then discusses the research process adopted including the methodological assumptions and ontological approach. A schematic presentation summarising the key steps in the research is presented, before each stage is discussed in detail.

4.2 Conceptual framework

In the context of clothing purchase, a wide range of different consumer decision-making styles may be observed, ranging from highly considered and purposive product selection to ad-hoc impulsive or hedonistic buying based on attractive product characteristics. It is important that any decision-making framework retains the flexibility to accommodate this diversity of behaviour. A cognitive framework provides the most appropriate basis for the study of ethical purchasing behaviour, as it allows for the complexity of such actions that may be subject to extensive intrapersonal evaluation. At the same time it retains the flexibility for different consumers to pass through the key decision-making stages more rapidly without such considered thought. Additionally, the use of a cognitive framework does not exclude contributions to be made from the alternate theoretical approaches to the study of consumer behaviour. The role that behavioural learning may play in decision

making, or the contribution of emotion, altruism and research examining the volitional stages of purchasing as espoused by humanistic theories, for example, can all be embraced within a cognitive framework.

Common steps depicted in cognitive consumer behaviour theories include problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice and outcome evaluation. In the case of clothing purchase, it is likely that information search and the evaluation of alternatives may occur concurrently in the live store setting, especially if the shopper is browsing serendipitously without a well defined need. Despite this integration of stages, both Eckman et al. (1990) and Sirgy et al. (2000) have found that different product attributes will hold relevance in different stages of product selection suggesting that some items generate consumer interest based largely on symbolic factors, while more functional attributes are dominant later in the decision-making process. Furthermore, Eckman et al. (1990) suggest, perhaps logically, that consumers will initially only visit stores that they believe will contain suitable items.

It is clear that a wide range of different product attributes are likely to influence consumers' assessment of items, however, differences exist between the findings of previous studies. There is a need for research in this area to compile an up-to-date account of the attributes that are important in clothing selection for the UK consumer. Despite this, there is growing evidence that ethical attributes may influence clothing purchase decisions (The Co-operative Bank 2007), and while some studies have suggested that these attributes are secondary to other considerations (Phau and Ong 2007; Hartmann et al. 2005), research into the specific role that the ethical factors play, and how they may interact with other attributes, is yet to be conducted.

Literature examining ethical decision-making suggests that such decisions are reliant on the 'actor' perceiving an ethical problem, prior to deontological and teleological assessments being made (Vitell and Muncy 1992; Hunt and Vitell 1986). In the context of clothing purchase these assessments are not likely to be thorough, rather anecdotal and largely dependent on the extent of information that is provided and the awareness the consumer has of these issues (Shaw and Clarke 1999).

Possible emotional outcomes of purchase decisions have been proposed by Bagozzi et al. (2002) who suggest that positive anticipated emotions and negative anticipated emotions may act on desire as an antecedent to intention. These constructs may hold

relevance in the consumption of clothing lines, especially if ethical attributes are highlighted. Nicholls and Lee (2006) found that some consumers experience guilt when selecting less ethical items, and Meyer (2001) reports consumers feeling emotionally better after purchasing an ethical or environmental product. Given that neither of these studies examined the purchase of clothing, it would be premature to suggest that such feelings impact on decision-making in this context, however, it is likely that such emotions may be observed.

A wide range of studies have suggested that when selecting clothing lines, the factors considered will vary depending on the individual and the item being sought (Niinimaki 2010; Birtwistle and Tsim 2005; Chattaraman and Rudd 2006; Shoham 2002). Further to this, many studies have suggested that ethical opinions and attitudes will differ greatly from person to person, affecting the importance such attributes are likely to be afforded (Hines and Ames 2000; Parker 2002; Dickson 2005). Figure 8 integrates these areas of contribution into a conceptual framework outlining the role ethics may play in clothing purchase behaviour.

Figure 8. Conceptual framework of the role of ethics in clothing purchase decision-making
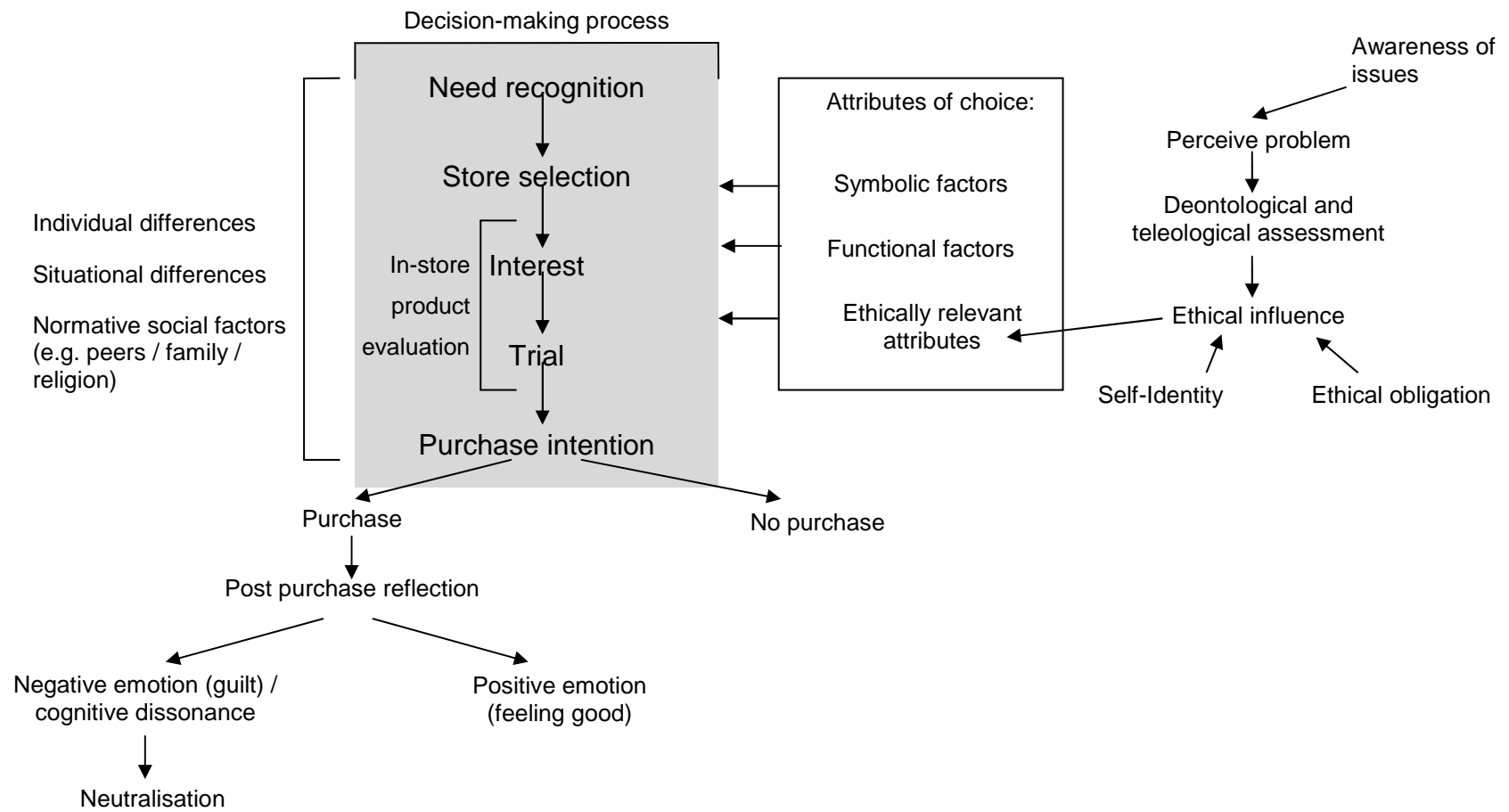
Most previous research in this area has been of a qualitative nature, with many studies employing focus group discussions with a small number of participants (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Shaw and Duff 2001; Herbst and Burger 2002; Clavin and Lewis 2005; Shaw et al. 2005; Nicholls and Lee 2006; Sneddon et al. 2010), or interviews (Eckman et al. 1990; Shaw and Duff 2001; Nicholls 2002; Cherrier 2005; Hiller Connell 2011). The relatively few studies that have adopted a quantitative approach, surveying the attitudes and behaviours of a larger sample of respondents, have tended to draw their samples from a population likely to hold accentuated ethical views, for example subscribers to a journal focusing on ethical issues (Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2003; Shaw et al. 2006), or samples that are likely to be untypical of the UK population as a whole (De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Joergens 2006; Niinimaki 2010). This study will provide a fresh approach, examining the attitudes and behaviours of a large sample that is more representative of the UK population.

4.3 Research approach

The research was undertaken in two main stages, encompassing four empirical studies as summarised in Figure 9. Given the complexity of the research area and the significant gaps in understanding that currently exist, the first stage of the research was conducted inductively, to identify and probe the variables that are important, and to suggest the relationships and processes that are involved. Qualitative research methods are best suited to this inductive exploratory research as they are not limited by the preconceived ideas of the researcher, and enable the subject to be probed in-depth, ensuring that all key points are identified (Creswell 2008). The ideas that emerged from this qualitative research were conceptualised and, through the use of more positivist deductive methods, the suggested relationships were tested and the importance of specific aspects in influencing purchasing decisions assessed.

Figure 9. Main stages of the research
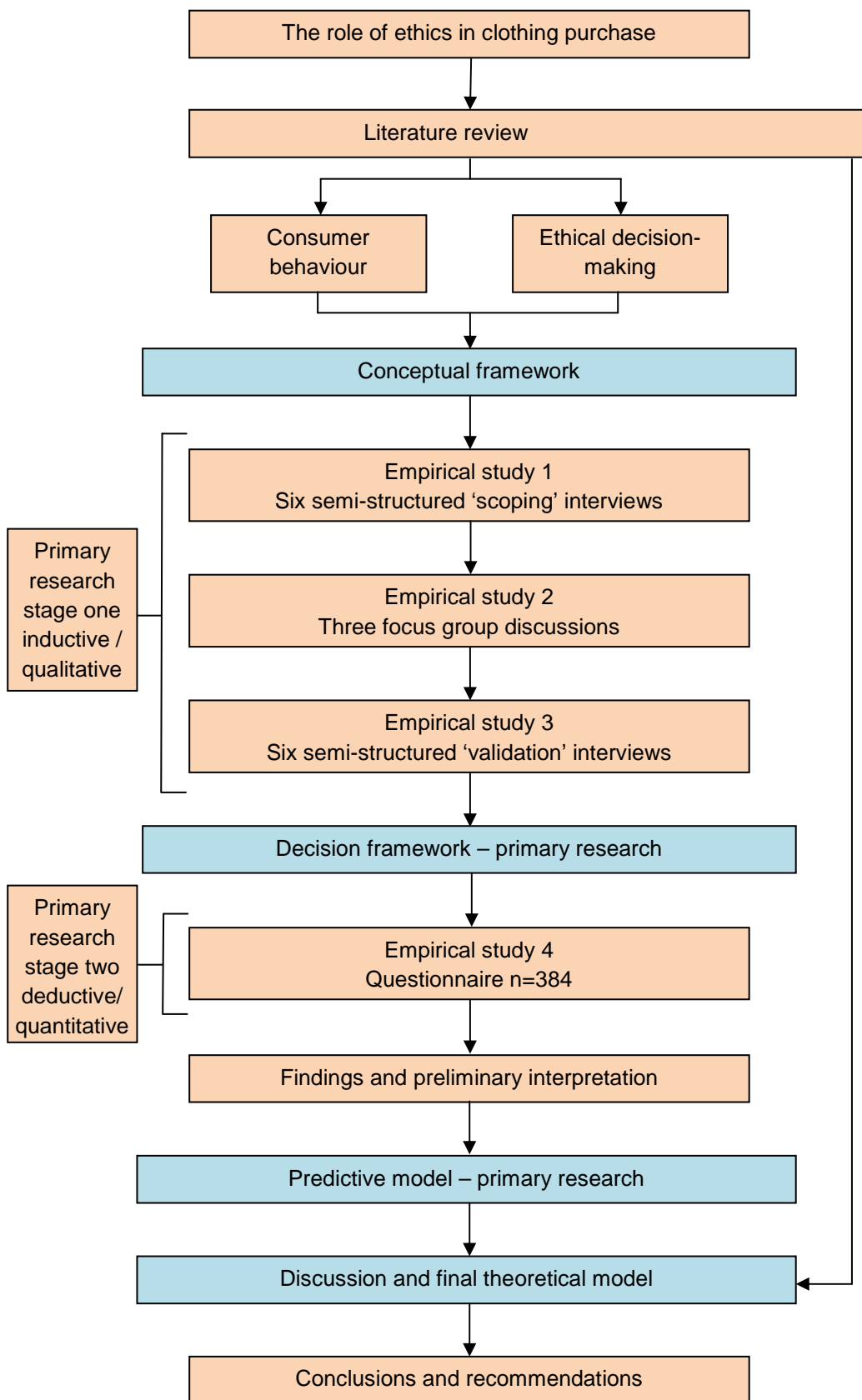
This mixed methodological approach has gained wide support in recent years, despite what many consider to be a quantitative/qualitative divide (Bryman 2008). Traditionally, two main philosophical standpoints have been taken toward research: positivism and interpretivism. Positivist ontological views hold that social observations should be treated as entities in the same way as researchers in the natural sciences treat physical phenomena. Researchers should focus on the objective measurement of phenomena through quantitative methods providing hard generalisable data. Interpretivist researchers conversely utilise qualitative research methods arguing the superiority of constructivism, idealism, relativism and humanism over research limited to quantitative explanations, attempting to research the depth of phenomena through a degree of immersion to gain greater understanding (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

The positivist and phenomenological paradigms are two extremes, points at which very few researchers operate. However, purist researchers from both perspectives advocate an incompatibility thesis (Howe 1988) which posits that qualitative and quantitative methods cannot, and should not, be mixed. Guba stated in 1990 (p. 81) that "accommodation between paradigms is impossible … we are led to vastly diverse, disparate, and totally antithetical ends".

Despite this dispute, a growing number of researchers have been conducting mixed methods research; research that mixes both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell 2008). Mixed-methods research acknowledges the usefulness of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, encouraging methodological pluralism and eclecticism to draw from the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of either individual approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Acceptance of mixed-methods research has grown to a point where even leading qualitative purists have suggested that it is possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another (Guba and Lincoln 2005). The mixed methods research design employed within the primary research is outlined in Figure 10, using the accepted notation standard (Creswell 2008).

Figure 10. Research design

Stage One - Inductive			Stage Two - Deductive
qual 6 Scoping Interviews	QUAL 3 Focus Groups	qual 6 Validation Interviews	QUAN/qual Questionnaire n-384
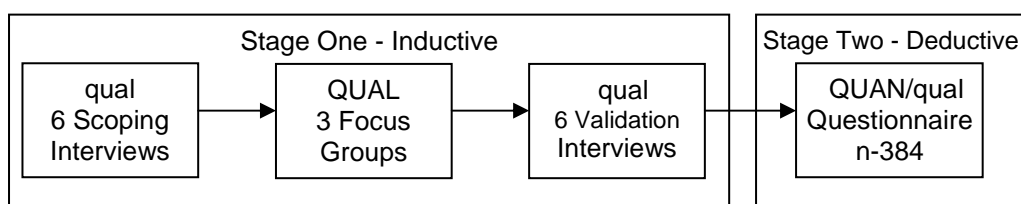
A sequential research design was employed to allow the inductive early research to inform the development of the subsequent quantitative research. While the questionnaire was largely quantitative in nature, a mixed-model approach was adopted in the questionnaire design, encouraging respondents to provide qualitative comments in a number of areas to help elaborate and explain their stated views (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Within this mixed-methods framework a pragmatic philosophical approach has been adopted to allow the benefits of each method to be fully embraced (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

4.4 Empirical study 1 – semi-structured scoping interviews

Six in-depth semi-structured interviews were initially conducted to probe consumers' awareness of ethical issues and assess their understanding of the key terms used in this regard. Further, the interviews examined consumers' knowledge of ethical clothing options and the relative importance of such factors in respondents' decision-making, providing an understanding of knowledge in this area and the likely importance of ethical factors to the industry.

The interview questioning route was inductive; however, themes that had emerged from the literature were introduced by the researcher if they were not raised by the participant to ensure that views and reactions were gained on all of the key aspects of ethical clothing choice. While some pre-determined structure was developed prior to the interviews, this structure was only loosely followed to ensure that discussions were not limited, and any ideas introduced by the interviewees that were not anticipated could be fully explored. The interview guide was discussed with a colleague not familiar with the study prior to data collection to ensure that the questioning route was clear and easily understood. A copy of the interview questioning route is presented in Appendix E.

Interviews started broadly, with participants asked to explore what the term 'ethical fashion' meant to them. From this, interviewees were asked to identify any ethical issues that they might be aware of in the fashion industry. Discussions then moved on to consider the participants' own clothing purchase decisions, probing the extent to which ethical aspects might influence their own purchasing practices. Participants were then asked if they could identify retailers with good ethical standards or poor ethical standards to gauge the level of awareness that is present in this regard before finally asking how the interviewees would seek to find out more information on retailers' ethicality.

Interviewees were not extensively briefed on the purpose of the research prior to each interview. This ensured that participants' initial responses could be gleaned, and a true representation of their thoughts as a consumer could be explored. Providing a more complex brief of the research topic would have led participants to think through the issues prior to the interview, potentially altering the responses given.

While the findings of these interviews were never intended to be generalisable, in order to ensure a representative sample, views were gained from an equal number of male and female respondents, with each of these groups being represented by one younger (20-35 years old), one middle-aged (36-55) and one older (56+) member. Within this framework respondents were sampled according to convenience through contacts who were unfamiliar with the research project. Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings, each being familiar to the participant creating a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Participants' consent was gained both before and after each interview, and their anonymity in the analysis was assured. Each interview lasted between 10 and 25 minutes (mean length 18:20 minutes) and was audio recorded. Through repeated playback and note taking, the consumers' vocabulary in this area and level of awareness became clear, and after six interviews had been conducted, theoretical saturation of the data had been achieved, meeting the aims of this study. Discussion of these issues enabled the most widely understood terminology to be identified, allowing subsequent research to be grounded in this consumer vocabulary ensuring common understanding of terms.

4.5 Empirical study 2 – focus group discussions

In order to extensively probe the area of ethical consumer behaviour, three focus group discussions were conducted, until theoretical saturation of the data had been achieved. Each group discussion was around one hour in length (mean length 62:40 minutes), and contained either seven or eight members. Focus group discussions are the most effective method to generate ideas and ensure that the subject areas are probed from a number of different angles and from different perspectives that could not necessarily have been imagined by the researcher in advance (Krueger and Casey 2009).

Two focus groups were conducted at Bournemouth University, a neutral location that was familiar and convenient to all participants, with the third being conducted at a local college that the participants attended. Each room was set up to allow all participants and the moderator to sit around one large table at the same height to create a feeling of inclusiveness and equality. The focus groups were moderated and in addition a trained observer, who was impartial to the research project, was also present. The observer monitored the group discussions to ensure that all aspects of the intended discussion guide were being addressed and to interject if they observed any group member's contribution had been missed. Additionally, the observer made notes throughout on body language, intonation and hesitation of group members, adding to the richness of the resulting discussion transcripts.

4.5.1 Social desirability bias

As discussed in Chapter 3, many previous studies have commented on the large gap that is present between consumers' reported attitudes towards ethical issues and their actual purchasing behaviour (Nicholls and Lee 2006; Chatzidakis et al. 2006; Black 2010). One of the likely reasons for this disparity between research findings and observed scanner data is thought to be the social desirability bias of the research design (Cowe and Williams 2000). The problem of social desirability bias is well covered in the literature, with Clavin and Lewis (2005 p. 185) describing the issue as an "over reporting of ethical actions by research respondents seeking to give the 'right' answer."

In order to minimise the impact of social desirability bias in this inductive research, it was necessary to not fully disclose the research topic to the participants prior to the convening of the focus groups. Participants were informed that the research was on clothing purchase behaviour, and ethical issues were only directly introduced by the researcher in the third part of the focus group in a conversational manner once the participants were comfortable with each other. It was pertinent to this research at what point, if at all, the group discussions themselves would introduce ethical considerations and whether any ethically relevant factors would be identified as attributes of clothing choice. A partially covert approach was therefore adopted.

Academics have considered at length the ethical implications of covert research, highlighting the lack of formal consent, invasion of privacy, the risks for unwilling participants and researchers and the disregard for people's right not to be studied

(Bulmer 1982). Critics of covert research hold that total honesty and the full inclusion of participants in studies are essential ideological principles of research. Pragmatists highlight the practical reasons and contextual factors of research in their justifications for employing covert methods (Lugosi 2006). Within this study the pragmatic approach suggested that it was necessary to withhold some details of the study's intent from participants in order to reduce any social desirability bias. The specific nature of the data collected was not deemed to represent a risk to the participants, and their consent was gained both pre and post data collection.

4.5.2 Focus group content and discussion guide

Prior to conducting the focus group interviews, a structured discussion guide was compiled to ensure that each focus group followed a similar format, and that the key objectives were addressed. This discussion guide was constructed in accordance with the recommendations of Krueger and Casey (2009), and the questioning route was piloted by asking the questions of three respondents in an individual interview scenario to ensure that the interventions made were easy to articulate and understand. A copy of this discussion guide and supporting explanation is presented in Appendix F.

In keeping with qualitative research principles, the moderator did not follow this discussion guide rigidly, allowing the discussion to develop freely to ensure that any emerging ideas could be adequately probed. The moderator was deliberately relaxed and conversational in his approach to ensure that discussion was free-flowing and to create an unpressured environment. Moderator involvement was kept to a minimum, allowing the group to freely discuss the issues without unnecessary intervention. Throughout the focus group discussions, special care was taken to ensure that responses were offered from all participants and that no single individual dominated the discussion; opinions were specifically solicited from any participants who appeared reticent to offer their view.

At the start of the focus group discussions, members were welcomed with tea and coffee. The nature of the discussion group was briefly introduced, stressing that there were no right or wrong answers, group members were then asked to introduce themselves and briefly identify an item of clothing that they had recently purchased. This introduction served to create a relaxed and informal environment to enable open discussion.

The main body of the focus groups was split into two sections; the first section explored the attributes of clothing choice, with the second section discussing ethical issues directly.

4.5.2.1 Attributes of clothing choice

Firstly, participants were asked to individually write down the key factors that they considered when selecting a recently purchased item of clothing. This writing task was used to ensure that each participant identified the attributes that initially came to mind for them. This served two purposes: firstly to ensure that each participant formed their own view and was able to actively contribute to the group discussion, and secondly to provide an additional source of data for analysis. Group members were given two minutes to compile their list before discussing as a group with additional attributes emerging through this discussion. This free response method ensured minimal researcher interference and provided an up-to-date list of the attributes considered by consumers. It was important that these factors were grounded in the consumers' vocabulary to ensure that they were correctly understood in the subsequent quantitative research phase, and enabled future stages in the research to explore conceptual distinctions made by the respondents rather than imposed by the researcher (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995). Any attributes that did not come out of the discussion, but had been previously identified in the literature, were prompted and discussed to ascertain whether they had simply been missed or whether they were not, in fact, important to the participants. Within this, any ethical attributes of clothing choice that had not been previously introduced by the participants were raised by the moderator in a conversational manner to glean participants' views on the importance of these considerations. Once the attributes had been identified, each group discussed the influence of and interrelationships between these factors.

4.5.2.2 Ethical issues in clothing

Moving on from a general discussion around the selection of clothing, the second part of the focus groups concentrated on potential ethical issues in the clothing industry, participants' views on these issues and their likely impact on purchase decisions. Firstly in a second short writing task, participants were asked to identify any ethical issues that they were aware of in the clothing industry. Each group then discussed the issues raised, debating whether and how they might influence their views on clothing lines and thus purchasing behaviour. The focus group discussions culminated with the participants debating their awareness of ethical clothing products on the retail high street, their

perceptions of the differing ethical standards of a variety of retailers and predictions for the future of ethical clothing.

4.5.3 Sampling

One focus group was recruited through a local college with all participants being aged 16-18 and engaged in full-time education, enabling views to be gleaned from those who may have restricted budgets, but also who may have recently been introduced to ethical dimensions within their studies. The other two focus groups comprised a broader age range of participants who were recruited on an ad-hoc basis using existing contacts that were unfamiliar with the research. In each case a broadly even gender mix was assured. Krueger and Casey (2009) suggest that, the ideal size of a focus group for most non-commercial topics is five to eight participants. In light of this, four male and four female participants were invited to each group, resulting in two groups containing seven members each, due to one invitee failing to attend each of these groups, and one group containing eight members. Within this framework, group members were selected on an ad-hoc basis using existing contacts. Due to the small overall sample size required it was not necessary to incentivise group attendance.

4.5.4 Ethical considerations for the focus groups

All focus group members provided their informed consent for participation in the research following the guidance of the Helsinki agreement (World Medical Association 2004). See Appendix G for a copy of the consent form used. In light of the partially covert approach, members were invited to request that their comments be excluded from the data at the end of the focus group, however, the topics discussed were not of a sensitive nature and all group members were comfortable to be included in the analysis.

While all participants were over the age of 16, extra consideration was afforded to the conduct of the group containing of students aged 16-18. The researcher was checked and certified by the Criminal Records Bureau, and this discussion group was held in a school classroom with the consent of appropriate school staff. The research was considered and approved by Bournemouth University's Ethics Committee.

4.5.5 Analysis

All focus groups were audio recorded and the content transcribed verbatim including, where appropriate, notes on tonality, hesitation and intonation. In addition to the discussion transcripts, completed sheets from the two written tasks were collected for analysis.

4.5.5.1 Use of QSR software

Once transcribed, the data were formatted and entered into the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package NVivo[1]. The data were coded manually within the NVivo software package. Historically, some authors have criticised the use of computer software packages for the analysis of qualitative data as there is an assumed paradigmatic clash between interpretive qualitative data being processed through what is thought to be a positivist software package (Seidel 1991; Coffey et al. 1996; Roberts and Wilson 2002). Most of the concerns that have been raised assume that the researcher will lose a holistic view of the data and exploit a number of more quantitative analytical tools that such software packages offer, however, software packages such as NVivo 7 are highly sophisticated, supporting a range of analytical approaches. These criticisms were avoided with the researcher using NVivo simply as an organisational tool to aid data sorting, retrieval and display of the transcription passages.

4.5.5.2 Thematic / template analysis

Template analysis was used as a technique to thematically organise and analyse the transcript data from the focus groups. Submersion within the data through a repetitious process of reading and rereading the transcriptions allowed the key themes (codes) to be identified and the textual data to be coded according to these emerging themes (Crabtree and Miller 1999).

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[1] NVivo version 7 from QSR International.

An initial coding frame was developed from the focus group discussion guide but remained flexible and was modified and added to as new content categories and sub-categories emerged through the reading and analysis of the data, in keeping with the inductive nature of the research. The initial coding template was discussed with the focus group observer, requiring the researcher to justify the inclusion of each code and to clearly define how it should be used, thus ensuring greatest reliability in the analysis (King 2004). Responses to the written exercises were also coded, initially on paper to establish a framework of codes. The coding frame was again discussed and defended with a researcher independent to the research and then used to recode the data using NVivo. This repetitious coding ensured the greatest accuracy and validity. Second coding demonstrated 94% coding consistency with 5 differences over a total of 81 points considered.

Both transcript data and data from the written tasks were organised according to the codes it appertained to, but not in a mutually exclusive fashion, thus some blocks of text were attributed to more than one code if they encompassed more than one theme. As the themes became clearer in the data, they were reorganised, and in some cases grouped together, to best represent the emerging findings.

Template analysis was the most appropriate analytical approach, providing a pragmatic middle ground between the rather too simplistic and straightforward content analysis, trying to derive meaning through the quantification of the data in a positivistic manner and the very contextual constructivist positions that interpret every detail and resist any form of structure that could serve to limit the possibilities of interpretation (King 1998). Given the research objectives of the focus groups, the template does not mean relying on positivist methods, but does not suggest greater complexity in the data than actually exists; rather it seeks to identify the themes and relationships that emerge, enabling the development of a decision framework of effects that can be deductively tested in the second main primary research phase.

4.6 Empirical study 3 – validation interviews

Once the focus group transcripts from empirical study two had been fully analysed, a decision framework was developed, outlining the ways in which ethical considerations may influence the consumer decision process. A total of six validation interviews were conducted to verify that the analysis had truly represented the relationships discussed

within the focus groups, and to provide any additional insights that may emerge through viewing such a depiction of the process of clothes purchasing.

The decision framework provided a structure to these interviews, with a laptop computer being used to build up this framework one stage at a time whilst eliciting the views of participants at each point of development. Six interviewees were selected according to convenience from the 22 focus group members while ensuring representation from each age and gender group. Each interview was recorded and was analysed through repeated playback and note taking. Interviews typically lasted around 15 minutes (mean length 15:17 minutes) and were conducted in a convenient location familiar to the participant.

4.7 Empirical study 4 – questionnaire

The qualitative research probed the problem area, identifying the ways in which ethical attributes may impact upon clothing choice, and providing some understanding of the importance of such influences. Understanding of the level of influence and possible interaction of these factors, however, remained incomplete. It was therefore necessary to study a larger sample to fully explore the relationships that had been proposed and to provide a measure of their importance for different groups of consumers. There is not one unified view on ethics, ethical consumption, or attributes of clothing choice (Singhapakdi et al. 1999); indeed different groups of consumers are likely to hold quite different attitudes and opinions on such issues (Dickson 2005; Doran 2009). Further it is suggested that each person may not hold a singular view, with their attitudes on such issues varying dependant on the particular item in consideration or contextual factors at the point of purchase.

To fully explore these aspects it was necessary to administer a detailed questionnaire to a random sample of the UK population to ensure responses could be gleaned from a sufficiently large cross section. The use of questionnaires also ensured that the responses were structured and organised in such a manner that they could be effectively and efficiently analysed. While it is acknowledged that the structure of a questionnaire will inevitably impose the researchers' assumptions about responses, this is appropriate, with the design of the questionnaire being driven from the inductive qualitative research findings from empirical studies 1 to 3.

The purposes of the questionnaire were to:

- further examine the role of ethics within clothing purchase behaviour, verifying or challenging the relationships suggested from the inductive research,

- assess the influence different attributes exert on clothing choice including ethically relevant attributes,

- identify differences in consumers' attitudes towards these issues,

- probe differences in purchasing behaviour between different types of clothing products.

4.7.1 Questionnaire design

The design of the questionnaire was guided by the results from the qualitative research phases that preceded it. The sequential mixed-methodological research design ensured that the survey tool was truly examining the variables and relationships identified by the consumer rather than the researcher. As such, not only the overall design of the questionnaire, but the variables examined, the ordering of questions, and the closed answer options afforded respondents were all guided by the analysis of the earlier qualitative research phases.

In order to minimise the potential effects of social desirability bias, the specific aims of the questionnaire were not clearly laid out in the instructions to respondents. It is thought that any prior prompting of potential ethical aspects in the clothing industry would have either consciously or sub-consciously affected respondents' perceptions or reported perceptions towards their clothing choices. It is not thought that this semi-covert approach had significant ethical implications as all respondents elected to return their completed questionnaires, as such their consent was given after completing the whole survey; further, the data collected was not deemed to represent any risk to the participants and was collected with anonymity.

The questionnaire was designed to fit on one sheet of A3 paper printed double sided and folded along the long edge to form a four page A4 booklet. This length of questionnaire enabled the aims to be met, whilst remaining a manageable task for respondents. A longer questionnaire is likely to have resulted in a lower rate of response due to the increased time needed to complete (Nakash et al. 2006). Specialist questionnaire

designing software package, SNAP[2], was used to format the final version of the questionnaire to ensure that it was professionally presented. A mix of horizontal and vertical format answer presentation was used as necessary to achieve the overall presentation and spacing of the questionnaire, this was deemed important in maintaining respondents' interest and engagement with the questionnaire as they were completing it.

Most of the questions invited a closed response, aiding clarity and making them less time-consuming for the respondents to complete. Further, closed questions were pre-coded, and could be efficiently processed and analysed (Simmons 2005). While it is acknowledged that closed questions constrain response, this is not considered to restrict the survey's validity as the dimensions and response categories were derived from the previous qualitative research stages and verified through pre-testing and pilot stages. Open-ended questions were added where appropriate to provide respondents the opportunity to elaborate their responses.

A range of questioning styles was used including Likert scales, with monotonic statements (Procter 2005), and importance rating dimensions. Likert scales require respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with statements (Finn et al. 2000). Since the introduction of the Likert scale in 1932, researchers have attempted to find the number of scale points which maximise reliability. Findings from these studies are often contradictory with some claiming that reliability is independent of the number of scale points, while others have maintained that reliability is maximised using seven-points, others five-points, four-points or even three-points (Philip and Hazlett 1997). In this research, five-point scales were used in the Likert questions, following the suggestions of Oppenheim (1992) with responses invited between: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither; Disagree and Strongly Disagree. While those questions employing importance scaling invited a response between 7 (very important) and 1 (unimportant), as suggested by Moser and Kalton (1971), providing scope for adequate differentiation between a range of attribute questions. Where appropriate, an additional response category of 'Not Sure' was added which, given the complexity of the research topic, provided additional useful response.

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[2] SNAP version 9 Professional from Snap Surveys.

The use of Likert scales has been criticised due to the lack of reproducibility (Openheim 1992), and evidence of unequal interval measures between categories (Sandiford and Ap 2003). It is suggested that the distance between each level of variable may not be equitable for both the researcher and respondent. Similarly, the category labels differentiating between points on the scale are unlikely to remain qualitatively constant from one item to another (Denscombe 2003). In spite of these concerns, reliability of these scales tends to be good (Oppenheim 1992).

The content of the questionnaire was structured in three main sections:

Section A: Selecting items of clothing

This first part of the questionnaire was predominantly concerned with rating the importance of various attributes of clothing choice as identified in empirical study 2 and identified in the literature. While the attributes of Fair Trade and Organic labelling were present, they were just two of a total of 23 possible attributes of choice. As such it was not clear to the respondents from this first page of the questionnaire that these attributes were of particular interest to the researcher, minimising the potential for social desirability bias. A critical incident technique was used (Flanagan 1954), asking respondents to identify an item of clothing that they had recently purchased and answer a series of questions in relation to this particular purchase. Through using reflection to a recent purchase in this way, rather than asking for a more hypothetical situation to be imagined, greater accuracy of response is likely to be achieved (East and Uncles 2008). Additionally, through answering this section of the questionnaire recalling the purchase of a specific item, the responses could be grouped and analysed according to different clothing types, how the item was likely to be used, whether the item was purchased as a gift or for a child and where the item was purchased.

Care was taken in this section of the questionnaire to not indicate that ethical dimensions were of particular interest in order to attract typical responses that had not been affected by disproportionately prompting consideration of ethical considerations.

Section B: Thinking more generally about buying clothes

Pages two and three moved beyond the questioning of a particular purchase and examined in detail attitudes and opinions specifically in relation to ethical aspects of the clothing industry and clothes purchase. Firstly, respondents were asked to rate the importance of seven potential ethical issues, the issues questioned here being those

identified by participants in the focus groups in empirical study 2. Participants were then asked if they were likely to boycott any particular products or brands. Slightly later in the questionnaire respondents were asked specifically whether they would be prepared to purchase an item of clothing containing animal fur, as the qualitative research highlighted that some consumers hold very strong views towards the use of fur in clothing lines. Comparison between responses to these three questions enabled analysis to be made on the effect of prompting of these issues.

Perceptions on Fair Trade and Organic clothing were probed, including how such attributes are likely to influence purchase decisions and feelings that the respondent is likely to have about owning and wearing particular types of clothing. This part of the questionnaire included probing the respondents' willingness to pay more for an Organic or Fair Trade item of clothing.

The final three questions in this section were still related to clothing purchase, but were used to understand the purchasing habits of the respondents and facilitate the analysis of different groups within the sample. Question 18 identified those stores that were most frequently bought from, while question 19 identified the respondents' typical volume of clothing purchase. The final question in this section asked respondents to identify which of the UK's leading clothing retailers (by value market share) they believed stocked Fair Trade clothing; each of these retailers did stock some Fair Trade clothing lines at the time of survey. Data from this question enabled responses to be grouped based upon their level of awareness of Fair Trade availability and assessing the effectiveness of individual retailers' communication of their Fair Trade ranges.

Section C: Who are you?

The final page of the questionnaire focused on gathering the characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, ethnic origin, nationality, household income and educational attainment. The response classes used in these questions followed the groupings employed in Mintel report data or the Office for National Statistics enabling the sample to be readily compared with national data or previous surveys. Additionally, whether the respondent had children, how many, and their ages was surveyed to enable any influence that children of different ages might have on perceptions and attitudes in this area. Respondents were asked to provide their contact details if they were prepared to take part in a follow-up research stage should this be necessary.

Pre-Test

Multi-stage pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted to help ensure its content was unambiguous, well understood and that the response classes provided for the closed questions were appropriate. Firstly, a convenience sample of 15 people was asked to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher providing them the opportunity to clarify or discuss any points that were not clear to them. This was an iterative process, with minor revisions being made to the questionnaire as they became apparent prior to gaining the next respondents views. Once no further modifications appeared necessary, the questionnaire was distributed to 40 existing contacts using the postal method to identify any final aspects that needed further attention. The final questionnaire is presented in Appendix H.

4.7.2 Questionnaire type

In order to meet the research aims it was necessary to gain a sample that was as representative as possible of the UK population. Given that differences in opinions and attitudes could exist in different parts of the UK, a nationwide sample was sought. The most feasible means of reaching this nationwide sample was through a self-completed postal survey. There are a number of strengths that self-completed postal surveys hold that were important to this study. Firstly, self and remotely completed questionnaires remove any effect that the researcher's presence might otherwise have exerted (Bryman 2008). This is deemed of particular importance where the subject area is likely to be vulnerable to social desirability bias with postal questionnaires being particularly well suited to these circumstances (Sudman and Bradburn 1982). Additionally, postal surveys are convenient to respondents and relatively quick and cheap to administer (Bryman 2008).

The potential limitations of self-completed postal questionnaires are also acknowledged: firstly, the inability to prompt respondents if they are unsure of the meaning of a question, or to ask for elaboration on particular answers as they occur (Bryman 2008). Extensive pre-testing and piloting of the questionnaire ensured that the questions were framed in the clearest possible way and that elaboration was explicitly sought where most useful. The second potential limitation of a self-completed postal questionnaire is that respondents can view the entire contents before answering any one part of it (Bryman 2008). This may have influenced some responses, specifically in the first section of the questionnaire, however, this effect was not found to occur in the pre-testing stage.

Finally, and possibly most significant for this research, is the relatively low response rates that postal questionnaires can receive introducing the risk of bias in the sample (Simmons 2005).

For this study, the ability to reach a nationwide sample using a remote method that removed any effect of the researcher's presence was felt to outweigh a possibly lower response rate. The alternative methods of questionnaire administration would have introduced other limitations to the sample, with electronic methods not being equally accessible to those not using the internet, and a shopping centre intercept technique inevitably placing restrictions on the geographical spread of response, and possibly also resulting in a low rate of response.

4.7.3 Sampling approach and administration

The questionnaire was distributed to a sample drawn from the Royal Mail Postal Address Finder. The Postal Address Finder is the most up-to-date and complete database of addresses in the UK containing over 28 million entries (Royal Mail 2010). Working with such a large database required a systematic approach as it was not possible to simply extract a random sample from the complete file. A list of all 2981 post code districts (denoted by the first group of numbers and letters in the postal code e.g. BH12 [Office of National Statistics 2010] was sourced [Map-Logic 2010]), and a sample of 100 were selected at random. A visual check of these 100 post code districts was made to ensure that broad national coverage had been achieved; Figure 11 highlights the locations of these sampled post code districts. Every residential address within these 100 districts was extracted from the database and a weighted sample drawn from this to form a database of 100,000 addresses. Addresses were surveyed at random from this new database.

Figure 11. Map outlining post code districts included in sample
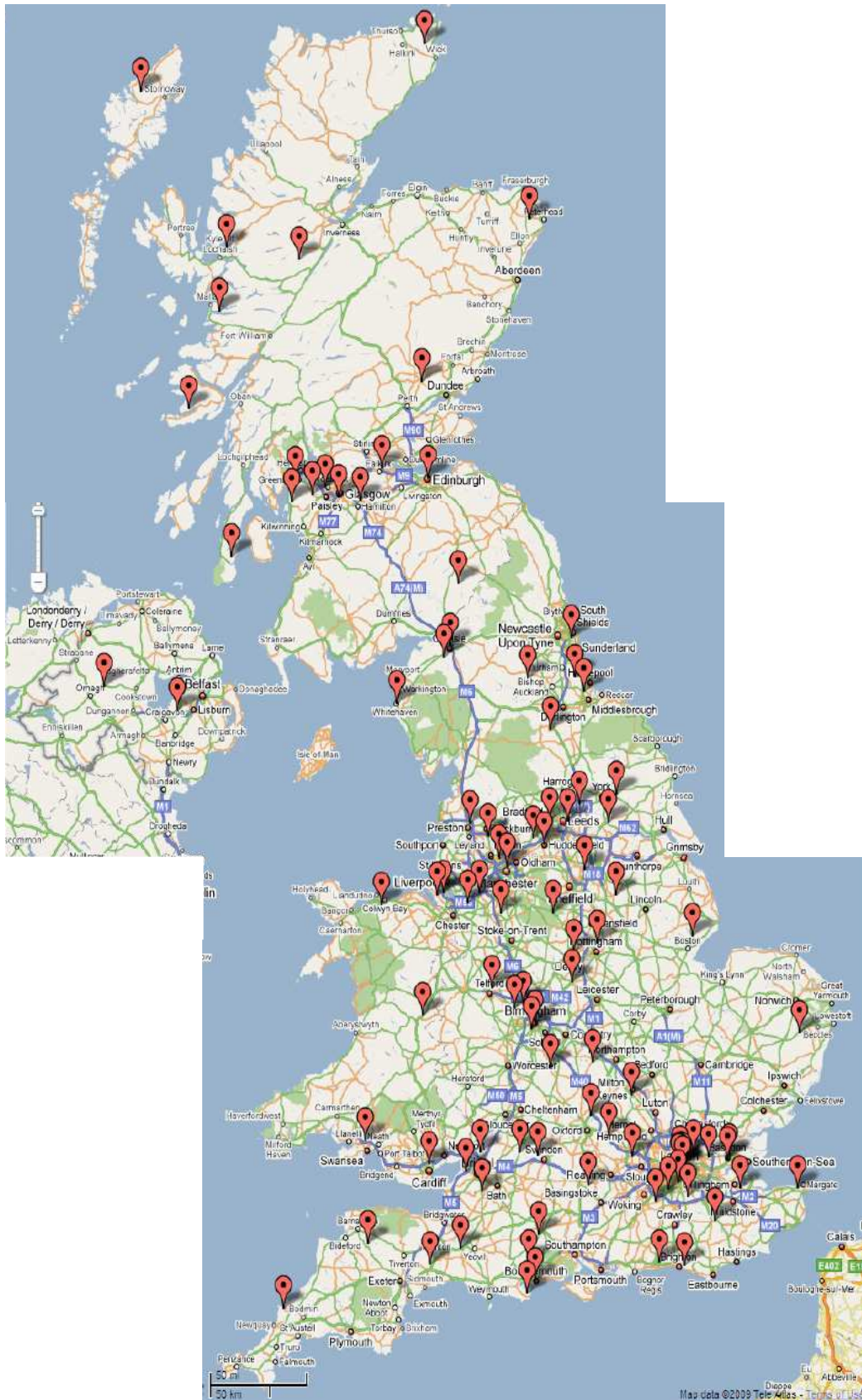
Source: Compiled with Google Maps (Google 2010)

While the Royal Mail Postal Address Finder provides the most up-to-date and reliable database of addresses, it does not include details of the residents at each address. Consequently, questionnaires were sent simply to the address rather than being personalised to a named recipient. Much research has highlighted the negative effect non-personalisation has on response rates (DeLeeuw and Hox 1988; Dillman 2007), however, available databases that contain personalisation details can be costly, out-of-date, and comprise frequently surveyed addresses, which could conversely reduce rates of response. Additionally, such databases are likely to contain biases due to their method of compilation (Dillman 2007).

Questionnaires were posted in window envelopes displaying address details on an enclosed covering letter. The covering letter was printed on Bournemouth University headed paper and briefly explained the survey and the importance of response. Contact details were provided to enable recipients to discuss the study with the researcher if they wished to do so. A copy of this cover letter can be seen in Appendix I. A pre-paid business response envelope was included in each mailing. While some research suggests that response rates are likely to be higher if a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed rather than a pre-paid business response (Lavelle et al. 2008), only postage on those surveys that are returned is paid providing a significant cost advantage by using printed business response envelopes. Most contemporary studies suggest that providing incentives does not significantly increase response rates (Hoffman et al. 1998; Nakash et al. 2006): as such, no incentive for response was offered.

Each covering letter and questionnaire had an identification number to enable the researcher to identify those addresses that had not responded, and to facilitate analysis of responses on a geographic basis. There is disagreement in the literature, with some studies reporting that the presence of an identification number will suppress return rates with respondents not wishing to be identified (Yammarino et al. 1991) and other studies demonstrating a positive effect on response from the presence of an identification number (McKee 1992; Dillman 1978). Roth and BeVier (1998) for example found that the inclusion of an identification number on questionnaires increased response rates by approximately 10%, with the authors suggesting that the expectation of reminders on non-response encourages the return of questionnaires.

4.7.4 Sample size and response rates

At the end of October 2009, an initial batch of 1000 questionnaires was posted. A total usable response of 137 (13.7%) was received. Most previous studies have found that the use of reminder letters is highly effective in generating a high response rate (De-Rada 2005; Nakash et al. 2006), with Hoffman et al. (1998) reporting a fairly typical improvement in response rate of 23% on the second mailing of their questionnaire. Some studies have found that by sending the reminder by recorded delivery, though more costly, increases this response rate improvement yet further (Tai et al. 1997), and it is suggested that sending up to three reminder follow-up letters is appropriate (De-Rada 2005). Researchers have found some minor differences in the characteristics of those responding quickly to the first mailing, and those responding only after additional prompting (De-Rada 2005), with Quintana et al. (2003) finding that early responders to his study tended to be more educated and younger than those who responded to subsequent reminders. In line with these findings, early in December a random sample of 130 non-responders were selected and a reminder letter sent along with a fresh questionnaire and return paid envelope. These reminder letters generated a total useable response of 8 (6.2%, i.e. 19.9% in total).

Given the response rates experienced to the first mailing and the reminders, each useable response from the first mailing cost £3.90, where each useable response from the reminders cost £8.09. It was decided to send out questionnaires to additional addresses in order to achieve a large enough sample to detect significant differences in attitudes between different groups within the sample, rather than to send multiple reminders resulting in a significantly smaller overall sample being gained. In this way it is acknowledged that a small bias may have been introduced to the sample, however, this effect is not thought to be significant and is similar to that which would have been experienced through alternate methods of data gathering.

With non-parametric data, calculations cannot easily be made on an initial sample to determine the necessary final sample size. Rather, estimation must be made based on the effect sizes of the statistical tests conducted (Field 2005). Cohen (1992) suggests that at an α-level of 0.05, and with a statistical power of 0.8, then 783 participants are required to detect a small effect size ($r = 0.1$), 85 participants to detect a medium effect size ($r = 0.3$) and 28 participants to detect a large effect size ($r = 0.5$) (Cohen 1992). The larger the sample size, the more findings may be reported as significant, but they may not be of substantive interest. Based upon this guidance, a total sample size in the region of

400 was sought, with this number being sufficient to conduct sub-sample analysis, but not so large that non-substantive findings may be reported as significant.

At the end of January 2010, an additional 2,000 questionnaires were mailed, resulting in a total useable response of 384. The response rates to each mailing are summarised in Table 4.

	Total sent	Returned	Response rate
Usable from initial sample	1000	137	13.7%
Usable from reminders	130	8	6.2%
Usable from second sample	2000	238	11.9%
Usable ID removed		1	
Total Usable		384	
Returned undelivered/rejected		29	
Returned unusable*		14	
Total returned	3000	424	14.1%

* In most cases this was simply as the recipient had posted the questionnaire back not completed.

Table 4. Sample compilation and response rates

4.7.5 Data analysis

While the questionnaire was formatted to facilitate automatic scanning of the data, the researcher decided to enter the data by hand as responses were gained. This data entry phase provided immersion in the data and began the process of understanding the results. The data were entered into computer software package SPSS[3], with the first stage of analysis utilising descriptive statistics.

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[3] SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 16 from IBM.

The majority of the analysis was concerned with assessing respondents' perceptions towards ethical issues within the clothing industry, the influence of such considerations in their purchasing choices and any differences that existed in attitudes and reported behaviours between different groups of respondents. These groups were formed, based on differences in shopping habits, different levels of awareness of Fair Trade lines in shops, demographic differences and, where appropriate, the type of clothing item being recalled. As the variables in the questionnaire were nominal or ordinal, the main statistical techniques used were non-parametric univariate inferential tests. Each of the surveyed variables were treated as independent to each other which has enabled clear statements to be made about how behaviours have differed between groups. It is acknowledged that there may be correlations between some of the predictor variables in the data, and where this may be intuitively the case this has been discussed in the analysis of results. The statistical analysis of the data gained has stopped short of conducting multivariate analysis, preferring to focus, at this stage in the research on the description of the observed effects.

To test the difference between more than two groups when the dependent variable was ordinal, Kruskal-Wallis test (H) was used as a preliminary step where no trend in the grouping variable is anticipated, and Jonkeere-Terpestra test (J) used where a trend is to be expected. Where an effect was found, follow-up Mann-Whitney tests (U) were conducted on paired groups in order to understand the nature of this effect. In many cases this resulted in the need to conduct a large number of Mann-Whitney tests (U) in order to probe each possible pairing; where question 23 (What is your age?) invited response in 8 different possible categories for example, a total of 28 tests ((n-1)/2) x n) would be required to exhaust every possible pairing. This does not only create a problem of workload, but increases the chance of type 1 error (Field 2005) i.e. because the tests are non-independent and their individual α probabilities add. Through conducting multiple tests on the same family of data, the probability of seeing an effect when there is not one increases, i.e. rejecting the null hypothesis incorrectly. The most common way to control for this possible effect is to apply a Bonferroni correction which involves dividing the required significance level by the number of comparisons made, i.e. in the previous example where 28 tests were required, a significance level of 0.0018 (0.05 / 28) should be applied to accept the test as statistically significant (Field 2005). Such a low α probability makes it difficult to accept any tests, i.e. the power of the test is unacceptably lowered and so grouping variables were typically binned into two or three states to require fewer paired analyses and consequently a higher significance level to be accepted.

Where appropriate, effect sizes were calculated and reported alongside the test statistic and probability. The reporting of effect sizes (r) is deemed important to provide an objective measure of the magnitude of a reported effect (Field 2005), and as such provides greater understanding than merely reporting a significant relationship, and avoids the possibility of reporting significant findings that are neither meaningful nor important but merely result from large samples (Field 2005). The effect size calculation differs according to the statistical test to which it is applied, however, the results are standardised to provide a clear and easily compared output between 0 (no effect is observed) and 1 (the effect is total). The work of Cohen (1988; 1992) is important in this area, and he has proposed widely accepted guidelines about what constitutes a large or small effect:

$$r = 0.1 \text{ (small effect)}$$
$$r = 0.3 \text{ (medium effect)}$$
$$r = 0.5 \text{ (large effect)}$$

By squaring the effect size it is possible to calculate the total variance explained by the reported effect (Field 2005). Given this guidance, findings have been reported only where they are significant ($p < 0.05$), and substantive ($r > 0.1$). Where findings are reported as being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), the convention that there is sufficient evidence to reject the Null hypothesis of no effect is followed. There remains a 5% chance that the statistical test may report an effect through chance, however, the use of a 95% probability threshold is commonplace in research of this nature (Field 2005), and allied to the reporting of effect size provides a suitably robust approach.

In the analysis of binary dependent variables (two state), Chi-Squared (χ^2) cross tabulation was conducted to assess the difference between groups, with Cramer's V being the appropriate effect size measure. Where the grouping variable was also two state (i.e. a 2 x 2 analysis), then a Fishers Exact (FE) test was used, with Phi (φ) being reported as the appropriate effect size measure. In each of these cases the effect size output is automatically generated by SPSS when calculating the test statistic.

In order to understand how different attributes of clothing choice outlined in question five interact with each other, Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted. Factor analysis is a technique used for data reduction without losing the information initially provided, and identifies those variables that are most closely loaded together on new factors (Punch 2003). Prior to this analysis, the small number of missing values that questionnaires had on any of the 23 items in question five were imputed with the mean value for that variable.

Through this process no bias was introduced, the missing values simply being replaced by a neutral value that enabled all of the cases useful data to be included. This enabled analysis of the full 384 cases rather than just the 257 cases that did not contain any missing values. Hierarchical cluster analysis using block metric (Field 2005) was used to independently verify the identified factors.

Open-ended questions did not form a large part of the questionnaire data, however responses to those questions that did invite a qualitative elaboration were grouped by emergent themes and coded, facilitating their better collective analysis.

4.8 Validity, reliability and generalisability

Through adopting a mixed methods approach, the early qualitative studies helped to ensure the validity of the final quantitative survey in a number of ways. Firstly, it enabled the survey and its questioning to be grounded in the consumers' own vocabulary, minimising any cause for confusion or misunderstanding (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995). Secondly, the relationships and factors examined in the questionnaire are those that had inductively emerged from the qualitative research, providing confidence that the most relevant considerations are in fact being measured.

There is some debate into the reliability of scaling questions or even surveys at large. Gillham (2005), for example, suggests that individuals' interpretation of scale questions may differ dramatically, with the meaning of response being different from one respondent to another, while Devinney et al. (2010) assert that the context of a survey is meaningless to the context of purchasing rendering surveys on consumption behaviour meaningless. Nevertheless, carefully designed surveys have become widely accepted and used within social science research. The questionnaire used here has been designed carefully to minimise the likelihood of different interpretations, and the use of regression to an actual recent purchase is likely to result in greater accuracy of response (East and Uncles 2008). Where this study differs from previous research in this area is through drawing its sample randomly from the UK population as a whole. In so doing, it is possible to have greater confidence that any findings can be generalised to the nation's shoppers as a whole.

Chapter 5: Results and preliminary interpretation

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the findings from the primary research which incorporated the qualitative phases of the study (empirical studies one, two and three), and the quantitative survey (empirical study four). Initially, the findings from the qualitative research are discussed and preliminarily interpreted, and the key elements and relationships are distilled into a decision framework (Figure 14). The chapter then progresses to present the results from empirical study 4, the quantitative questionnaire, the key findings of which are summarised in a predictive model (Figure 26).

5.2 Empirical study 1 – scoping interviews

There was a wide diversity of response from the six scoping interviews, with interviewees having very different levels of knowledge regarding the ethical issues in the clothing industry and different attitudes toward them. While some respondents were very receptive to Organic or Fair Trade items, others were less concerned and two interviewees were sceptical about such claims, believing that they might be made simply to increase the profit margin of the item.

Respondents were not briefed on the specific topic of discussion prior to the interviews, and when asked what ethical fashion meant to them, all respondents were hesitant and took some time to identify any contributing factors. Firstly, the term fashion was interpreted differently by each respondent and did not seem universally clear, analysis of this suggests that the clearer term of clothing should be used in subsequent studies. Secondly, through discussion it appeared that the concept of ethics in the fashion industry was not well known or considered by respondents. Despite this, once respondents had identified some ethical aspects, all had opinions in the area and were aware of a range of potential ethical issues in the supply of clothing. This preliminary scoping exercise was useful in identifying the issues that participants perceived, and to explore the terminology they used to articulate the concerns raised. The key terms used are presented in Table 5 and serve to inform the subsequent stages of the research.

Exploitation of workers
Sweatshops
Copycat designs
Counterfeit items
Size zero models used
Use of fur for clothing

Table 5. Ethical issues identified in the initial scoping interviews

All respondents suggested that ethically relevant issues would perform, at best, a secondary role in the selection of goods, with aspects such as how well an item fitted or the price of the item being more influential. While describing their own clothing purchases, a number of respondents appeared guilty that they did not consider more fully ethical aspects, one typical such comment being: "sadly I don't really consider it; I know I should though" (Female, aged 52). This feeling was, however, not universal, with other respondents expressing feelings of futility suggesting that their purchasing could not change the acknowledged ethical challenges. One respondent stated that he would be actively discouraged from purchasing an item that was branded ethical, with either Organic or Fair Trade ticketing, feeling that these aspects "would make them seem hippyish" (Male, aged 30). Notwithstanding this, all other respondents were interested in the ethical aspects and would welcome further product information in stores and on products to enable them to make more educated choices. Currently any awareness of the ethical issues in clothing had come from the limited media coverage of these matters.

Given that each respondent was aware of some ethical issues within the clothing industry, but that these aspects were not immediately identified, it was important that the subsequent research stage was qualitative in nature, allowing the depth of the issues to be fully probed to really understand the profundity of the processes and relationships at play. Further, through analysis of the interviews, a number of respondents felt they should consider ethical aspects more fully. The direct discussion around ethical aspects may have been vulnerable to social desirability bias. The fact that some respondents appeared slightly inhibited, discussing these issues could imply that they understand some of the aspects and feel it is socially desirable to care about them.   As a consequence of this potential for bias, and in order to generate the most valid data, a semi-covert approach was adopted in the design of the focus group discussions.

5.3 Empirical study 2 – focus groups

From the focus groups, important themes emerged in the two main areas of examination, namely the attributes of clothing purchase and the influence of ethical aspects. Following the discussion of the key findings, a decision framework is presented that synthesises the main aspects into a depiction of the consumer decision process, highlighting the process and relationships between factors.

5.3.1 Attributes of clothing choice

Each focus group participant initially identified 3-9 attributes they considered when making a recent clothing purchase; however, through discussion, more factors were quickly identified. While it proved straightforward to compile a long list of attributes, their meaning was sometimes ambiguous, comfort meaning physical comfort to one participant and social comfort to another for example. The relative importance of individual factors appeared to vary depending on individual preferences, the specific item of clothing being discussed and the situation in which the item is likely to be used. The attributes of clothing choice identified are summarised in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Summary of the attributes of clothing choice identified through focus group discussions

Cosmetic factors
- Brand ——————————— Logo
- Colour
- Social comfort ——————— Statement
- How it looks on you / Whether it suited you
- Image
- Individualism / Exclusivity
- Style
  - Pattern
  - Plainness
  - Fit
- New to season
- Reputation of store selling
- Age appropriateness

Practical considerations
- Price ——————————— Value for money
- Quality
  - How long it lasts
  - Finish
  - Durability
  - Brand
  - Fabric
  - Reputation of store selling
  - Detailing of the item
- After sales care
- How easy it is to wash
- Is it really needed?

Advice from peers

Usability
- Flexibility
- How many times it will be worn
- Usefulness
- Warmth
- What it could be worn with
- What else is needed to go with it
- Suitability for intended occasion / purpose

Physical factors
- Comfort ——————————— Texture of fabric
- Fit

Ethical considerations
- Country of origin
- Fair Trade
- Low price
- Organic

When purchasing clothing, respondents described a process through which a set of decision rules were used to quickly eliminate certain products. Other participants described a filtering process, with only a small range of items being fully considered, other items available being ruled out quickly due to the early assessment of one or two key attributes. A number of participants suggested that the price of the item would perform this filtering role, with one typical comment being:

> …before you go shopping you set yourself a limit I would say. If I'm going out for, let's say a top, or a pair of trousers I'd think well, top's going to cost me £40/£50; a pair of trousers the same, so you start then to look within, you start to be channelled to outlets.

(Female, aged 53)

This use of price as an initial filtering attribute was not universally adopted, however, with another member responding; "I don't look at the cost first, I just buy on a whim" (Female, aged 47). Other contributors reported that their existing knowledge of product and retail brands would enable them to quickly identify particular stores likely to hold interesting products. It was identified that this knowledge of brands would come from previous purchases, external communications such as advertising and word of mouth from friends and family. Even if the price of an item was an overriding concern, participants described a process whereby they would only look in stores that, based upon this prior knowledge, would have suitably priced items. The role of store brand went further for some, with group members suggesting that in chosen stores they would make no further assessment of price, quality, or even the fashionability of specific products viewed, the store brand serving as a mental shortcut for each of these attributes.

5.3.2 Ethical issues in clothing

None of the focus group participants identified any ethically relevant attributes in the free response writing task, indicating that such factors do not play a dominant role in decision-making. Only in one focus group were any ethical considerations introduced to the discussion without prompting by the moderator, with one participant stating: "…some people actually also, umm, look where the product was made; if it was made in, let's say, Cambodia they wouldn't buy it because of the cheap labour" (Female, aged 28).

It is of interest that the respondent saying this did so cautiously, and said it in the third person, not claiming that it would affect her own decisions. Once this point had been made, discussion centred on the sourcing of clothing and potential issues surrounding the

low prices of some clothing for just over two minutes. Other participants expressed concerns about the perceived conditions under which clothing was manufactured, with one member stating: "… it kind of freaks me out that it's that cheap, so I wonder what's going on in the production line there, who's being stiffed basically to make it so cheap" (Female, aged 26).

In this short discussion, specific clothing discount stores were identified and discussed, with the low retail prices being seen by many as an indicator of questionable labour standards throughout the supply chain. After discussing these ethical issues, one participant outlined cautiously that another attribute, price in this case, was more important to her, overriding any ethical concerns she might have: "… I feel guilty when I buy cheap things, but the trouble is, for me, umm, trying to save my money outweighs the guilt, if you see what I mean" (Female, aged 19).

Only a small number of ethical attributes were identified while discussing clothing purchase, and the limited discussion engaged only four participants. Despite this, when asked to individually identify any ethical issues in the clothing industry, most contributors noted four to six points, with one member identifying 8 points and just one person being unable to identify any, demonstrating wide awareness of such issues. There was no discernable pattern in response due to differences of age or gender. The factors identified are presented in Figure 13, with identification of the number of similar responses.

Figure 13. Template of ethical issues identified in the clothing industry

```
Animal rights (5) ─────────┬─ Animal testing
                           └─ Animal cruelty ──────┬─ Fur
                                                   └─ Leather

Exploitation of workers (63) ─┬─ Fair Trade ──────────── Retailer demands
                              ├─ Child labour
                              │                      ┌─ Working conditions
                              │                      ├─ Treatment of workers
                              ├─ Sweatshops ─────────┼─ Unfair labour
                              │                      ├─ Health and safety
                              │                      └─ Long hours of work
                              ├─ Cheap labour
                              └─ Cotton farmers ─────┬─ Long hours of work
                                                     └─ Unsafe working conditions

Sustainability (14) ─────────┬─ Transport / Airmiles ─── Local production
                             ├─ Materials ─────────┬─ Pesticide use
                             │                     └─ Organic cotton
                             └─ Carbon footprint
```

(Numbers indicate frequency of similar responses)

Few contributors highlighted factors concerning animal rights, however, those who did identify issues in this area felt very strongly about them. In discussing this, one participant stated that she would boycott any item containing animal fur due to the perceived poor standards of animal husbandry within the fur trade, illustrating for this consumer how an ethical factor acted as a decision rule early in the assessment of items.

It was those factors concerning the exploitation of workers that commanded the greatest attention. Most of the issues raised within this grouping are clearly understood. Of the points raised, participants used differing terminologies and described their points to varying levels of detail: where one participant may have written simply sweatshops, others attempted to outline the specific problems implied by this term, making any mathematical analysis of responses difficult. Three contributors included Fair Trade within their list of ethical issues; however, through discussion it became clear that Fair Trade was viewed as a solution to the perceived unfairness of current trading relationships. Retailer actions were specifically mentioned in relation to this with a number of participants believing that large retailers exert undue pressure on suppliers, and in turn manufacturers and ultimately factory workers, in a search for lower prices. As such, for some members, retailer demands represented the ultimate cause of many of the other issues raised. However, despite identifying this concern, most participants displayed feelings of futility, feeling that the issues were so universal that there was little they could do as individuals to alleviate these concerns. While points relating to sustainability were identified, in discussion members found it difficult to pin-point factors in

this area that related specifically to the clothing industry. Issues surrounding counterfeit goods, copy cat designs and the use of size zero models, previously identified in empirical study one, were not raised by any participant in the focus group discussions implying that they are not significant considerations when selecting clothing lines.

It was commonly thought that when choosing between clothing lines, items were assessed against those attributes that directly impacted on the consumer, and that any ethical issues, being largely vicarious in nature, were not considered during this evaluation at all. Despite this, most participants expressed a preference for ethically positive or benign products, with a number of participants suggesting that they would be keen to purchase an ethical alternative if one were available, but only if it did not require them to compromise on other attributes. This view was shared by a number of participants:

> If there was the option of two products the same price, sort of, I probably would choose the, urr, even if it's a Fair Trade product, sort of choose the more ethical one out of the two. If it looks the same and I like it just as much.

(Male, aged 17)

Other members stated that they would be willing to pay a slightly higher price for an ethical alternative, but again would firstly select the item that they liked the most and would be unlikely to reject this for an ethical alternative if they did not like the ethical item as much. A number of group members expressed that the extent to which ethical factors would influence purchases depended on the presence of attractive alternatives, clear labelling of the product outlining its provenance and knowledge of the ethical issues in the first place. Most group members did not feel that sufficient information was available on ethical standards at the point of purchase and were keen to receive more information outlining a product's provenance to enable more informed decisions to be made. For some, there was a clear sense of frustration, where they would like to purchase more ethically but did not perceive there to be enough suitable alternatives available on the high street:

> I think it's because we can't help it, everywhere's like it so what are we meant to do? They've all got Fair Trade clothes but there's not a huge range is there, what are we meant to do really?

(Male, aged 17)

Similarly, in some cases participants did not feel that by changing their own purchasing behaviour it would have any tangible effect on the overall issues within the industry: "If there's a boycott then it's a bit different, but one person… is not going to change the world" (Male, aged 17).

Despite this perceived lack of information, most participants were comfortable identifying retailers that they thought operated with higher or lower ethical standards, with these assessments being based largely on media exposure and the retail prices charged. With regard to individual items of clothing, the country of origin was seen as a key indicator to the likely ethics in its production, demonstrating a clear preference for items produced in developed countries. However, all groups suggested that it would be difficult to assess the ethicality of individual items of clothing. With the plethora of potential ethical issues in the clothing industry, Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification were the two claims most widely understood and appreciated by participants as a means to identify clothing that had been ethically sourced.

5.3.3 Decision framework development

When asked to identify the attributes of clothing used to select items, no participant identified any ethically relevant factors. Despite this, through the discussion groups it became clear that participants had a good level of awareness of potential ethical issues in the clothing supply chain, and had a clear preference toward the purchase of ethical alternatives where these were available and did not require compromise in other areas such as the look of the item. Further, some respondents described feelings of guilt when outlining that their own purchasing may be directed towards ethically questionable products. These aspects all indicate that ethically positive or benign products may be favoured by the consumer and that ethical aspects can exert influence on clothes purchasing decisions. It is, however, clear that any such influence is secondary for most consumers.

While the focus group discussions were broad and varied, it emerged that ethical factors can influence the consumption process in three specific ways. These emerged as the critical points within the decision-making process that ethical aspects may be considered, labelled here as:

1. Ethical Red Line,
2. Ethical Clouding,
3. Post-purchase satisfaction.

5.3.3.1 Ethical red line

Early in the process of selection, some consumers will boycott selected items based on a small number of ethically relevant factors. For one focus group member, a critical decision point such as this was reached with the boycott of items using fur. While the use of fur was the most readily recalled example of this effect, other participants more generally stated that "everyone's got their own line that they won't want to cross" (Female, aged 19), suggesting that for a number of consumers, products could be ruled out if the perceived ethics of the item were strongly dissonant to their own beliefs. Discussion demonstrated that this ethical red line was relevant to both the selection of particular outlets and individual items.

5.3.3.2 Ethical clouding

With no respondent identifying any ethically relevant factors when recalling the attributes they have recently used to select clothing lines, it could be assumed that such factors hold no significance in purchasing. However, discussions demonstrated that the lists of attributes identified by respondents were incomplete, and that they were only able to recall initially a small proportion of the total influences. As those factors identified in the first writing task were the most readily recalled, they may have been the most important or influential in the purchase. Even though the evaluative content of clothing purchase was discussed in each focus group at length, with such a wide number of factors influencing decisions it would not be realistic to expect every possible attribute of choice to be identified. One focus group, for example, did not initially identify the colour of the item as influencing clothing purchase decisions, whereas it was the first attribute to be outlined by another group. Further, we may not be conscious of all the factors that contribute to our final decision; many factors may influence us in a purely subconscious manner.

Given this, it would be unwise to discount the possibility that ethical attributes may play a role in the evaluation of alternatives. However, discussions intimated that such considerations are not influential in the consumer reaching a preliminary choice. Once such a preliminary choice has been made, the preference for ethically positive or benign products expressed by participants may then influence the likelihood of purchase, or sway a decision, should the consumer be undecided between two or more similarly attractive items. This effect has been labelled here as 'Ethical Clouding', as it is a layer

within the decision-making process that may cloud preliminary choices in either a positive or negative light influencing the final purchase decision.

It became clear from the focus group discussions that the importance of product attributes varies dependent on the item of clothing being sought. However, given that ethical assessments pertain to fixed principles detached from the item considered, it is likely that any influence of ethical indicators will be constant, irrespective of the specific item being examined. Thus for some items the influence of ethical attributes is sufficiently prevalent to direct purchasing, whereas for other items the same scale of influence may not be sufficient to differentially affect decisions due to strong preferences on other attributes. For example, once shoppers have preliminarily selected suitable socks, they may not have a strong preference between the shortlisted options, rendering the fixed influence of ethical principles sufficient to make a decisive impact on choice. If this same shopper then searches for a new suit, the attributes used in its selection are likely to differ, the fit and look of the item may become far more important, leading to the shopper having a preference great enough to render the influence of ethical principles insufficient to impact on the choice made. This might go some way to explain why ethically labelled clothing lines are often basic items, such as undergarments, where a smaller range of attributes are considered important, leaving more potential influence to the constant, though minor in most cases, influence of ethics.

5.3.3.3 Post-purchase reflection

A preference towards ethically labelled products was discussed in all focus groups, and in some cases members described feelings of guilt when purchasing items that they felt might have been produced in an unethical manner. Given this, it is probable that an item of clothing labelled as Fair Trade or Organic would engender positive feelings in the consumer when using the product, with the converse applying if there were any negative ethical indicators. Although not articulated by the focus group participants, it is thought that the resulting post-purchase reflection may influence future purchase decisions and the importance afforded to these factors.

5.3.3.4 Individual and situational differences

In the search for clothing items, the importance of particular product attributes varied greatly between participants. This variation may be explained by personality differences

and may be a consequence of differing purchase contexts or situations. A casual item, for example, may be selected according to different criteria than those of a smart item. Other situational factors may also influence this process, for example, the perceived or actual wealth of the individual when shopping or their mood at the time. While it is not possible to draw any fixed conclusions about such individual or contextual differences from the focus group data, the differences observed here do serve to highlight these variables which require further quantitative examination.
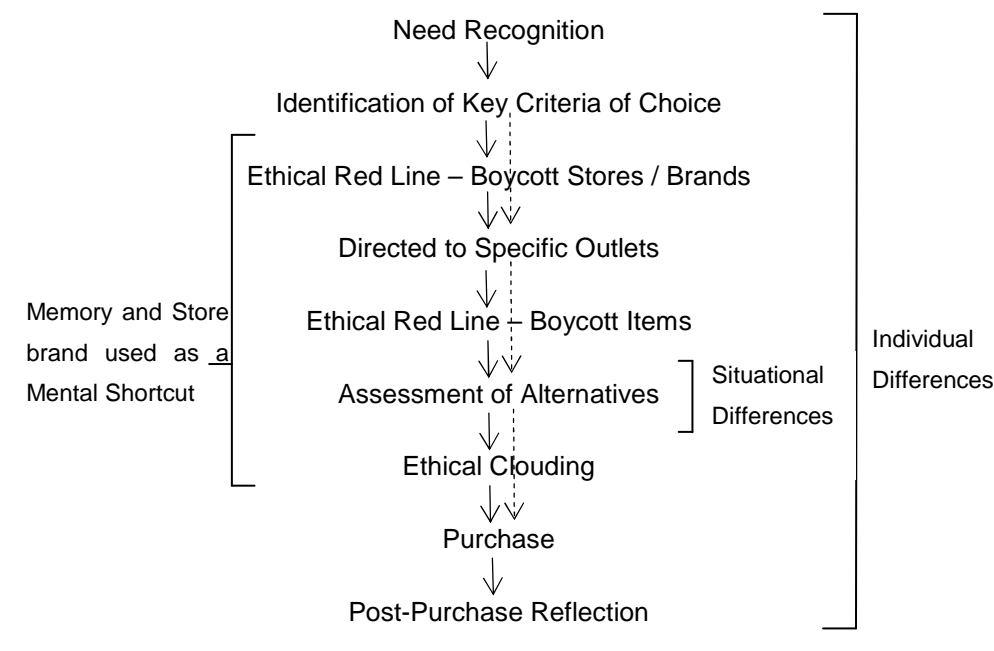
5.3.3.5 Memory and store brand

The inductive research found that consumers use their existing knowledge of the store brands on the high street to guide their search for items, using store brand as a mental shortcut, informing likely price, quality and style of the goods contained within. Participants also appeared comfortable using the store brand to indicate the ethical standards likely to be present throughout the supply chain, with some participants recalling negative media attention directed toward some retailers, and more positive marketing messages communicated by others. Some group members identified fashion discount brands as having particularly questionable ethical standards and suggested that this view came from both negative media coverage that these retailers had received, but also simply from questioning the ultra low retail prices of their products, using this low price positioning to indicate possible poor ethical standards within the supply chain.

Figure 14 presents a decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour which summarises the effects discussed in this section. At first glance it appears that this framework infers a strict and formalised process, however, the individual and situational differences introduce the flexibility to account for passage through the stages at different speeds and affording differing depths of engagement at the various stages. Additionally, many aspects may be accomplished without conscious thought, the selection of key stores, for example, may not be thought about, rather a result of habits formed through previous experiences. Dashed lines have been used to make clear that the ethical influence exerted at this point is variable dependant on the individuals' personality and moral views, and acknowledges that for some consumers no obvious effect may be apparent.

Figure 14. Decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour

Need Recognition

↓

Identification of Key Criteria of Choice

↓

Ethical Red Line – Boycott Stores / Brands

↓↓

Directed to Specific Outlets

↓

Ethical Red Line – Boycott Items

↓↓

Memory and Store brand used as *a* Mental Shortcut

Assessment of Alternatives

Situational Differences

Individual Differences

↓

Ethical Clouding

↓↓

Purchase

↓

Post-Purchase Reflection

5.4 Empirical study 3 – validation interviews

Each of the six validation interviewees felt that the decision framework (Figure 14) provided an accurate depiction of their own clothes purchasing, with all the key stages gleaning support. Discussions added some further insights into the process and are discussed below.

The specific boycott of certain products (labelled here as 'Ethical Red Line') was only originally introduced by one focus group member, and when discussed in the validation interviews not all respondents immediately recognised any impact that it could have on their purchasing. Once the example of purchasing fur was introduced, however, all interviewees stated that they would not purchase fur items on ethical grounds, indicating that this stage is widely relevant even if it is not immediately recognised by the consumer. Some ethically relevant issues, like the boycotting of fur, may have become so embedded into consumers' decision-making that it is no longer afforded conscious thought, demonstrating the complexity and concealed nature of some of the effects on our behaviour in this area.

When discussing the possible 'Ethical Clouding' of items, all interviewees agreed with the assertion that products would initially be selected according to those attributes that directly affected them, with ethical aspects only being considered once a preliminary choice had been made. In one interview the example of socks was used:

> I'd firstly look for those that were black, the right size, within my price range, and made of cotton, then if one type were Fair Trade, I'd probably take those.

(Female, aged 29)

This view is supported by many comments in the focus group discussions and each of the validation interviews where respondents were keen and enthusiastic to consume ethically, but were unprepared to compromise on attributes, such as colour, style and fit that negatively affected the product's usage or appearance.

All interviewees did concur that they were more likely to feel good owning and wearing ethical items, with a typical comment being: "You feel satisfied; yes, I think that you fulfil yourself; feel like you're helping" (Female, aged 28). Three interviewees added that this effect is likely to decay over time, with comments such as: "Once you've worn it 4 or 5 times you kinda forget" (Male, aged 32).

One common theme that was introduced was the need for greater information to be provided on the ethicality of particular clothing lines, and for ethical choices to be clearly labelled as such to enable informed decisions to be made. One respondent stated a clear preference for ethical lines to be grouped together within a store, as the greater attraction of many items together would encourage them to look through this range, making purchase more likely than if these products were spread throughout the store.

5.5 Empirical study 4 – quantitative survey

5.5.1 Characteristics of the sample

The characteristics of the sample is summarised in Table 6.

Characteristic	Percentage of sample
Sex	
Female	76
Male	24
Age	
Under 16	1
16-24	7
25-34	14
35-44	16
45-54	21
55-64	21
65-74	11
75 and over	9
Household income	
Less than £15,000	21
£15,000 - £19,999	12
£20,000 - £29,999	20
£30,000 - £39,999	13
£40,000 - £49,999	9
Greater than £50,000	18
Missing	8
Highest academic qualification	
No academic qualifications	11
GCSE (Grades D-G) or equivalent	1
GCSE (Grade C or above) or equivalent	16
A level or equivalent	22
First degree (undergraduate)	23
Master's degree or above	10
Missing	16

Table 6. Characteristics of the sample (n=384)

Whilst the sample included adequate representation of each adult age group, it can be seen that older groups were overrepresented and younger groups underrepresented in comparison to the UK population as a whole (Office for National Statistics 2001a) as highlighted in Figure 15.   There was also an overrepresentation of female response (76%) against the UK rate of 51% (Office for National Statistics 2001a), though the sample size of male respondents is large enough (94) to conduct comparisons. This bias in the sample is not uncommon on surveys into shopping habits (Wharton 2007) and is not dissimilar to the imbalance in clothing purchase, with women purchasing some 66% of all clothes sold in the UK (Mintel 2009; Mintel 2010). The income profile of the sample

closely matches that of the population (Office for National Statistics 2008), although the sample has a higher representation of graduates, with 33% in the sample holding a first degree or higher qualification compared to 20% in the 2001 census data (Office for National Statistics 2001b). The vast majority of respondents were of a white ethnic origin and UK nationals, with insufficient response in other categories to enable analysis on these variables.

*Figure 15. Age profile of sample compared with the UK population*
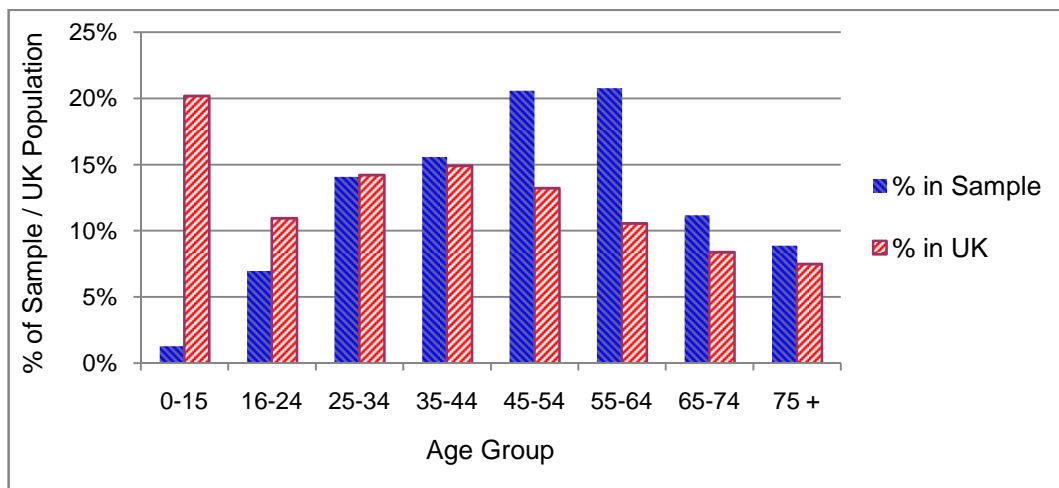
Source: Office for National Statistics 2001a

The results from the quantitative survey will be outlined below, firstly presenting findings into the relative importance of ethical attributes of choice before following the structure of the decision framework (Figure 14) to examine respondents' behaviour and attitudes in relation to the boycotting of particular products and brands, the influence and perception of Organic and Fair Trade lines (ethical clouding), and post-purchase reflection on such purchases. Each section will be annotated, highlighting the relevant stage in the decision framework.

5.5.2 Attributes of clothing choice

Figure 16. Decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour – identification of key criteria of choice
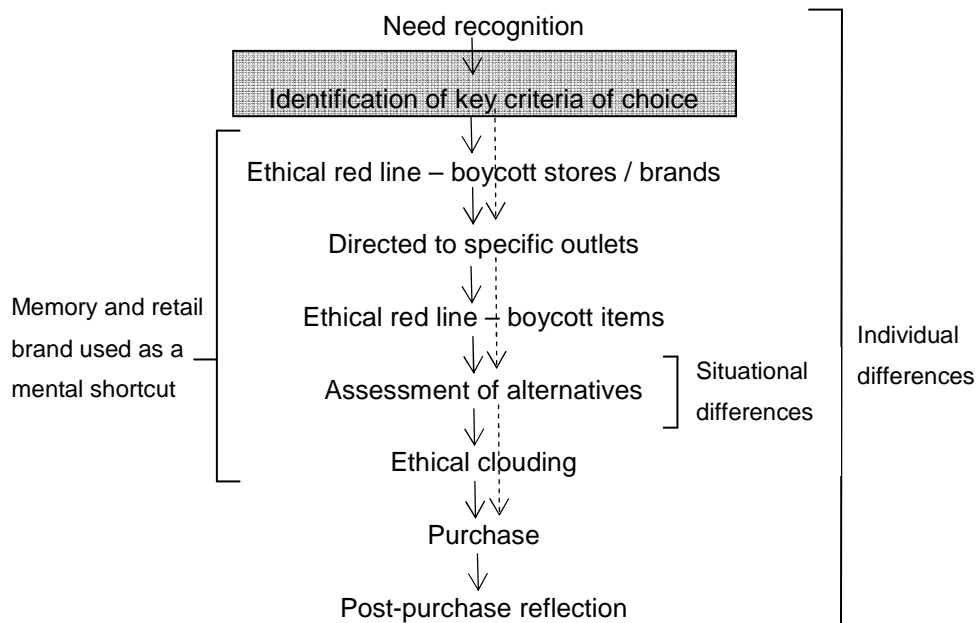
This section will outline the reported importance of different attributes of clothing choice, assessing the relative position of ethical aspects and how these considerations interact with other attributes of choice. Any notable changes in the relative importance of attributes between different groups of respondents will be explored.

When asked to rate how important a range of attributes were in a recent clothing purchase, respondents identified the fit and look of the item to be of greatest importance, with comfort, style, quality and price also leading concerns. Ethical factors listed were less important: Fair Trade considerations being only 16th most important overall, when the attributes are ordered by mean score, and the use of Organically certified materials the 22nd most important influence on respondents' clothing choice as identified in Table 7.

| Rank	Attribute of clothing choice	Mean importance* (standard deviation)
1	How well fitted	6.53 (±0.80)
2	Looked when tried on	6.20 (±1.18)
3	Comfort	6.06 (±1.16)
4	Style	5.99 (±1.13)
5	Quality	5.89 (±1.12)
6	Appeared good value	5.71 (±1.30)
7	The colour	5.71 (±1.40)
8	Good value	5.33 (±1.58)
9	How item would coordinate with wardrobe	5.27 (±1.71)
10	Materials it was made from	4.95 (±1.71)
11	How often it would be worn	4.93 (±1.74)
12	Low price	4.76 (±1.71)
13	Washable	4.71 (±2.01)
14	Customer service	4.33 (±1.80)
15	Price reduced	3.77 (±2.20)
16	Fair Trade	3.18 (±1.77)
17	Store it was stocked in	2.87 (±1.86)
18	Brand	2.81 (±1.86)
19	Exclusivity	2.79 (±1.94)
20	Advice from family and friends	2.73 (±1.75)
21	Country of manufacture	2.46 (±1.73)
22	Organically certified materials	2.45 (±1.61)
23	Designer label	2.18 (±1.58)

* Rated on a scale between 1 (unimportant) and 7 (extremely important)

n=384

Table 7. Mean importance of attributes of clothing choice

While Fair Trade and Organic considerations were not the most important factors for the sample as a whole, there were a considerable number of respondents to whom these factors were of great importance. The full variation of response to these two variables can be seen in Figure 17, which shows that for 74 respondents (22%) whether the item was made in accordance to Fair Trade principles was given an importance level of 5 to 7 (where 7 was the maximum level of importance possible). Whether the item was made from Organically certified materials, however, appears to be of less concern with not only a lower mean score, but with fewer respondents, 43 (12%), affording it an importance level of 5 to 7.

Figure 17. Respondents' importance rating of Organic and Fair Trade attributes
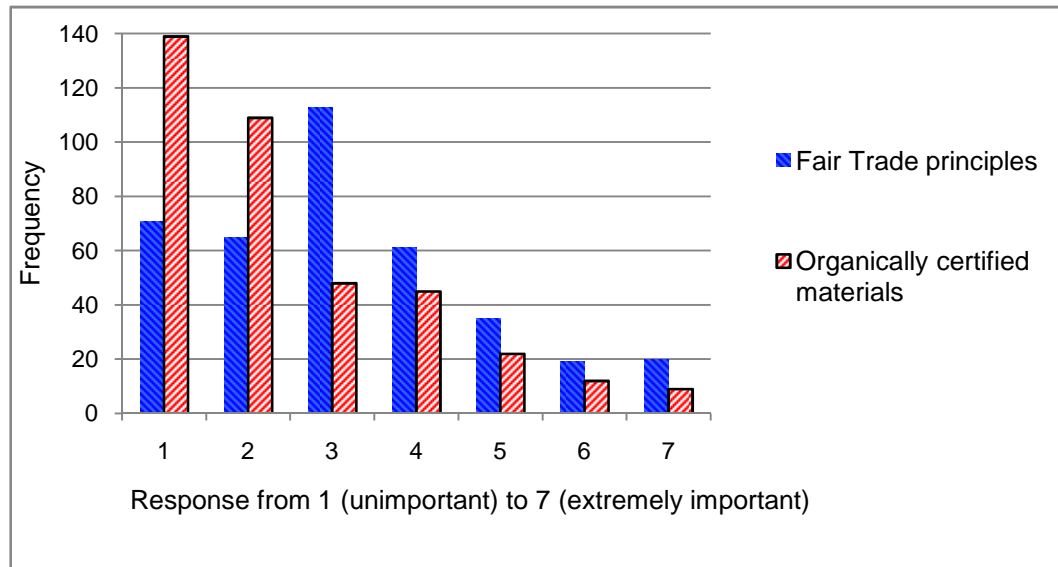
The number of respondents selecting 'Not Sure' against these two factors is higher than for any of the other factors questioned, indicating either a lack of understanding among some consumers or that respondents have not formulated a view on these attributes. It is the use of Fair Trade principles that attracted the most responses of this nature (Fair Trade 40; Organic 22) suggesting that the later concept is less well understood.

The group of respondents to whom Fair Trade principles were of greater importance (rated 5 or higher) had lower levels of household income ($p < 0.01$, Cramer's V = 0.17), greater awareness of Fair Trade items on the high street ($p < 0.01$, Cramer's V = 0.16), and purchased more items of clothing in the average month ($p < 0.01$, $\varphi = 0.13$) than those reporting Fair Trade to be of lesser importance (rated less than 5).

Exploratory factor analysis and hierarchal cluster analysis indicate that attributes concerning Fair Trade accreditation, the use of Organic materials and an item of clothing's country of origin, were closely related, with respondents likely to express similar views towards each of these aspects of choice. Further, no other attributes are heavily loaded to this ethical component, highlighting that these three attributes form a clear and distinct group.   Other factors that emerged contained intuitively related attributes pertaining to branding, price, the style and look of the item, practical considerations and fit.

Factor	Contributing attributes
Branding	Brand Designer label Exclusivity Store it was stocked in
Price	Low price Price reduced Appeared good value Good value
Style and look	How item would coordinate with wardrobe Style Colour How looked when tried on
Practical considerations	Materials it was made from How often I would wear it Comfort Washable Quality
Ethical	Fair Trade Organically certified materials Country of manufacture
Fit	How well fitted

Table 8. Factor analysis of the attributes of clothing choice

5.5.2.1 Type of item

There is some evidence that the importance of ethically relevant attributes differ depending on the type of clothing item purchased. Both Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification appear to be more important in the selection of inner wear than outer wear, and more important in decisions relating to the purchase of casual over smart clothing. However, it is only the greater importance of the use of Organically certified materials in choosing casual items of clothing that is significant at the <0.05 level ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.26$). The pattern here is nonetheless interesting and suggests that where other attributes, possibly relating to branding or the look of the item, are less important, greater consideration is given towards the more vicarious ethical aspects of the item. Current availability of Fair Trade and Organic clothing lines is generally focused toward more basic, casual lines, an approach which appears to have resonance with respondents' views here.

5.5.3 Importance of ethical attributes

Moving beyond the recall of one recent purchase, respondents were asked to assess how important seven ethical aspects were in their general selection of clothing. The results from this are summarised in Table 9 and show that the use of sweatshops in production is viewed to be the most important aspect followed by the use of fur. While the use of sweatshops was afforded the greatest importance, Fair Trade is not closely linked to this with a substantially lower mean score suggesting that respondents do not always view Fair Trade as providing a solution to sweatshop concerns.

	Mean* (standard deviation)	Not sure	Number of respondents ranking 5 or higher
Use of sweatshops in production	4.60 (±2.05)	16 (±4.4%)	195 (54.2%)
Does not contain fur	4.52 (±2.57)	3 (±0.8%)	202 (54.3%)
Use of sustainable materials	3.78 (±1.99)	6 (±1.6%)	141 (38.1%)
Use of pesticides	3.57 (±2.15)	17 (±4.7%)	125 (34.6%)
Fair Trade	3.26 (±1.79)	8 (±2.2%)	89 (24.0%)
Organic	2.58 (±1.56)	7 (±1.9%)	45 (12.2%)
Does not contain leather	2.36 (±1.84)	6 (±1.6%)	52 (14.1%)

* Response from 1 (unimportant) to 7 (extremely important).

n=384

Table 9. Importance of ethical aspects in clothing choice

The following sub-sections will examine any significant differences in the importance of these factors dependant on differences in age, gender, presence of children, household income and education level of respondents and awareness of Fair Trade lines availability.

5.5.3.1 Gender

Female respondents were overall significantly more discerning in their choice of clothing lines overall (responses were on average 7.7% higher, with a total mean Likert score of 4.49 for females against 4.17 for males). Within this pattern it appears that factors considering the style and look of an item, practical considerations and ethical aspects, including Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification, are significantly more important to female shoppers. It is the style and look of the item that demonstrates the greatest difference between male and female respondents (Table 10).

Factor	Female mean factor loading (SD)	Male mean factor loading (SD)	*n*	*p*	*r*
Style and look	0.17 (±0.82)	-0.54 (±1.28)	384	<0.01	0.27
Practical considerations	0.05 (±1.00)	-0.16 (±0.98)	384	0.03	0.11
Ethical	0.63 (±1.02)	-0.20 (±0.92)	384	0.04	0.11

Table 10. Significant factor importance differences by gender

Within these factors it is interesting to note that while female respondents rated Fair Trade and country of manufacture as more important than male respondents did (Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.16$; Country of Manufacture: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.14$), there was no significant difference observed in the importance of the use of Organically certified materials. However, when questioned about shopping for clothing in general, female respondents identified every potential ethical issue as more important than male respondents, as summarised in Table 11.

Consideration	Male mean* (SD)	Female mean* (SD)	*p*	*r*
Does not contain fur	3.42 (±2.62)	4.88 (±2.45)	<0.01	0.24
Use of pesticides	2.82 (±1.96)	3.82 (±2.16)	<0.01	0.20
Does not contain leather	1.96 (±1.65)	2.49 (±1.88)	0.03	0.15
Use of sustainable materials	3.32 (±2.14)	3.92 (±1.92)	0.02	0.13
Organic	2.34 (±1.65)	2.65 (±1.53)	0.03	0.12
Use of sweatshops in production	4.19 (±2.08)	4.73 (±2.03)	0.03	0.11
Fair Trade	3.01 (±1.91)	3.34 (±1.72)	0.09^	0.09^

* Rated on a scale between 1 (unimportant) and 7 (extremely important)

^ Not significant or substantive

Table 11. Gender differences in importance of ethical issues

5.5.3.2 Age and the presence of children

Different age groups within the sample had similar views on the importance of both Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification in their clothing choice. However, the country of manufacture was of significantly greater importance to older respondents (≥ 65) than those aged 45-64 ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.16$). Given the pattern of response here, it is likely that the strong difference in importance of country of manufacture is not due to ethical considerations. When considering clothes shopping in general, younger

respondents were significantly less concerned about sweatshop production practice, with importance rising progressively with age ($p = 0.01$, $r = 0.18$). Within this broad picture, a trend can be observed amongst the younger respondents with the importance of a number of ethical factors appearing to be lowest amongst those aged between 16-24, and rising in importance quite progressively until the 34-44 age group beyond which point opinions appear more stable. Those ethical factors demonstrating significant trends are highlighted in Table 12.

Ethical factor	Age group			p	r
	16-24 Mean* (SD)	25-34 Mean* (SD)	35-44 Mean* (SD)		
Organic	2.30 (±1.46)	2.48 (±1.62)	2.93 (±1.60)	0.04	0.17
Does not contain fur	3.93 (±2.37)	4.75 (±2.49)	5.19 (±2.29)	0.02	0.19
Use of pesticides	2.88 (±1.99)	3.06 (±1.88)	3.79 (±2.11)	0.03	0.18
Sweatshops in production	3.20 (±1.92)	4.12 (±2.05)	4.75 (±1.96)	<0.01	0.27

* Rated on a scale between 1 (unimportant) and 7 (extremely important)

Table 12. Significant trends between younger respondents in the importance of ethical factors

It might have been thought that the presence of children, particularly children of school age, could have considerably affected the importance of ethical aspects in clothing choice due to messages around sustainability and globalisation being taught in schools. However, no such relationships were found, with no significant differences present when examining the importance of Fair Trade or Organic certification. A significant difference was found in the importance of country of manufacture, with this being of greater reported importance to those with children ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.12$), while those with children of school age reported that the use of sweatshops in production was less important to them ($p = 0.04$, $r = 0.12$).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with children of school age and those with children of pre-school age purchased significantly more items of clothing in an average month than those with no children, or older children (p <0.01, $\varphi = 0.17$; $p = 0.02$, $\varphi = 0.13$). Older respondents purchased significantly fewer items of clothing (under 45, compared with 65 and over $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.28$).

5.5.3.3 Household income and educational attainment

While income level does not appear to affect the volume of clothing purchased, respondents with higher household incomes (>£30,000) were less concerned with the price of items (p = <0.01, r = 0.22), possibly more surprisingly they also rated ethical aspects as being less important in their choice of the clothing purchase they were recalling (p = 0.01, r = 0.14). This effect is even more substantive given that those with higher household incomes were significantly more discerning in importance ratings overall, with a mean importance across all 23 attributes of 4.49 compared with just 4.30 for those with household incomes under £30,000 (p = <0.01, r = 0.14).

Those with higher household incomes rated country of manufacture, Organic certification and Fair Trade accreditation as all being of lower importance in influencing their recalled purchase than those with lower household incomes. However, it is only Fair Trade accreditation where this effect is both significant and substantive (p < 0.01, r = 0.17). Further, when referring to general clothing purchasing, those with higher household incomes viewed each of the ethical aspects questioned as being less important, with four of these relationships being significant at the 0.05 level, as presented in Table 13.

| | Household income | | | |
Ethical factor	<£30,000 Mean* (SD)	>£30,000 Mean* (SD)	p	r
Does not contain leather	2.54 (±1.97)	1.99 (±1.48)	0.01	0.14
Use of sustainable materials	4.19 (±2.02)	3.21 (±1.84)	<0.01	0.24
Use of pesticides	4.06 (±2.23)	2.87 (±1.82)	<0.01	0.27
Use of sweatshops in production	4.72 (±2.12)	4.33 (±1.98)	0.05	0.11

* Rated on a scale between 1 (unimportant) and 7 (extremely important)

Table 13. Household income effect on ethical aspects of clothing purchase

This effect appears to be progressive with the overall importance of the ethical aspects questioned (sum of means) declining with each rise in income category as highlighted in Figure 18.

Figure 18. Importance of ethical aspects in relation to household income
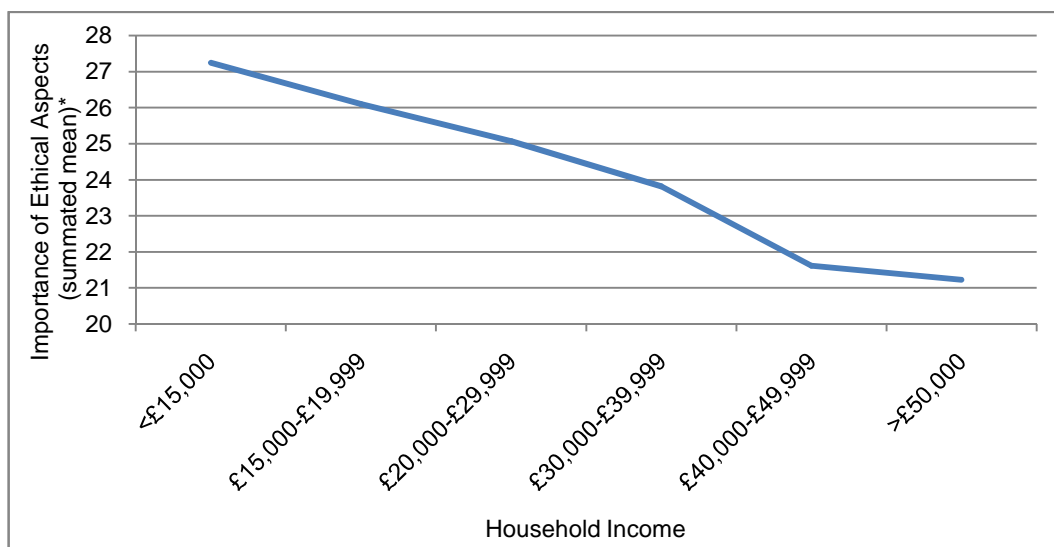
*The importance of seven ethical aspects of clothing choice were rated by respondents on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 7 (extremely important), with the mean for each set of responses being summed to provide a total on a scale from 7 to 49.

Those respondents with a higher income are more likely to be male ($p = 0.02$, $\varphi = 0.12$), and younger ($p < 0.01$, Cramer's V = 0.25), with respondents aged under 45 being 2.9 times more likely to have a household income greater than £30,000 than those respondents 65 and over. Income levels of respondents also appear to be closely linked to level of educational attainment ($p < 0.01$, $\varphi = 0.32$); those with a first degree or higher in the sample are 2.04 times more likely to have household earnings in excess of £30,000 than those without this level of qualification. Due to this close link it is unsurprising that those respondents educated to a graduate level reported ethically relevant attributes as being less important in their choice. While each ethically relevant variable was reported as being less important to those educated to degree level, ('does not contain leather' excepted), it is only Fair Trade accreditation and the use of pesticides where this effect is significant (Fair Trade accreditation: $p = 0.05$, $r = 0.11$; Use of Pesticides: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.17$).

5.5.3.4 Awareness of Fair Trade clothing stocked at retailers

Each of the ten largest clothing retailers in the UK by value (Mintel 2008) stocked some Fair Trade clothing at the time of survey distribution, and in many cases considerable marketing and point of sale materials have been used to raise awareness of these ranges. It is notable, however, that respondents generally demonstrated very low levels of awareness of these lines as highlighted in Figure 19. Female respondents reported

higher awareness of Fair Trade clothing products in stores ($p = 0.02$, $\varphi = 0.12$), and younger respondents similarly were more aware of these items than older respondents (< 45 vs. ≥ 65; $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.33$). However, neither the presence of children nor household income levels exerted any discernable influence.

Figure 19. Intensity of awareness of Fair Trade lines stocked in leading retailers
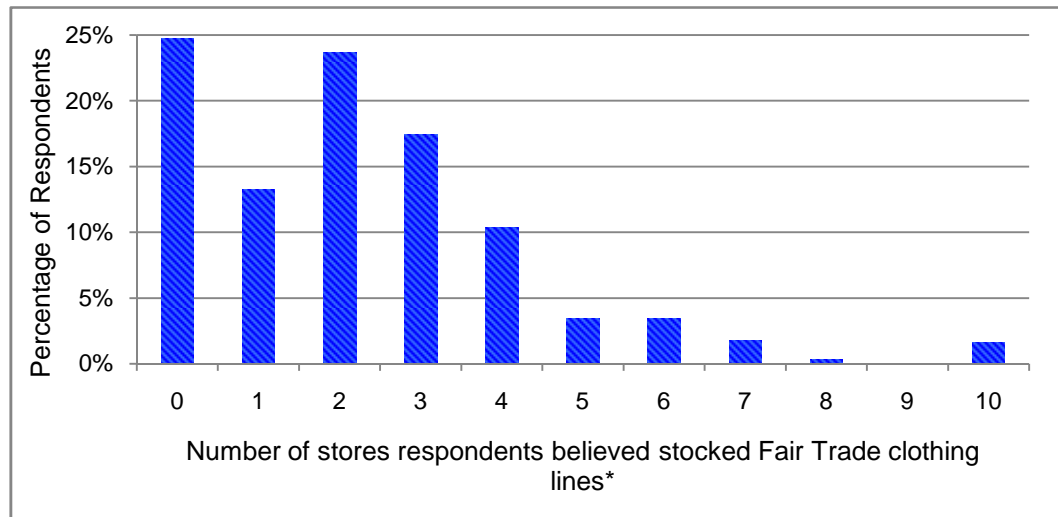
* The ten largest clothing retailers in the UK (by market share) were listed; each of these retailers stocked a range of Fair Trade clothing. Respondents were asked to tick those they believed to stock Fair Trade clothing lines.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents who had greater awareness of Fair Trade clothing lines being stocked by leading UK retailers rated both Fair Trade and Organic certification as being more important in their selection of the recalled item of clothing (Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.14$; Organic: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.16$). Similarly, when reflecting on clothing purchase in general, those respondents with greater awareness of Fair Trade lines on the high street reported each of the ethically relevant aspects to be of greater importance to them as demonstrated in Table 14.

	Mean importance score* (SD)			
	Minimal awareness	Greater awareness	*p*	*r*
Organic	2.47 (±1.52)	2.75 (±1.62)	0.09^	0.09^
Fair Trade	3.02 (±1.72)	3.62 (±1.85)	0.03	0.16
Does not contain leather	2.18 (±1.69)	2.63 (±2.02)	0.05	0.10
Does not contain fur	4.28 (±2.60)	4.89 (±2.48)	0.03	0.11
Use of sustainable materials	3.54 (±2.01)	4.14 (±1.92)	< 0.01	0.15
Use of pesticides	3.27 (±2.06)	4.06 (±2.21)	< 0.01	0.17
Use of sweatshops in production	4.46 (±2.04)	4.82 (±2.07)	0.08^	0.09^

* Rated on a scale between 1 (unimportant) and 7 (extremely important)
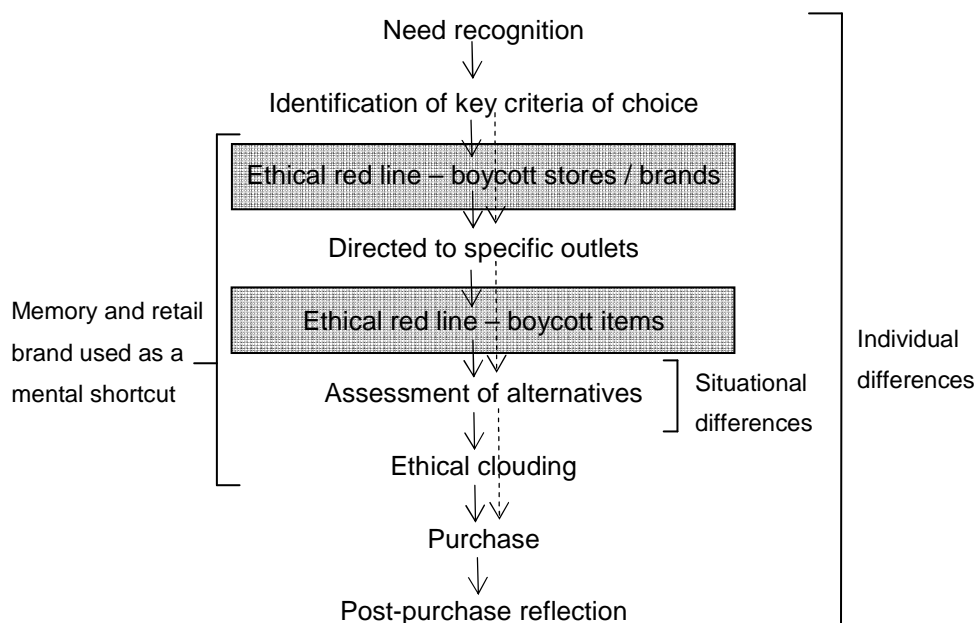^ Does not pass significance or substantive thresholds.

Table 14. Impact of awareness on importance of ethical attributes

Whilst it is understandable that greater awareness of Fair Trade products might go hand in hand with viewing ethical issues as more important, it is less clear whether becoming aware of such products triggers thinking about the issues or whether those with stronger ethical views are more likely to notice Fair Trade products in stores.

The vast majority of questionnaire responses were completed recalling purchases made for self consumption (*n* = 345) rather than as gifts for another (*n* = 23). Given the small sample size responding in relation to gift purchase, it is not possible to draw conclusions from any statistical comparisons; however, Fair Trade was the 16th most important and Organic the 22nd most important attributes when purchasing items for self (mean Likert scale response of 3.14 and 2.39, respectively). When purchasing for other adults, this changed to 16th and 21st (3.46 and 2.54), and when purchasing for a child 15th and 18th (3.6 and 2.8), respectively. This does indicate a possible change in the importance of these attributes when purchasing for others and notably for children, however, further specific research would be necessary to have confidence in these findings as none currently can be reported as statistically significant (possibly due to the small sample size representing gift purchase) and could have occurred by chance.

5.5.4 Boycotting

Figure 20. Decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour – ethical red lines

Need recognition

Identification of key criteria of choice

Ethical red line – boycott stores / brands

Directed to specific outlets

Ethical red line – boycott items

Memory and retail brand used as a mental shortcut

Assessment of alternatives

Situational differences

Individual differences

Ethical clouding

Purchase

Post-purchase reflection

The majority of respondents identified that there were items of clothing they would boycott for ethical reasons (57%), while only 24% said they would boycott particular brands or shops. When questioned on a particular point, 74% of respondents identified that they would not be prepared to purchase an item of clothing containing animal fur. This suggests that these factors are not pre-eminent in people's minds when thinking about purchase decisions, however, they do elicit negative reactions when raised, highlighting a difficulty with research in this area. The use of fur was the predominant reason (71%) that respondents cited for their boycott of specific clothing items followed by sweatshop production practices (26%). Sweatshop production practices were highlighted as the most important reason why respondents might avoid stores or brands, with just over one third identifying 'Primark' as a store that they would avoid, possibly due to the considerable adverse publicity that the brand has received in recent years. This effect is substantial, with some 33 (8.6%) respondents identifying that they boycott the 'Primark' brand for ethical reasons. Additionally, eight (2%) respondents suggested that they would boycott clothing lines or stores that were too cheap, with these respondents using low retail prices as an indicator of questionable ethical standards through the supply chain, "cheaper shops – obviously using sweatshops" being a comment of this nature.

Females were 1.4 times more likely to boycott specific clothing items than males, with 61.4% of females reporting such behaviour against just 43.5% of males ($p < 0.01$, $\varphi = 0.16$). Similarly, fewer female respondents were prepared to purchase items containing fur ($p < 0.01$, $\varphi = 0.22$), with consistent messages around animal cruelty being cited as the reasons for avoiding these items. While age does not appear to alter consumers' likelihood to boycott items or brands, it does make a significant difference to attitudes towards items containing fur, with older respondents (≥ 65) being 2.4 times more likely to be prepared to purchase such items than respondents under 45 years old ($p < 0.01$, Cramer's V = 0.20). Despite this trend, those respondents aged 16 to 24 were more prepared to buy items containing fur than other younger respondents ($p < 0.01$, r = 0.28), with the proportion of respondents unwilling to purchase such items increasing progressively to a peak amongst those aged 35 to 44. The presence of school age children does not make a significant difference to the propensity to boycott products or brands.

5.5.5 Influence and perception of Fair Trade and Organic

Figure 21. Decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour – ethical clouding
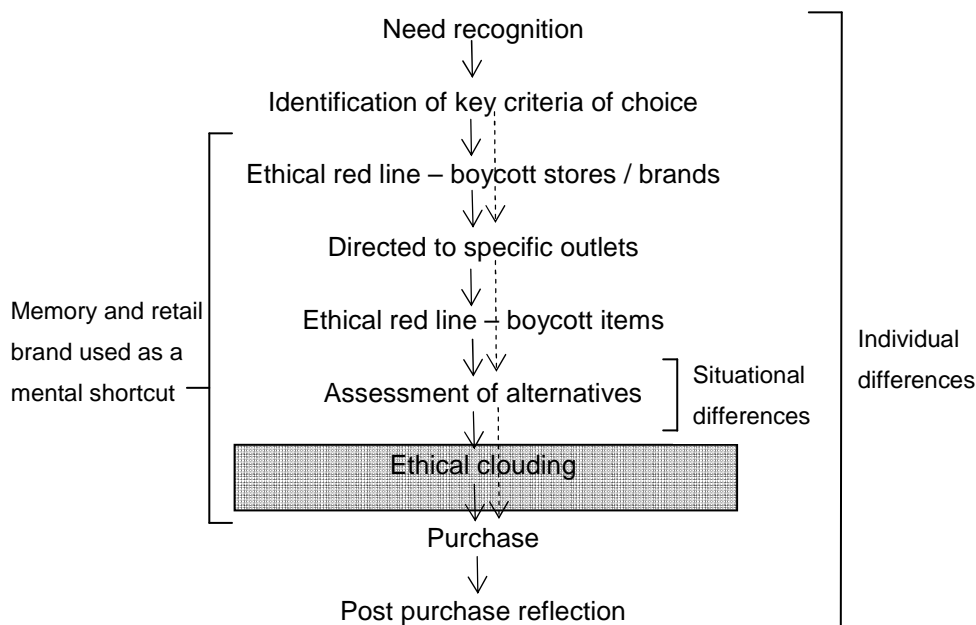
Whilst 50% of respondents indicated that the labelling of an item as Fair Trade would exert no influence on their purchase decision, some 48% indicated that such labelling would make them more likely to purchase the item. Responses were less favourable when considering the labelling of an item as Organic, with 70% suggesting that this labelling would not influence their purchase decision, and only 24% reporting that it would make them more likely to purchase the item. A small number of respondents reported that the labelling of an item as Fair Trade or Organic would make them less likely to purchase the item (3 [0.8] and 20 [5.2%] responses, respectively), with these respondents suggesting scepticism towards, and profiting from such claims to be the reasons for this negative influence. These findings are presented in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Influence of Fair Trade and Organic labelling on likelihood to purchase
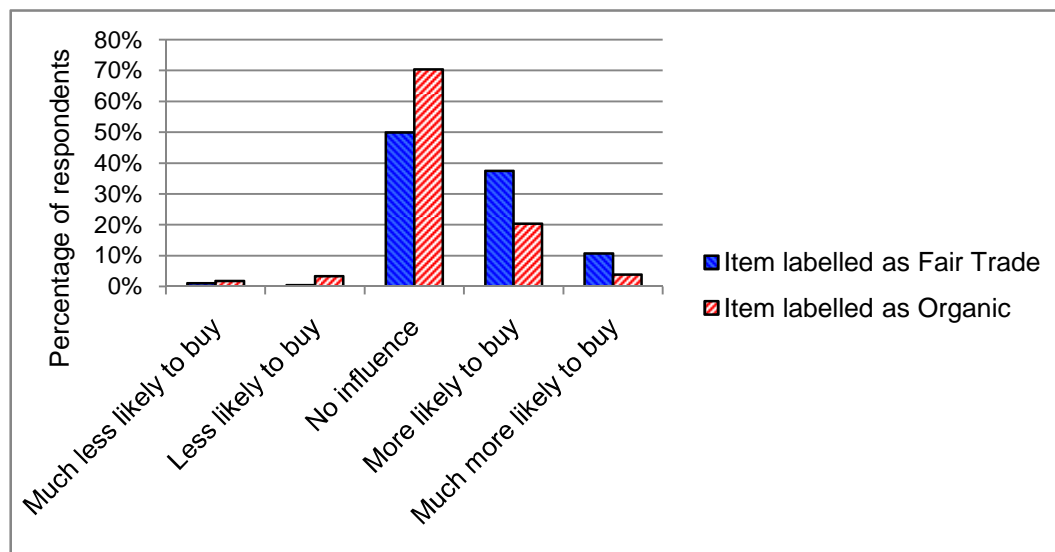
The most commonly identified reasons that respondents gave for being influenced by such factors related to benevolent concerns for the well-being of workers involved in the production of clothing and the desire to "help people" through supporting fairer working conditions. Notably, however, some respondents identified more personal influences such as "less guilt in wearing the item" and "makes you feel good about where the money is going". For many, comments related to the higher price of Fair Trade and Organic items prohibiting or discouraging their purchase, and a notable number of respondents commented that Fair Trade and Organic labels had greater meaning to them on food lines than on clothing, with many commenting that they did not have a good understanding of what such claims mean in relation to clothing. A number of respondents indicated that while Fair Trade or Organic labelling would not be likely to exert a strong influence, such factors would help to sway a decision between two similar products with a typical comment to an open-ended question including; "would tip the balance if I was undecided" and "given two otherwise identical products would prefer Fair Trade".

5.5.5.1 Perceptions towards Fair Trade and Organic clothing

Fair Trade

Overall, respondents' perceptions towards Fair Trade items were positive; some 61.8% either agreed or strongly agreed that Fair Trade assures better working conditions for employees in the supply chain. However, a further 19.8% indicated that they were not sure, suggesting that such claims are not universally trusted or understood. It appears

that understanding of Fair Trade is a greater issue than a lack of trust, with 18.4% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they do not understand what Fair Trade means in relation to clothing lines.

Notwithstanding this, responses indicate an interest and appetite for Fair Trade clothing with 68.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Fair Trade clothing lines, and 75.8% suggesting that they would like shops to provide more information on their production standards. Generally, respondents believed that the quality and fashionability of Fair Trade clothing was comparable to alternative items, and while 33.8% of respondents thought that such items were too expensive, 20% disagreed with this statement, with the remainder of the response holding a neutral view.
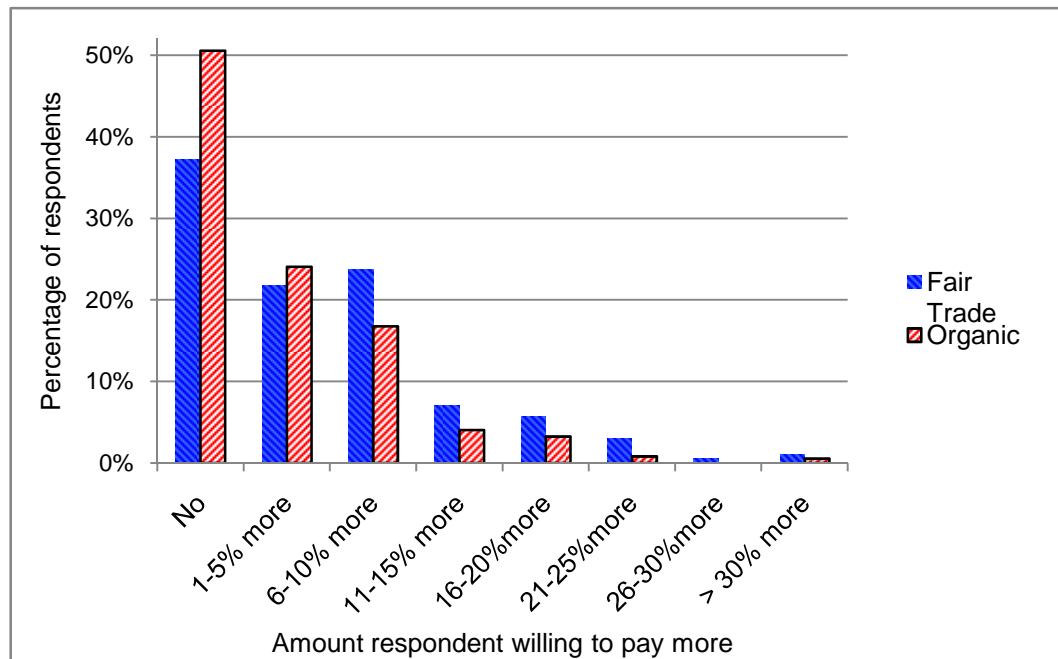
Organic

Generally, respondents' perceptions of Organic clothing were a little less positive than towards Fair Trade lines. In contrast to views on Fair Trade clothing, a greater proportion of respondents felt that Organic items were too expensive (50.8% respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with only 11.4% disagreeing).   Similarly, 45% reported that they were sceptical when retailers claim their clothing is Organic, and 22.1% suggested that they did not understand what Organic meant in the context of clothing (a slightly higher proportion than for Fair Trade). In spite of these views, 56.9% believed that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Organic clothing lines, with almost half of all respondents reporting that they have never seen Organic clothing in the shops they visit.

Possibly unsurprisingly, the vast majority of respondents agreed that Organic clothing is better for the environment (63.8% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, with a further 22.4% holding a neutral view), however, only 17.9% felt that such items were more healthy to wear. Overall the quality and fashionability of Organic clothing was viewed to be similar to that of non-Organic alternatives.

5.5.5.2 Likelihood to pay more for Fair Trade and Organic clothing

It is notable that 50% of respondents were prepared to pay more for Organic clothing lines, and 63% were prepared to pay more for Fair Trade lines, with a greater price premium seemingly tolerated on Fair Trade lines as can be seen in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Willingness to pay more for Organic and Fair Trade items of clothing

5.5.5.3 Gender

Although there were no significant differences in the willingness of male and female respondents to pay more for Organic and Fair Trade items, female respondents appear to be a little more positive towards both factors. This difference is most notable with respect to Organic lines, with females reporting being influenced more by seeing that an item was labelled as Organic than males ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.13$). Similarly, females were more likely to believe that Organic lines are healthier to wear ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.18$) and better for the environment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.19$); and they felt more strongly that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Organic clothing ($p = 0.01$, $r = 0.15$). Notably, females were also less sceptical towards Organic claims than male respondents were ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.15$).

Female respondents were keener to have more information on the production standards of clothing ($p = 0.01$, $r = 0.13$), and for stores to stock a wider range of Fair Trade lines ($p = 0.03$, $r = 0.12$) than male respondents were. They viewed Fair Trade items to be of higher quality than male respondents ($p = 0.01$, $r = 0.14$), however, they were more likely to agree that Fair Trade lines are too expensive ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.21$).

5.5.5.4 Presence of children

In parallel with earlier findings, there was some indication that parents of school age children were less influenced by Organic and Fair Trade labelling, however, these relationships were not significant at the 0.05 level. Parents with children of school age were more likely to believe that Fair Trade clothing is too expensive than those without school age children ($p = 0.05$, $r = 0.12$), with this pattern also being significant for those with children of pre-school age compared with other respondents ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.21$). In spite of this, those respondents with pre-school children were more likely to feel that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Fair Trade items ($p = 0.03$, $r = 0.13$), suggesting that while price constraints may be more apparent in this group, there is interest in such lines.

Similar relationships can be observed with respect to Organic lines, with parents of school age children more likely to feel that these products are too expensive than those without children ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.16$), and again, there was a more substantive relationship when comparing those with pre-school aged children than those without ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.20$). Respondents with pre-school aged children appear to understand what Organic means in relation to clothing lines better than those without ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.14$) and are more likely to think that stores do not stock a wide enough range ($p = 0.04$, $r = 0.13$), again suggesting that there is considerable interest in this area.

5.5.5.5 Age

When assessing the difference that age exerts on perceptions and attitudes, the eight surveyed groupings were collapsed into three age groups each containing roughly equal numbers of respondents, with < 45, 45 to 64 and ≥ 65 being the resultant groupings. Significant and substantive relationships are reported between these groups and important relationships within these groups have also been assessed.

The influence of Fair Trade labelling does not appear to differ depending on the respondents' age, however, the influence of Organic labelling does decline among older respondents ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.13$), with those aged 65 and over being significantly less influenced by such claims than those aged under 45 ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.22$). Within this broad picture there are a number of notable differences between age groups' perceptions of Organic and Fair Trade clothes. Significant trends were apparent, with older

respondents less likely to understand what Fair Trade means in relation to clothing lines ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.18$), and probably linked to this, fewer agreed with the statement 'Shops do not stock a wide enough range of Fair Trade clothing' ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.17$). Again it was respondents aged 65 and over who held significantly different views to younger respondents with those 65 and over being more likely to agree with the statement 'I don't understand what Fair Trade means in relation to clothing' than those under 45 ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.28$) and less likely to agree with the statement 'Shops do not stock a wide enough range of Fair Trade clothing' ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.25$). As previously highlighted, the very youngest respondents appear to be less convinced by ethical factors, and were significantly less likely to believe that Fair Trade lines are more fashionable than those aged 35 to 44 ($p = 0.03$, $r = 0.27$). Further, this group appears to be less interested in ethical aspects; less likely to agree that stores should provide greater information on their production standards ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.27$), but exhibit lower levels of scepticism (less likely to agree with the statement 'Fair Trade accreditation doesn't make any difference to factory workers') than those aged 35 to 44 ($p = 0.03$, $r = 0.27$).

It was, however, in relation to Organic items that perceptions differed most greatly between age groups with half of the surveyed statements demonstrating significant trends. The significant relationships between different age groups are outlined in Table 15 and show that younger respondents were more likely to agree that Organic clothing is better for the environment, understood the concept more widely, had seen more of it in the shops, were less sceptical toward such claims, and were more likely to feel that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Organic lines.

Statement	Age group			p	r	n
	<45 Mean* (SD)	45-64 Mean* (SD)	≥65 Mean* (SD)			
Organic clothing is better for the environment	3.85 (±0.87)	3.70 (±0.84)	3.31 (±0.81)	<0.01	0.23	313
I don't understand what Organic means on clothing lines	2.34 (±1.09)	2.68 (±1.17)	2.88 (±1.22)	<0.01	0.17	326
I have never seen Organic clothing	2.82 (1±.16)	3.15 (±1.21)	3.49 (±1.07)	<0.01	0.20	333
I am skeptical when claim clothes are Organic	3.14 (±0.84)	3.46 (±0.86)	3.69 (±1.04)	<0.01	0.22	320
Shops do not stock enough range of Organic clothing	3.77 (±0.76)	3.59 (±0.88)	3.46 (±0.78)	0.01	0.15	307

* Rated on a scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Table 15. Age group differences in perceptions towards Organic clothing

Expanding the younger age group (< 45) it can be seen that the very youngest respondents (16 to 24) were least likely to believe that Organic items were better quality. Subsequent age groups were more likely to believe that Organic lines were better quality, as demonstrated in Table 16, before this perception became equally held from the age group 35 to 44 and older.

| Statement	Age group			p	r	n
	16-24 Mean* (SD)	25-34 Mean* (SD)	35-44 Mean* (SD)			
Organic clothing is better quality	2.55 (±0.65)	2.80 (±0.84)	3.00 (±0.69)	<0.01	0.26	113

*Rated on a scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Table 16. Age group differences on perception that Organic clothing is better quality

A significant trend is present in the data with younger respondents more prepared to pay a price premium for Organic and Fair Trade clothing lines than older respondents (Organic: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.16$; Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.17$). Respondents under 45 were 2.11 times more likely to be prepared to pay more for Organic items of clothing than those aged 65 and over ($p = < 0.01$, Crammers' V = 0.23), and 1.8 times more likely to be prepared to pay more for Fair Trade items ($p = < 0.01$, Crammers' V = 0.24). Figure 24 highlights this relationship between age and willingness to pay a price premium for these items.

Figure 24. Proportion of different age groups prepared to pay more for Organic and Fair Trade clothing lines
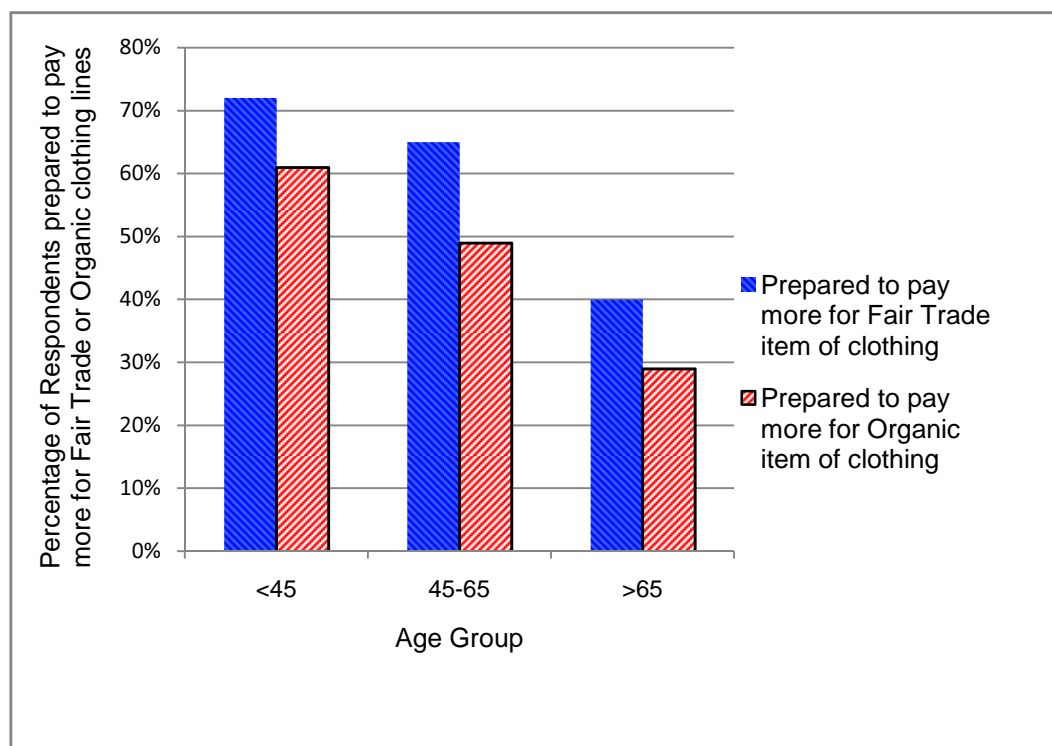
5.5.5.6 Household income and educational attainment

Respondents with higher levels of education tended to be more likely to purchase an item of clothing if it was labelled as either Fair Trade or Organic (Fair Trade: $p = 0.02$, $r = 0.13$; Organic: $p = 0.03$, $r = 0.12$). No such relationship existed between respondent groups with different levels of household income. While it has been demonstrated that the perceived importance of ethical aspects in clothing choice is lower for those respondents with higher household incomes, it is only in two statements where household income appears to affect attitudes. Generally those with higher household incomes understand what Fair Trade means on clothing items more than those with lower household incomes ($p = 0.03$, $r = 0.12$) and are less likely to feel that Organic lines are too expensive ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.24$).

Possibly reflecting their enhanced incomes, those respondents with undergraduate or higher qualifications were less likely to think that Fair Trade lines are too expensive than those with lower educational attainment ($p = 0.04$, $r = 0.13$). Conversely, those without degrees were more likely to believe that Organic clothing was more healthy to wear ($p =$

0.01, r = 0.15) and more likely to believe that Organic clothing is generally more fashionable (p = 0.04, r = 0.12) than graduates were.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with higher household incomes were more likely to be prepared to pay more for Organic and Fair Trade lines than those with lower household incomes (Organic: $p < 0.01$, r = 0.17; Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, r = 0.17). On examining this relationship further, most of this difference is present between those with household incomes lower than £20,000 and those with greater resources (Organic: $p < 0.01$, r = 0.20, Fair Trade; p = 0.02, r = 0.15). A similar trend is present with regard to educational attainment, with more educated respondents willing to pay more for such items (Organic; p = 0.01, r = 0.14; Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, r = 0.18).

### 5.5.5.7 Awareness of Fair Trade clothing stocked in retailers

Those with greater awareness of Fair Trade items being stocked by leading retailers held the belief that Fair Trade and Organic lines are better quality (Fair Trade: p = 0.02, r = 0.14; Organic: p = 0.05, r = 0.12) and that Fair Trade lines are generally more fashionable (p = 0.04, r = 0.12). Further, these respondents were more likely to think that Organic items are more healthy to wear (p = 0.02, r = 0.14) and believe that shops do not stock a wide enough range of Organic clothing (p = 0.04, r = 0.12) than those with lower awareness of Fair Trade items in stores.

Greater awareness of Fair Trade lines on the high street is allied to being more willing to pay more for such items (Organic: $p < 0.01$, r = 0.16; Fair Trade: p = 0.02, r = 0.13). Volume of clothing purchase does not appear to affect respondents' willingness to pay a price premium for Organic or Fair Trade lines, however, it does influence attitudes in two specific ways: those purchasing a greater number of clothing items in an average month were less likely to feel that Fair Trade lines are too expensive (p = 0.04, r = 0.12) and understand what Organic labelling means in relation to clothing lines more than those who purchase fewer items (p = 0.04, r = 0.12). In spite of these relationships, when questioned directly on the influence of Fair Trade or Organic labelling on clothes, neither volume of clothing purchase nor awareness of Fair Trade lines in high street stores affected responses.

5.5.6 Post-purchase reflection on clothing purchase

Figure 25. Decision framework of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour – post-purchase reflection
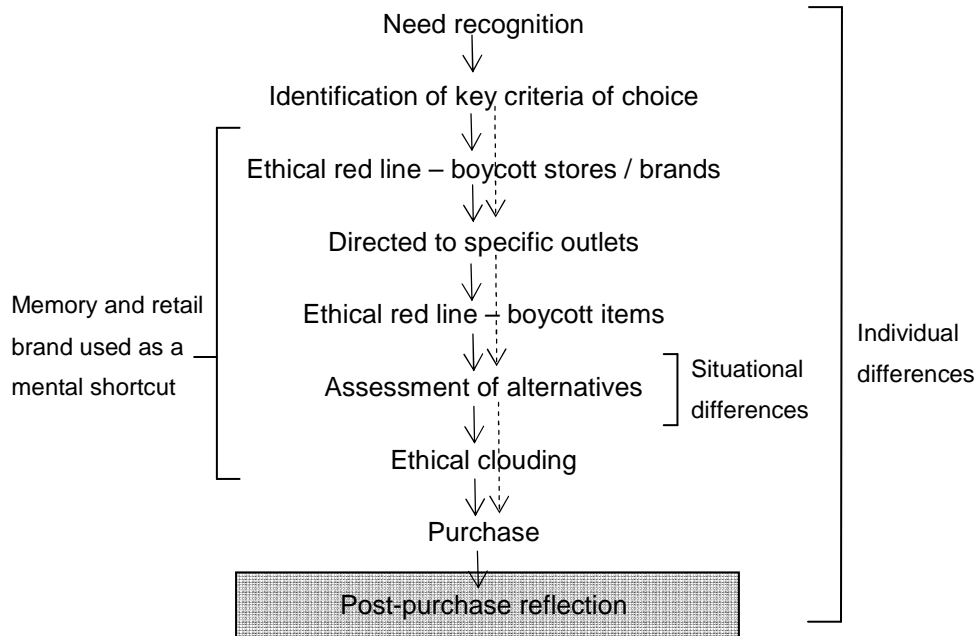
The final influence of ethical attributes on clothing choice is identified in the decision framework depicted in Figure 25 related to consumers' post-purchase thoughts about items as they owned and wore these garments. The questionnaire included a range of hypothetical statements surveying emotional feelings towards different clothing purchases. The data from these questions show that for just over half of the respondents, how their clothes were made affects how they feel about them (53.1%) and specifically if they thought that their clothes were made in sweatshop conditions they would feel guilt (74% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement). Thirty-eight point seven percent of respondents stated that they would feel good wearing an item made with Organic cotton, while 60.1% reported that they would feel good wearing a Fair Trade item of clothing, further suggesting that Fair Trade is an issue that means more to consumers than Organic in the context of clothing. A third of all respondents (33.1%) expressed the view that they would feel uncomfortable buying clothes that were perceived to be too cheap. Through these questions it is also apparent that there is only minimal scepticism toward Fair Trade and Organic claims with only 16.4% of respondents feeling that their purchasing will not make any difference to factory workers. However, many responses were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with

the statements presented, demonstrating that for many, strong views on these issues are not held.

5.5.6.1 Gender

The gender of respondents appears to influence post-purchase thoughts around Fair Trade and Organic garments, with female respondents appearing more sensitive to each of the issues questioned. Three of these relationships are significant at the 0.05 level, namely, the respondent would feel good about wearing an Organic or Fair Trade item of clothing (Organic: $p = 0.02$, $r = 0.13$; Fair Trade: $p = 0.02$, $r = 0.12$) and the feeling of guilt if the use of sweatshop production conditions was suspected ($p = 0.04$, $r = 0.11$).

5.5.6.2 Age and the presence of children

Whilst the presence of children does not appear to affect post-purchase thoughts towards clothing items, progressive relationships are observed with relation to the age of respondents. Younger respondents are more likely to agree that they would feel better wearing an Organic or Fair Trade item than older respondents (Organic: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.16$; Fair Trade: $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.14$). However, younger respondents were less likely to be uncomfortable if the clothes they bought were too cheap ($p = 0.02$, $r = 0.12$).
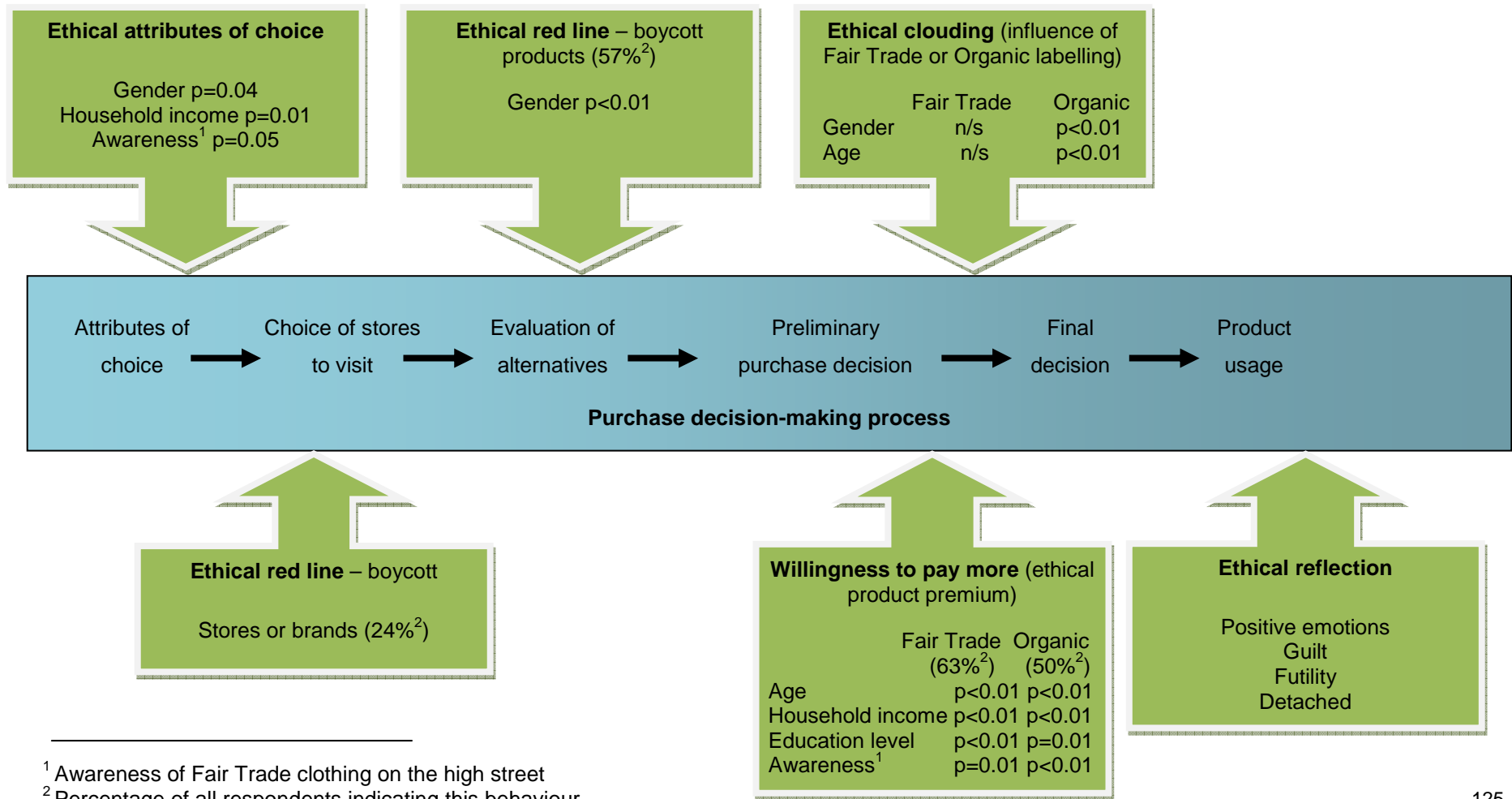
Neither awareness of Fair Trade items being stocked by high street retailers, nor volume of clothing purchase affected significantly post-purchase views towards respondents' clothing. Similarly, no significant differences existed between different household income groups or levels of educational attainment.

5.6 Chapter conclusion

The primary research findings have identified the key points within the consumers' purchase decision-making process that ethical aspects may exert influence. The focus group research and validation interviews suggested that ethical considerations may influence decisions in six key ways. These relationships have been further examined through the quantitative survey to assess their scale of influence and identify how their

effect differs between different consumer groups. The findings from this quantitative research have been summarised with a predictive model presented in Figure 26, detailing the role of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour. In Chapter 6, each of the relationships identified will be discussed fully in relation to previous research.

Figure 26. Predictive model of the role of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour

Ethical attributes of choice

Gender p=0.04
Household income p=0.01
Awareness[1] p=0.05

Ethical red line – boycott products (57%[2])

Gender p<0.01

Ethical clouding (influence of Fair Trade or Organic labelling)

	Fair Trade	Organic
Gender	n/s	p<0.01
Age	n/s	p<0.01

Attributes of choice	Choice of stores to visit	Evaluation of alternatives	Preliminary purchase decision	Final decision	Product usage

Purchase decision-making process

Ethical red line – boycott

Stores or brands (24%[2])

Willingness to pay more (ethical product premium)

	Fair Trade (63%[2])	Organic (50%[2])
Age	p<0.01	p<0.01
Household income	p<0.01	p<0.01
Education level	p<0.01	p=0.01
Awareness[1]	p=0.01	p<0.01

Ethical reflection

Positive emotions
Guilt
Futility
Detached

[1] Awareness of Fair Trade clothing on the high street
[2] Percentage of all respondents indicating this behaviour
n/s (not significant)

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand the role of ethical considerations in decisions associated with the purchase of clothing lines. Previous studies that contribute to understanding fall broadly into two areas: firstly, a large body of work examining consumer behaviour, probing the nature of purchase decisions, the approaches that consumers take to reach decisions, and the evaluative content of purchase decisions; and secondly, more recent work that has focused specifically on ethical decision-making. Existing models of consumer behaviour almost exclusively assume the position of rational self-interest, where literature examining ethics is more focused on altruistic notions. Only very limited research has been conducted attempting to draw together and understand how these two areas may combine to provide an assessment of the role of ethical aspects in consumer decision-making (Perugini and Bagozzi 2004).

Of the few studies that have examined ethical considerations within consumer decision-making, many have used highly purposive samples, for example surveying subscribers to ethical consumerism magazines (Shaw et al. 2000; Shaw and Shiu 2003; Shaw et al. 2007), or have been vulnerable to social desirability bias through using statements pre-determined by the researcher (Hawkes 2007; Niinimaki 2010). These concerns limit the extent to which their findings can be applied to the general population, and inferences from these research projects are thus of limited practical applicability. To address these shortcomings, the research conducted here has examined consumer decision-making holistically to identify where, within this process, ethical aspects may have relevance. The initial inductive research in this study was conducted in a semi-covert manner ensuring that responses were typical of consumers' thoughts and behaviours and not subjected to undue researcher influence. The factors that emerged were grounded in the consumers' own vocabulary and informed the subsequent, randomly sampled survey ensuring that the questioning was most appropriately phrased to ensure the best possible comprehension.   As a consequence of this approach, the research presented here provides a comprehensive theoretical model of consumer decision-making, highlighting the influence of ethical aspects. This model, presented in Figure 27, integrates the key findings from the research with other relevant studies in the areas of consumer behaviour and ethical decisions to provide a comprehensive account of the key relationships and

processes. The following sections fully introduce the model and discuss the key conceptual components.

Figure 27. Theoretical model of ethics in clothing purchase behaviour
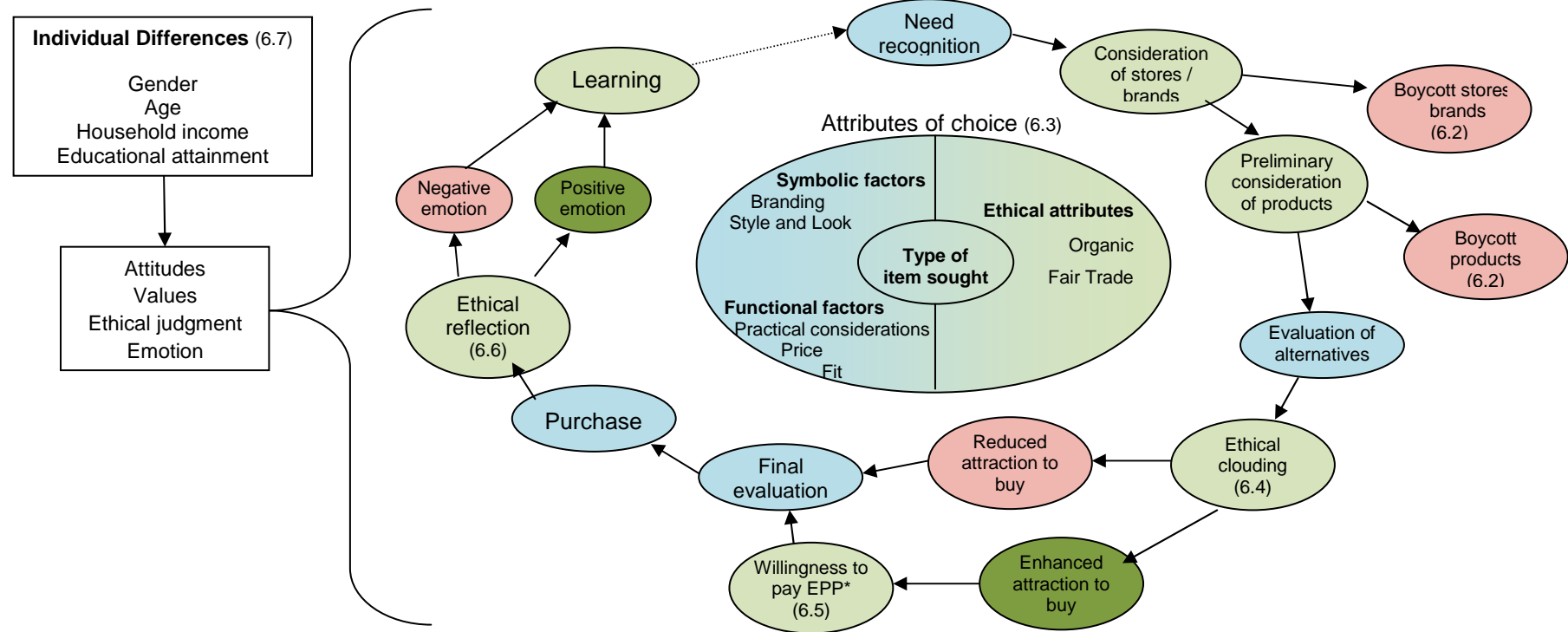
*EPP – Ethical product premium

Numbers in brackets represent the section numbers in which these aspects are discussed.

Pale green elements are influenced by ethical considerations, where elements shaded blue are not subject to ethical consideration.

Dark green shading represents possible positive influence of ethical aspects where pink shading highlights possible negative influences.

Research examining the purchase of clothing lines has identified two main groups of product attributes that are considered by consumers, namely symbolic factors and functional factors (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995; Birtwistle and Tsim 2005). Exploratory factor analysis of the 23 attributes identified and surveyed in the primary research identified six clear groups of product attributes, namely branding and the style and look of an item, which are of predominantly symbolic relevance, and practical considerations, price and fit, which are of predominantly of functional relevance. Ethical attributes emerged as a key factor grouping and the findings from the primary research show that these aspects of clothing choice are considered at different points in the purchase decision process and in a different way to symbolic and functional attributes. This distinction has been highlighted in the theoretical model, with those parts of the process that are devoid of any ethical consideration being shaded blue, and aspects that do contain ethical consideration being shaded pale green. A number of possible outcomes as a result of ethical consideration have been identified through the primary research; these have been highlighted in the model, with the outcomes that make purchase less likely being highlighted in red, namely the boycotting of stores, brands or individual products, reduced attraction to buy a considered item after evaluating its likely ethical profile, and negative emotions being felt post-purchase when wearing or reflecting on a less ethical purchase. Identified outcomes that positively influence purchasing have been highlighted in dark green and reflect an increased likelihood to purchase a product that is perceived to be ethical and positive emotions that result from the wearing of, or reflecting on, a perceived ethical purchase.

The model is depicted as a circular process to acknowledge the role of reflective learning feeding into future actions, a relationship that has been identified in a wide range of behavioural contexts (Moon 1999; Petkus 2000; Rimanoczy and Turner 2008). The literature and primary research have clearly shown that the clothing purchase decision-making process will differ for individual consumers (Shoham 2002; Chattaraman and Rudd 2006), and in some cases will differ depending on the purchasing context (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995). Within this, it is clear from the primary research that the influence of ethical attributes will vary depending on a number of individual characteristics, with these differences being highlighted on the left of the model, impacting the consumers' attitudes, values, emotions and ethical judgement, and in turn exerting influence on the selection of clothing lines. Additionally, Birtwistle and Tsim's (2005) research into clothing purchase identified that the criteria used in selection will differ depending on the nature of the item being sought. Informed by this work, the primary research investigated how the influence of ethical aspects may differ depending on the type of clothing line being sought or the purchase occasion, and while the data are inconclusive in some areas, there is indication that the attributes of choice including

ethically relevant attributes differ depending on the nature of the item being purchased; as such, the type of item sought is identified in the theoretical model influencing the attributes of choice. Each element of the theoretical model will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

6.2 Boycott of stores, brands and products

Many respondents reported boycotting products (57% of all respondents), stores or brands (24% of respondents) in response to perceived ethically questionable practices, however, an underreporting of this effect has been demonstrated; some boycotts have become embedded in the consumer's mindset and are no longer actively considered until prompted. This was highlighted through specifically probing the use of fur in products: 74% of respondents reported that they would not be prepared to purchase items containing fur due to considerations of animal cruelty; a substantially greater number than had previously stated that they would not boycott any products, clearly outlining the latency of such considerations, only being actively considered when brought into the consumers' consciousness. While some previous research has found that consumers are more likely to support positive ethical messages rather than punish negative messages (Parker 2002), recent survey work has shown that boycotting of clothing lines is growing in importance, with the consequent lost sales having risen in value from £338m in 2007 to £399m in 2009 (an 18% growth over these two years) (The Co-operative Bank 2010). Rising media attention (Blanco-Velo et al. 2010) and regular exposés of ethical issues within the clothing supply chain (Maher 2010) suggest that the boycotting of clothing brands and lines will continue and possibly increase.

Perceived use of sweatshop production practices were identified as the most common reason for respondents to boycott particular brands or stores, and the results demonstrate that consumers often use the very low prices of some clothing lines as an indicator of poor ethical standards in the supply chain. Highlighting the potential commercial impact of boycotting is the frequent mention of 'Primark' by respondents, with this chain being avoided more than any other. This finding confirms the recent survey by Mintel (2009) that found four in ten respondents under 45 years of age reporting that they were less likely to shop in 'Primark' following ethical allegations made by pressure groups and the media in 2008. Primark's very low retail prices have caused some to question their production standards including media and campaign group investigators who have focused on the retailer (War on Want 2006; Cairns 2007; Maher 2010). 'Primark' is a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative, a body that seeks to promote fair conditions

throughout the supply chain (Ethical Trade 2011), and there is no evidence to suggest that the standards maintained by 'Primark' are lower than those present in much of the clothing industry; rather, it appears to be their ultra low price positioning that has encouraged disproportionate scrutiny of their practices. While many respondents in this research have identified that they boycott 'Primark' on ethical grounds, the company's sales have continued to grow strongly (MacDonald 2011). While the results here clearly show that some consumers will act upon information questioning the ethical standards of a retailer such as 'Primark', other consumers will not change their behaviour in light of such revelations. It should be of concern to retailers that consumers do not appear to forget negative ethical stories quickly. 'Nike' and 'Gap' who both received significant press attention for questionable manufacturing practices in the 1990's (Lavin 1999) were also frequently mentioned as boycott targets in the primary research despite both companies having made very significant efforts to improve their standards since their poor manufacturing practices were originally exposed (Iwanow et al. 2005). With boycotting of clothing lines growing in importance (The Co-operative Bank 2010), and the longevity of a poor ethical reputation once gained, as demonstrated by the primary research, it is important for retailers to take reasonable measures to monitor the production standards of their goods and act swiftly on any sub-standard practices that are discovered.

6.3 Ethical attributes of choice

While a number of studies have examined the attributes of clothing choice, the process identified by Eckman et al. (1990) explains clearly how different factors influence decisions. Their research found that symbolic factors generate initial interest in products, whereupon functional factors are evaluated to make a purchase decision. Different studies do not agree on the most important symbolic or functional attributes (Abraham-Murali and Littrell 1995; Shoham 2002; Birtwistle and Tsim 2005), possibly due to their differing samples, research contexts and methodologies. The primary research has surveyed the importance of 23 key attributes, identified by consumers using their reflection on a recent purchase to ensure the most accurate responses. The findings provide up-to-date insights into the considerations of clothes shoppers in the UK and can be interrogated to identify any different priorities that may exist between different consumer types or between the purchase decisions of different types of clothing, for example casual versus smart items. Central to the aim of this research was the relative importance of ethical attributes. While there are a plethora of potential ethical issues in the clothing industry, the inductive research found that Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification were the two issues most widely understood and appreciated by

consumers as a means to identify ethical clothing lines. This chimes with the majority of previous studies which have mostly focused on Fair Trade (Didier and Lucie 2008; Doran 2009; Davies et al. 2010) and Organic consumption choice (Phau and Ong 2007; Didier and Lucie 2008; Tsakiridou et al. 2008).

Despite many studies commenting on growing interest in the ethical provenance of clothing (Thomas 2008; Clavin 2009; Hiller 2010), and in spite of Fair Trade accreditation and Organic certification being the most widely understood ethical indicators, it was found here that for most consumers these factors were not key considerations: aspects encompassing factors such as style, fit, comfort and price were all reported to be of greater importance in the clothing choices made. These findings agree with the majority of previous studies that have commented on ethical aspects being secondary considerations (Hartmann et al. 2005; Phau and Ong 2007), however, they bring clearer insight to this relationship by rating the relative importance of such factors. Further, it is notable that Fair Trade accreditation is more important than the use of Organically certified materials. Consumer perceptions were more positive towards Fair Trade lines and respondents reported being prepared to pay a higher price premium for Fair Trade products than for Organically labelled items. This finding provides clear guidance to the clothing industry, indicating that investment into Fair Trade production standards will be more commercially beneficial than the use of Organic cotton. Additionally, a focus on Fair Trade rather than Organic clothing would eliminate the oft cited constraining factor on the supply of ethical clothing, namely the limited supply of Organic cotton (Clout 2009; Rieple and Singh 2010). This relationship is likely to be due to the greater media attention that has been focused on sweatshop production practices than that given to the implications of non-Organic cotton production.

The primary data show that consumer understanding of the notion of sweatshops and Fair Trade is greater than that of Organic. This difference in understanding may be the cause of the disparity in perceived importance, rather than a lack of care for the environment. Recent surveys have demonstrated that this greater affinity towards Fair Trade rather than Organic goods is also the case for food items, with the most recent ethical consumer survey compiled by The Co-operative Bank (2010) finding that sales of Organic food and drink fell between 2007 and 2009, whereas sales of Fair Trade food grew by 64% over the same period. While such detailed statistics are not available for the clothing industry, it is possible that the pattern may be more dramatic in this context with the perceived personal health benefits of Organic accreditation being less obvious with clothing, whilst care for the fair treatment of workers and suppliers is likely to remain constant across different product categories.

While ethical factors have been found in this study to be secondary to other considerations, it is striking that Fair Trade accreditation is reported to be of greater importance than branding, exclusivity and designer labels, demonstrating that Fair Trade is of notable importance in many decisions. It is evident that these patterns are not universal, with some consumers valuing clothing brands highly, and similarly, some consumers rating ethical aspects as highly important in their choices. Previous studies have suggested that consumers are not prepared to compromise on other attributes in order to purchase an ethical item (Meyer 2001; D'Souza et al. 2006). The qualitative data in this research confirmed these suggestions with many respondents describing situations where they were receptive towards ethical messages and would be keen to purchase in accordance with these if all else was equal; consumers felt it is important to be able to retain the fashion status, look and comfort of an item before considering ethical aspects.

Both primary and secondary data outline a situation where the attributes of choice vary depending on the type of clothing item being considered (Birtwistle and Tsim 2005). Style and look may be very important for a party dress, for example, and of little concern in the purchase of everyday socks. With this being the case, any influence of ethical assessments which are of more consistent importance are likely to be of greater relative concern in the purchase of socks than the purchase of a party dress. This insight demonstrates that Fair Trade and Organic labelling will have greatest influence on basic items such as undergarments, and mainstream retailers that are seeking to add small ranges of ethical clothing would be most successful focusing on products in this category. For those retailers who have embedded ethical trading in their brand identity, these findings demonstrate that clothing lines are unlikely to sell, based predominantly on their ethical credentials, and that product positioning and marketing would be most effectively based upon criteria that are more prominent in consumer decisions such as quality, price or style, with ethical credentials being used to reassure the consumer and encourage purchase once a strong interest has been generated. This finding mirrors the assertions made by other studies, notably in the marketing of Fair Trade coffee, where sales are reported to have risen dramatically due to a shift in product position from the ethical choice to great tasting coffee (Wright 2004; Nicholls and Opal 2005).

Linked to this, many respondents in the quantitative survey commented that they would consider Fair Trade and Organic lines only in relation to food items, and it is certainly the case that these causes have generated greater traction in the context of food lines (The Co-operative Bank 2010). It is thought that consumers do not necessarily care more about Fair Trade food production than Fair Trade clothing production, rather that the important social communicative aspects of clothing makes shoppers consider other

attributes very carefully relegating the relative importance of ethical considerations. While it was found by Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) that consumers would avoid Organic clothing as it was perceived to be of poorer quality, the primary data compiled here does not corroborate this, with respondents generally feeling that the Organic status of clothing has little bearing on its quality.

The primary research has clearly established that consumers are willing, and in some cases keen, to make ethical purchases, but in the context of clothing at least, ethical criteria are far from centre stage as asserted anecdotally by some authors (Reeve 2010), and remain less important than other criteria of choice.

6.3.1 Awareness of and perceptions towards Fair Trade and Organic clothing

Despite all of the leading clothing retailers in the UK stocking at least limited ranges of ethical clothing, primary data demonstrates that customer awareness of such items being stocked is very low. These low levels of cognisance provide a challenge to such initiatives, with awareness being a clear precursor to consumer interest, desire for such products and action by way of purchase (McGoldrick 2002). The primary research shows that respondents with greater recognition of Fair Trade clothing being stocked by retailers judged such accreditation to be of greater importance in their purchase selections, although it is not possible to infer from the data whether awareness has led to greater interest, or whether those with greater interest in ethical provenance are more likely to notice such ranges.

Even if consumers are aware of the key ethical issues, it is not clear that the messages are well understood. The quantitative research found 26% of respondents indicating that they did not understand what Organic meant in relation to clothing lines, with 18% responding similarly with regards to Fair Trade clothing. Further, through the qualitative stages of the research it emerged that consumer understanding is often incomplete or inaccurate. Other studies have reported this partial understanding with Hustvedt et al. (2008), for example, finding that consumers have a lack of knowledge regarding the highly detrimental environmental impact of non-Organic or heavily irrigated cotton production.

Most consumers will not actively seek out information on production standards, they are reliant upon retailers informing or even educating them. In the food sector, pioneering brands have been instrumental in promoting the concept of Fair Trade and Organic produce through informative shelf edge labelling and packaging that not only clearly identifies a product as ethical through the use of a logo on its front, but often explaining the provenance in the space on the rear of the product's packaging (Zander et al. 2010). It is notable that these opportunities to communicate with the consumer are often missing in the clothing sector, with packaging usually being limited to a garment tag that needs to be searched for, and hung goods providing more limited shelf-edge point of sale marketing opportunities. With many consumers reporting that retailers should stock more Fair Trade and Organic clothing (69% and 57% of all respondents, respectively), and indicating that they would like retailers to provide more information on their production standards (76% of all respondents), a clear commercial opportunity exists here. Where clothing lines are sold in boxes or hung packaging is used, for example in the merchandising of multi-packs of basic lines such as socks, opportunities exist to provide such information. This information provision could take the form of a personal story, outlining the benefits to a cotton farming community or garment factory workers of the products enhanced provenance, an approach that has been commonly adopted in the food sector (Wright 2004; Davies, Doherty et al. 2010). In other product areas, where clothing lines are mostly hung and there are limits to the amount of information that can be provided on individual ticketing, flyers outlining the benefits of Fair Trade production processes co-located with such products would be welcome, and the greater awareness and understanding generated by this point of sale would undoubtedly increase interest. While consumers are demanding more information and seeking wider ranges of ethical clothing, it is acknowledged that raising the profile of potential ethical issues in the supply chain could expose the retailers of other ranges to criticism: through highlighting one range as fairly sourced, consumers may infer that other ranges were unfairly sourced; this may be the key reason why large clothing chains have appeared reluctant to market the limited ethical ranges that they do stock more widely. The primary data though highlights that some consumers actively seek ethical clothing lines, identifying a distinct commercial opportunity for these lines that would be sought by those consumers described as ethical hardliners (Niinimaki 2010) and embraced by those with an interest in, but lower commitment towards ethical principles.

A small number of previous studies have assessed levels of scepticism towards ethical claims; Mintel (2009), for example, found that 11% of consumers doubt the credentials of ethical labels. The results of the primary research are the first to have assessed the claims of Organic or Fair Trade status individually to reveal any differences in trust. Marked differences exist, with a far greater degree of scepticism being present in relation

to Organic than towards Fair Trade claims. Similarly, over half of all respondents viewed Organic clothing to be too expensive, where Fair Trade lines were not generally viewed in this way completing a picture of greater acceptance of, and interest in, Fair Trade than Organic clothing. This relationship is likely to be a reflection of consumers' weaker understanding of Organic claims in relation to clothing lines, and their generally less positive perceptions in comparison to Fair Trade lines.

6.4 Ethical clouding

Once consumers have decided which stores to visit and made preliminary product selections, ethical attributes may exert influence on choices. Ethical attributes are distinctly secondary for most consumers in selecting clothing lines, however, many respondents in the qualitative research identified that if there were any positive or negative ethical messages apparent to them, this could influence the final purchase decision, a finding that was confirmed through the subsequent quantitative study. The most likely positive ethical indicators that would be present are the labelling of an item as Fair Trade or Organic, while negative media attention or exposés, or the price being perceived by the shopper as too low were identified as the most likely indicators of poor provenance. These findings demonstrate that consumers care about the ethical provenance of their clothing purchases and that the labelling of goods exerts influence on final purchase decisions. There is a lack of research examining the impact of ethical labelling on clothing purchase (Bartsch et al. 2010), and so these findings provide useful insight into the influence of the two most commonly used and understood labelling claims (Organic certification and Fair Trade accreditation) and identify the influence that such claims can exert on purchasing. While such labels are likely to stimulate product sales alone only for the most ethically committed, it has been found that they will make mainstream consumers more likely to purchase, and in many situations where a number of items are deemed suitable, such labelling claims and ethical clouding will be sufficient to tip the balance in favour of the ethically labelled item.

6.5 Willingness to pay an ethical product premium

The pricing of ethical clothing lines is a complex area for consideration. There are a number of competing trends in the clothing industry; growth of ethical production standards being one trend which is opposed by a growth of cheap disposable clothing.

Following the abolition of the Multi-Fibre Agreement in 2005, which limited imports of clothing from certain countries as a protectionist measure, parts of the industry have witnessed significant price deflation (Hearson 2006; Nordas 2004; Ernst et al. 2005), with many stores becoming characterised by low cost and arguably poor quality clothing, facilitating a so-called fast fashion revolution where clothing lines are bought frequently and not worn extensively before they are disposed of (McAfee et al. 2004; Bhardwaj and Fairhurst 2010). In light of this trend, Mintel (2009) have logically suggested that ethical clothing lines should not be retailed too cheaply as they would continue to peddle the notion of disposable fashion and may breed scepticism. Mintel (2009) does not comment further on what might be considered too cheap or constitute adequate pricing.

A small number of studies have examined consumers' willingness to pay extra for an ethical product; a so-called ethical product premium. Most notably, McGoldrick and Freestone (2008) asked 988 respondents how much they would be willing to pay for a range of different products including 'ethically assured clothing', and Niinimaki (2010) asked an online sample of 246 Finnish consumers how much more they would be ready to pay for 'eco-clothing'. No studies have previously examined the tolerated ethical product premium toward Organic claims and Fair Trade claims individually; as such the primary data presented here provides significant additional insight in this area. The primary data finds 36% of respondents would not be prepared to pay more for Fair Trade clothing, and 49% would not be prepared to pay more for Organic clothing, compared to just 8.4% reporting in such a manner towards 'ethically assured clothing' (McGoldrick and Freestone 2008), and 3.7% toward 'eco-clothing' (Niinimaki 2010). Given the more favourable feelings towards Fair Trade lines than Organic lines, it is not surprising that the evidence shows consumers to be more willing to pay an ethical product premium on Fair Trade lines than on Organic lines. Additionally, the primary data demonstrate that more consumers are willing to pay higher product premiums for Fair Trade than Organic lines. The primary data do differ substantially from that reported by McGoldrick and Freestone (2008) and Niinimaki (2010), with this variation likely to be due to methodological differences, and the possibility for social desirability bias to have affected the results of these previous studies, however, further research in this area is necessary to fully understand the disparity.

In their qualitative research, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) found respondents keen to point out that they would favour ethical products if they were financially able to do so. The evidence presented here suggests that this finding may have been a result of social desirability bias, with no evidence found in the primary data that higher income levels will increase ethical consumption. Recent studies have found that consumers expect

ethically positioned clothing to be more expensive, with Stanforth and Hauck (2010) finding that consumers expected to have to pay a large price premium, but were only prepared to pay a little more, with this perceived disparity acting as a barrier to purchase. Harrell (2010), however, suggests that the price premium associated with ethical clothing is used by many consumers to associate such items with social status and showing off. The primary data have found that consumers do not feel that Organic or Fair Trade lines are too expensive, and they do not perceive such lines to be more fashionable or providing extra status to the wearer. There is no evidence from the primary data that consumers purchase ethical items as a means to communicate their caring or green personal credentials. Indeed, most Fair Trade or Organic clothing lines are not overtly branded in such a manner and so observers would rarely be able to discern the provenance of a wearer's clothing choice; further, with the marketing of Fair Trade and Organic clothing currently concentrated on basic lines and undergarments (Mintel 2009), such indicators would not be visible to observers. The evidence here challenges the view of a number of recent commentators who have asserted that ethical clothing purchase is increasingly being motivated by the fashion status of these items (Beard 2008; Kalyan 2009; Djula 2010; Harrell 2010); however, none of these publications offer any empirical support to their views. Further, the assertion that consumers do not purchase Fair Trade or Organic clothing to reap any perceived social status reaffirms the previous finding that ethical aspects should not be considered in the same realm as other symbolic or functional attributes of choice.

6.6 Ethical reflection

Previous studies have not extensively examined the post-purchase thoughts of consumers towards ethical issues. A number of studies have probed feelings towards ethically questionable behaviours such as buying counterfeit items, or returning items once they have satisfied their need (Chatzidakis et al. 2006), however, it is not thought that research in this area resonates with the vicarious nature of the ethical aspects examined in this thesis. Respondents in the primary research have identified that they care about the provenance of their clothing lines and feel guilt if they believe there may have been poor ethical standards through the supply chain. Conversely, the purchase of items identified as Organic or Fair Trade engenders positive feelings for many on wearing the items. This post-purchase reflection is an emotional response, affecting not only the user's satisfaction with the item, but also subtly their mood when thinking about the item.

Findings in this study extend and complement previous knowledge into such post-purchase reflections. Hiller (2008) noted how the purchase of a jumper had induced feelings of post-purchase guilt due to its ethically questionable provenance, and how noticing that a purchased T-shirt was Fair Trade had made another respondent feel good about their selection. Similarly, respondents in Nicholls and Lee's (2006) study reported feelings of guilt on the purchase of unethical products, while Kant (1964) found that people feel better if they buy something environmentally or socially positive. In their longitudinal studies, The Co-operative Bank reported that 17% expressed guilt about an unethical purchase in 2000 (Hines and Ames 2000), with this figure growing to 34% of all respondents in 2010 (The Co-operative Bank 2010). This is important research as it represents the only large longitudinal study into these phenomena and has clearly tracked a growing consumer conscience. The findings here, however, are not specific to particular product areas and are reliant on respondents' individual interpretations of unethical consumption.

The primary research finds that some 74% of respondents would feel guilt in purchasing items of clothing that they suspected to be manufactured in sweatshop conditions. Such a large proportion is, on the surface, striking, but overstates the phenomena as indication of poor manufacturing practices is not often apparent. This finding does, however, highlight the potential damage that negative media stories and exposure of questionable practices could inflict on a company, with such stories clearly implanting the idea of sweatshop production standards in the minds of consumers. Any feelings of guilt are driven by a cognitive dissonance within the individual (Festinger 1957), where discomfort is caused through holding conflicting views. In this case, cognitive dissonance is likely if a consumer wishes to purchase a low cost item of clothing or an item from a retailer who has been identified as having poor standards throughout their supply chain, but keen not to support such manufacturing practices.

Many studies have shown that consumers are driven to reduce such dissonance and will do so either by changing their behaviour or engaging in neutralising activity to help them to justify their actions (Cooper 2007; Jarcho et al. 2010). Any change in behaviour is likely to direct purchasing towards other retailers, not subject to ethical question, and towards any items that are indicated as holding high ethical standards, for example, through Fair Trade or Organic identification. Neutralisation might, in this context, see the consumers justifying their purchasing through comparison with others, denial of responsibility, or questioning the impact of their actions (Chatzidakis et al. 2007). Chatzidakis et al. (2006) comment that such neutralisation is likely to be prevalent in situations where the consumer is motivated to maintain self-esteem, resonating strongly with the purchase of clothing. During the qualitative research, a number of participants

appeared to question the reported ethical issues in the clothing industry, commenting that what we would regard as sweatshop conditions in the UK were normal and as such acceptable in their host nations. Some respondents went further to suggest that sweatshops were necessary in these countries to provide employment and support the country's economic development, a point that is not lost on a number of analysts (Myerson 1997; Hendrickson 2006). Such comments appear to be clear attempts to neutralise, probably subconsciously, any guilt that might be felt to reduce the dissonance within their conflicting views.

The discussion here highlights that ethical considerations have the potential to impact far beyond the decision stage of consumer behaviour, impacting the enjoyment and satisfaction of the product's usage. With the purchase of ethical items engendering positive emotions, and ethically questionable items promoting negative emotions in many, these post-purchase emotions are likely to trigger learning that may influence future evaluation of alternatives and thus product selections. The full effects of these relationships remain to be fully examined, but the data gathered by The Co-operative Bank (2010) evidences the growth in importance of these considerations and the potential impact that they can exert on future purchasing behaviour.

6.7 Individual differences

Existing research paints a very confused picture of the profile of the ethical consumer, with individual studies reporting quite different findings in this regard. As such, the primary research provides a very useful contribution to knowledge, assessing the factors likely to influence specifically the acceptance and desire for ethical clothing lines. Given the small sample sizes used within the inductive qualitative research stages it would be inappropriate to draw any inferences from participant response and their individual characteristics; rather, the quantitative primary survey data provide a richness of understanding, outlining a number of key differences in opinions and reported behaviours between distinct groups of consumers which will be discussed in the following sections.

6.7.1 Gender

In their review of the empirical ethical decision-making literature published between 1996 and 2003, O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) reported a total of 49 studies with findings pertaining to gender differences within the stages of ethical decision-making. Of these studies, a total of 23 did not find any significant differences between the responses of different gender groups, while 16 papers found some evidence of women being more ethically sensitive than men. While few of these studies will have focused on the context of consumption decisions, this summary suggests that women are more sensitive to issues of morality and ethics, a suggestion that is supported by the primary research. Primary data clearly show that female respondents' perceptions towards Organic and Fair Trade lines are more positive than the views of male respondents. Notwithstanding the fact that female respondents reported being more discerning in their clothing choices overall, they reported each of the ethical factors identified in the questionnaire as being more important than male respondents did; they were more likely to boycott brands and products on ethical grounds and more sensitive to feelings of guilt post-purchase or positive feelings when wearing Organic or Fair Trade lines.

A substantial gender difference is apparent which, while not challenging the broad thrust of existing research, confirms that within the context of clothing purchase female consumers are more positive towards and influenced to a greater extent by the causes of Fair Trade and Organic. Investigation of the causes for such a gender difference was beyond the scope of this study; however, it can be observed that female respondents had greater awareness of Fair Trade lines being offered by the leading UK clothing retailers. This difference of awareness is likely, at least in part, to reflect the greater time female shoppers spend on average in clothing stores and their greater purchase volumes, purchasing some 66% of all clothes sold in the UK (Mintel 2009; Mintel 2010). Those with greater awareness of Fair Trade lines held more positive perceptions towards such claims.

With increasing retailer and media attention highlighting the potential ethical issues within the clothing industry (Blanco-Velo et al. 2010) and consumer awareness of these issues steadily growing (The Co-operative Bank 2010), identifying the clear link between awareness and positive perceptions is important, and should serve to firstly reassure and encourage retailers to engage with ethical ranges, and secondly to provide greater information on their ethical products to help aid consumer awareness. The provision of greater information on product provenance has emerged as a strong theme from the

questionnaire data with most respondents suggesting that stores should provide more information on their production and sourcing standards.

Whether it is female shoppers' greater awareness of ethical ranges or other underlying personality differences that lead females to hold more positive attitudes toward Fair Trade and Organic lines and place greater importance on ethical issues, it is clear that ethical ranges of female clothing are likely to be more successful than ranges targeting male consumers due to these differences in views and the greater volumes of female clothing purchased.

6.7.2 Age

The effect of age on ethical decision-making is highly controversial, with different studies reporting opposing findings in this regard. In their review of previous research, O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) identified eight studies that did not find significant age differences, five studies reporting the importance of ethical considerations increasing with age, and six studies reporting the importance falling with age. Methodological and contextual differences are likely to account for a large part of this disagreement, but still it is unclear which effect age may have on decision-making in this context. It is thought that previous studies may have taken a too simplistic view of age differences, seeking to identify either a singular positive or negative relationship with ethical views. Rather, the primary research has found a more complex relationship to be present, with ethical considerations being of relatively low importance for the youngest group of consumers (aged 16-24), rising in importance progressively until the respondent group aged 35-44, beyond which point opinions appear to stabilise before declining in importance for respondents over 65.

A large body of research has examined the concept of moral maturity, proposing that people's ethical views develop as they grow more informed and form views on the world around them (Gibbs et al. 1992; Brinkmann 2004). Kohlberg (1969) proposed six key stages of moral maturity, starting with 'how to avoid punishment' at one end, progressing through to 'principled conscience'. It is suggested that moral development continues throughout an individual's lifetime and that it is extremely rare to regress backwards (Walker 1989). This work supports a picture of increasing moral maturity and ethical importance as consumers age. Counterpoised against this notion of increasing moral maturity is the declining interest in clothing and fashion observed among older consumers (Birtwistle and Tsim 2005). The primary research clearly shows that older respondents

buy fewer items of clothing, are less aware of the availability of ethical lines, and have a poorer understanding of Fair Trade and Organic claims in relation to clothing than younger shoppers, all factors likely to lead to a decline in the perceived importance of these causes to those over 65.

A lower level of moral development is likely to explain, at least in part, why the youngest consumers express relatively little interest in ethical considerations, however, it is also thought that clothing lines play an extenuated communicative role for younger consumers, serving to express their self-identity and conformity with desired groups (Phau and Lo 2004). For these shoppers, factors such as 'advice from friends and family' and the 'branding of the product' were extremely important, eclipsing any ethical considerations that could have been present. With peer pressure and branding of such importance to these consumers, an ethical brand that managed to capture the attention of opinion leaders among this demographic could be very successful, however, 'low price' of items was also most highly rated by this group which would act as a strong barrier to such success. Rather, the primary research suggests that ethical clothing is likely to find its strongest markets among consumers aged between 35 and 65, with this group having developed moral maturity, possessing a strong understanding of and appreciation for Fair Trade and Organic lines and being frequent purchasers of clothing.

6.7.3 Income and education level

Previous research has not extensively examined the impact of consumers' financial resources on their attitudes to ethical issues. This is surprising given that many ethical clothing lines are significantly more expensive than alternative items and are often marketed as premium products. A small number of writers have commented that ethical products are the preserve of the affluent (Barnett et al. 2005; Domeisen 2006), however these authors proffer no empirical research to support their assertions. The only study to assess the impact of education and income level on ethical concerns in a consumption setting found that the individuals with the strongest ethical concerns held lower levels of both education and income (Muncy and Vitell 1992), however, the ethical scenarios examined in this study were of a more Machiavellian nature than those considered here. Findings from the primary research were both striking and complex. Consumers with higher household incomes do not appear to buy greater volumes of clothing, but are more discerning in their purchase choices. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the price of an item is of lower importance to these consumers, but the primary research clearly reveals that

shoppers with higher disposable incomes and those with higher educational attainment view ethical aspects as less important.

This finding is striking and supports the early work of Muncy and Vitell (1992) and, on the surface, challenges the marketing strategies of many providers of ethical clothing. However, on fully probing the primary data, the picture appears more complex. Those with higher incomes and with higher educational attainment better understand the concepts surrounding Fair Trade and Organic clothing, are less likely to view these items as being too expensive, and are willing to pay considerably more for such lines. With these consumers less likely to believe that Organic clothing is more healthy to wear, and less likely to believe that they are more fashionable, it appears that they are generally less positive towards the notion of Fair Trade and Organic lines, but also less constrained by any price premium that may be associated with them. While consumers with lower household incomes and with lower levels of educational attainment understand the concepts of Fair Trade and Organic clothing less well and are less willing to pay a large price premium for such lines, they are more positively influenced by such claims, highlighting a key challenge to retailers in seeking the most receptive consumer segments.

With a scarcity of research indentifying this phenomenon, it is difficult to conjecture its underlying causes. One contributory factor is likely to lie in the demographic profile of respondents, with those falling into the higher income categories more likely to be male and younger, both aspects identified separately here as holding influence on ethical beliefs. While a small price premium might be necessitated by sourcing Organic or Fair Trade clothing, these findings challenge the wisdom of positioning such an offer to high income groups as is currently often the case.

6.8 Chapter summary

Through exploring the research findings and discussing in relation to previous studies, a summary theoretical model has been presented highlighting the points at which ethical considerations may influence consumers' selection and use of clothing lines. Each of these key points in the consumers' journey has been discussed to identify the likely scale and nature of the influence before key differences between groups of consumers have been discussed. Through exploring the research findings, the implications to theory and

practice have been identified, and the key recommendations in this regard will be identified in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

With increasing media attention focusing on ethical aspects of clothing production, and all large UK clothing retailers investing in ethically accredited ranges, this study critically evaluates the role that ethical aspects play within consumers' clothing purchase decision-making. Research that provides an understanding of both the importance that consumers place on such criteria and how their decisions are influenced by these considerations is both timely and overdue, providing a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of consumer behaviour, thus enabling retailers to employ optimum strategies. From this research clear conclusions can be reached.

Firstly, claims that ethical issues have become significant mainstream concerns to the majority of consumers are overstated. This research has shown that ethical aspects do not provide powerful influence on clothing choices in comparison to other attributes such as style, practicality and pricing. It is also possible to conclude that the purchase of clothing is complex, and that the influence of ethical considerations cannot be considered in the same realm as other attributes. Rather, any influence ethical considerations exert impact the decision-making process at a series of key points throughout the consumer's purchase decision-making process. Negative ethical messages will discourage purchase and lead to negative emotions such as post-purchase guilt or, most dramatically, the boycott of particular lines or retailers, while positive ethical messages can encourage purchase and lead to positive post-purchase emotions.

In spite of ethical considerations being secondary in most consumers' clothing choices, it can also be concluded that any media attention highlighting poor ethical standards within the supply chain of a retail company are absorbed by consumers and lead to some boycotting of the brand. Further, the data demonstrates that the influence of such negative media attention will be felt for many years, thus having a long lasting effect on the consumer's relationship with the affected brand or retailer.

It can be concluded from the primary research that Fair Trade accreditation is more widely understood and likely to exert greater positive influence on clothing purchase decisions than Organic certification. It is clear from this that retailers seeking to introduce ethical clothing ranges should focus their attention on the use of Fair Trade accreditation rather than seeking to simply use Organic cotton in their garments.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from analysis of the profile of different respondent groups, thus identifying those consumers most likely to be influenced by ethical aspects:

- Females are, firstly, more positive towards Fair Trade and Organic claims; secondly, they are more prepared to boycott brands and products on ethical grounds; thirdly, they are more likely to feel guilt post-purchase; and fourthly are more prone to positive feelings when wearing Organic or Fair Trade items.

- Consumers aged 44 to 60 are most interested in ethical clothing. The youngest consumers (16-24) care little for ethical considerations through a lack of moral maturity and the extenuated communicative role of clothing for this group. Whilst moral maturity grows with age, older consumers understand the ethical issues in the clothing industry less well and have lower awareness of the availability of ethical clothing.

- Consumers with greater awareness of ethical clothing lines being stocked hold more positive views of such lines.

- As household income rises, the importance of ethical aspects declines. Ethical clothing brands should, therefore, target mainstream consumers rather than high income groups; this is an important conclusion that challenges much existing practice in the marketing of ethical clothing.

7.1 Contributions to theory

Previous research has focused largely on consumer decision-making, or ethical decision-making, but the two constructs have not been put together demonstrating there is a gap in existing knowledge. Only very limited research has been conducted into the role that ethical aspects can play in the consumer decisions, and of the research that has been conducted, most focuses on negative ethical aspects such as falsely returning goods to a store, rather than the potential to engage in positive ethics through the vicarious purchase of ethically identified products. This research provides a significant contribution to knowledge, challenging existing conceptual assumptions and offering radical new theoretical insights in three main areas:

Firstly, through examining ethical attributes within the holistic process of clothing purchase, this study provides the first assessment of the importance of ethical aspects in the decision-making of typical consumers. This provides a unique and significant contribution to the existing work in the area that focuses more narrowly on ethical aspects of choice, or on the views of an accentuated sample of previously identified 'ethical

consumers'. The most cited comparable work has surveyed the views of subscribers to an ethical magazine. As such, it is reporting the attitudes and behaviours of an extreme sample, a point that is not always acknowledged when this work is cited in other studies. Findings here of more typical consumers highlight that for most shoppers, ethical considerations are not key attributes of product selection, rendering models focusing on the ethicality of decision-making ineffective in explaining consumer purchase habits. Rather, conceptual approaches that assess the holistic process of consumer choice whilst providing for the influence of any ethical consideration will hold greater explanatory power. This new approach and radical findings serve to challenge the existing published material in this area that has been constructed with a more limited research sample.

Secondly, this research has identified and probed the specific ways in which such ethical issues can impact on the selection, purchase and use of clothing lines. Previously, ethical attributes have been thought to influence decisions alongside other attributes of product selection such as colour, style or fit; but the research presented here has fundamentally challenged this assertion by identifying for the first time the very different role that ethical aspects play within consumer behaviour. Specifically, the boycotting of items, stores and brands early in the decision-making process is followed by an ethical influence on provisional purchase selections. Post-purchase ethical reflection on purchases can lead to positive emotions or, in the case of questionable ethical standards being present, feelings of guilt, both holding the potential to influence future purchasing decisions. These key relationships are highlighted in the theoretical model presented in Figure 27 which provides an original comprehensive account of the role of ethical considerations in purchase decision-making. By not recognising the different way that ethical considerations impact the consumer decision-making process, previous studies are simplistic, and have ignored significant effects that ethical aspects hold in the purchasing choices of many consumers beyond the evaluation of alternatives. This is a significant omission as it has led to an underreporting of the total influence of such considerations in many studies. The new knowledge from this study challenges existing thinking and furthers understanding of consumer behaviour considerably by providing a strong theoretical platform that can be used to examine other areas of the retail sector.

Thirdly, this research provides clear insights into consumer segmentation with regards to ethical consideration. Through the notions of moral maturity and ethical knowledge and engagement, a clear understanding of how age impacts ethical assessments is provided, helping to demystify the conflicting findings reported in previous studies. Further, findings here confirm the majority of previous studies that describe females as being more receptive to ethical messages than their male counterparts, and through demonstrating

that wealthier consumers care less about ethical issues, a more detailed picture has been developed. The findings here add to existing knowledge and aid understanding of the diverse findings from previous research in this area.

7.2 Contributions to practice

Due to the applied nature of this research, many of the findings provide direct and clear guidance to clothing retailers into the buying principles that should be adopted, optimal customer segmentation, and the merchandising and marketing practices best employed. Firstly, contrary to some media reports, retailers should acknowledge that ethical attributes are not at the core of many consumers' purchase choices. In spite of this, it would be unwise for retailers to ignore the very strong impact of consumer boycotts if poor ethical standards were exposed within their supply chains. While much literature has highlighted the difficulty in verifying the provenance of every product, each retailer should make reasonable efforts to do so and explore ways to introduce ethical lines into their current product portfolio. These steps should reduce the likelihood of their ethical standards being subjected to damaging media scrutiny, whilst also enabling the retailer to benefit from growing consumer interest in ethical goods. Few customers are sceptical toward Fair Trade or Organic claims or hold negative views toward these initiatives, so the influence that such claims have of purchase decisions is universally positive. It is clear from this research that Fair Trade sourcing is more widely understood and of greater influence than Organic certification, guiding retailers to concentrate their efforts towards Fair Trade accreditation within their supply chains and thus introducing wider ranges of items labelled as Fair Trade in their stores.

The customer group that will be most receptive towards ethical lines are females, aged between 44 and 65 with average household incomes. This demographic profile provides clear strategic guidance to those retailers focusing on the supply of ethical clothing and more general retailers seeking to develop ranges in this area. While other consumers have a growing interest in ethical consumption, it is this demographic group that currently is leading the way, thus increasing the likelihood of ethical product ranges being successful if targeting this age group. Within all age, gender, and income groups there are some consumers who care little for ethical aspects and others who actively seek out the most ethically positive products. There is a clear commercial opportunity for retailers to not only use ethics to enhance their products, positively influencing the purchase choices of many consumers, but also to attract sales from the most committed ethical consumer who will only purchase such lines.

Finally, a number of clear messages have emerged relating to the marketing of ethical clothing lines. Consumers wish to see wider ranges of Fair Trade and Organic clothing stocked by retailers and would be keen for greater availability of information, outlining products' provenance. This increased product information should be delivered through on-pack messages or through store based point-of-sale materials. With most consumers making their initial product selection influenced by symbolic and functional product attributes, and ethical attributes only influencing final decisions on closely considered short-listed items, retailers need to ensure that their clothing lines are positioned and carefully designed to address the symbolic and functional needs of their target customer. Clothing lines that are ethically focused, but do not address the symbolic and functional needs of the consumer, are likely to find only a very niche following.

7.3 Scope and limitations

The mixed methodological research strategy employed here enabled the quantitative research phase to be informed by the language and factors that had emerged from the preceding qualitative studies, and as such avoided a shortfall of many previous studies reviewed that have relied upon the researchers language and limited by the factors they have introduced. Additionally, the questionnaire here was distributed to a sample drawn from every household in the UK. The key strength of this approach is that it ensured that responses were gained from a diverse geographic spread and representative of all age groups, income levels and both genders. Through drawing the sample from a postal address list though, it was not possible to address the survey to named recipients, one factor that may have reduced the overall response rate. The total usable response rate of 384 may be typical of such a survey method; however, it is not possible to be certain that the responses received were consistent with the views of the non-responders. This level of response is comparable to that likely to be achieved through alternate methods such as mall intercept.

Given the moral dimensions of the topic area, any research is prone to possible social desirability bias where research subjects seek to align their responses with those they perceive to be correct, socially desirable or preferred by the researcher. In order to minimise the effect of this potential for bias, a semi-covert approach was adopted in the qualitative research phases in order to observe if and how the consumer introduced ethical aspects without prompting. The questionnaire was carefully designed with a

similar approach, not explicitly mentioning the ethical nature of the research on the first page and using regression to ensure that the most accurate responses were gained. Remote and anonymous completion of the questionnaire also reduced the likelihood of social desirability bias although the potential effect cannot be completely discounted.

Overall, the choice of sequentially administered methods was most appropriate to successfully address the research questions posed by this study, and the careful design to examine the process of clothing purchase holistically, using techniques to reduce social desirability bias and ground the survey research in the consumers' own vocabulary, has set this study apart from previous studies, enabling a strong contribution to theory and practice to be made.

7.4 Directions for future research

Significant new understandings of the role that ethics plays in consumer decision-making in the context of clothing purchase provide a sound basis for further research. The theoretical model that has been developed is likely to have resonance with purchase decisions in other product areas within the retail sector; as such, further research is called for to validate and test the proposed relationships in other purchasing contexts.

The key relationships between ethical attributes and the purchase decision process have been identified and explored here, with some striking findings emerging. In a number of areas the scope of this study has not enabled full exploration of the causal factors driving such relationships. A key example of this is the finding that those with higher household incomes rated each of the ethical aspects surveyed as being less important to them than those with lower household incomes. Further research is necessary to fully probe this relationship and understand the causal factors. Additionally, multi-variate analysis of the survey data, examining possible relationships between the predictor variables is likely to add to a richness of understanding in this area.

With growing media interest in ethical and environmental issues, consumer interest and knowledge is rising. It is clear that the role of ethical issues in consumption decisions is likely to be dynamic; as such, this research provides only a snapshot of current

perceptions and opinions and will need to be updated regularly to ensure that an accurate assessment of the contemporary consumer is maintained.

Finally, there was some indication in the primary data that ethical aspects may play an enhanced role in the purchase of clothing for children and in the gift purchase of clothing. The data here was statistically inconclusive, possibly due to the small number of respondents recalling such purchases, however, a study focusing on gift purchase and purchasing for children would be an exciting avenue for future research.

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9: Appendices

An Exploratory Study into the Factors Impeding Ethical Consumption

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ABSTRACT. Although consumers are increasingly engaged with ethical factors when forming opinions about products and making purchase decisions, recent studies have highlighted significant differences between consumers' intentions to consume ethically, and their actual purchase behaviour. This article contributes to an understanding of this 'Ethical Purchasing Gap' through a review of existing literature, and the inductive analysis of focus group discussions. A model is suggested which includes exogenous variables such as moral maturity and age which have been well covered in the literature, together with further impeding factors identified from the focus group discussions. For some consumers, inertia in purchasing behaviour was such that the decision-making process was devoid of ethical considerations. Several consumers manifested their ethical views through post-purchase dissonance and retrospective feelings of guilt. Others displayed a reluctance to consume ethically due to personal constraints, a perceived negative impact on image or quality, or an outright negation of responsibility. Those who expressed a desire to consume ethically often seemed deterred by cynicism, which caused them to question the impact they, as an individual, could achieve. These findings enhance the understanding of ethical consumption decisions and provide a platform for future research in this area.

KEY WORDS: attitude–behaviour gap, ethical consumption, Fair Trade

Introduction

It is commonly stated that ethical consumption is growing (Berry and McEachern, 2005; Davis, 2006; Nicholls, 2002; Webster, 2000). A longitudinal study by the Co-operative Bank reports that sales of ethical goods rose between 2004 and 2007 at around 12% a year, reaching £35.5 bn in 2007 (Clavin,

2008). Such growth patterns undoubtedly show great potential, but sales in this area still represent less than 6% of the overall consumer market of some £600 bn (Macalister, 2007). A large scale study by Cowe and Williams (2000) found that more than one third of consumers in the UK described themselves as 'ethical purchasers', yet ethically accredited products such as Fair Trade lines only achieved a 1–3% share of their market. Cowe and Williams (2000) named this the '30:3 phenomenon', since approximately 30% of consumers profess to care about ethical standards, but only 3% of purchases reflect these standards. This phenomenon has been independently noted by other authors and has also been termed the 'Ethical Purchasing Gap' (Nicholls and Lee, 2006) and the 'Attitude–Behaviour Gap' (Kim et al., 1997). Research into ethical consumption has increased significantly in recent years, but few studies have explored the factors responsible for this gap. The aim of this study was to explore the factors that impede the translation of consumers' ethical intentions into purchasing behaviour.

Ethical consumption

Many authors comment on the difficulty in defining ethical behaviour (KPMG and Synovate, 2007; Singhapakdi et al., 1999), ethical retailing (Whysall, 1998) and ethical consumption (Cherrier, 2005; Clavin and Lewis, 2005; Howard and Nelson, 2000). Whilst many aspects of consumer behaviour may be questioned ethically, assessments and distinctions tend to be subjective and complicated by circumstances (Cherrier, 2005; Kent, 2005). Ethical considerations may also be contradictory, for example, the desire to 'reduce food miles and support

developing countries' (KPMG and Synovate, 2007, p. 2). Despite this, a number of common ethical issues emerge from the literature, especially Fair Trade principles (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007; Loureiro and Lotade, 2005; Nicholls and Opal, 2005); the use of organically grown and processed materials (Shaw et al., 2006; Tomolillo and Shaw, 2004; Tsakiridou et al., 2008); working practices in developing nations (Anniss, 2003; Dickson, 1999; Joergens, 2006); and the depletion of natural resources (Ford et al., 2005; Sanfilippo, 2007). Cooper-Martin and Holbrook (1993, p. 113) define ethical consumer behaviour as 'decision-making, purchases and other consumption experiences that are affected by the consumer's ethical concerns'.

A number of decision-making models have been proposed within the broad area of business ethics (Nicholls and Lee, 2006, p. 371), the majority of which approach the issue from an organisational perspective, often without empirical support (Ford and Richardson, 1994). Comparatively little attention has been given to the role that ethics plays in individual purchasing behaviour (Nicholls and Lee 2006). Among the relatively limited studies on individual ethical decision making, two prominent theoretical approaches are Hunt and Vitell's General theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt and Vitell, 1986) and various models that draw on the behavioural theories of Ajzen and Fishbein (Chatzidakis et al., 2006).

Hunt and Vittel's General theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Vitell and Muncy, 1992) was developed to explain the ethical behaviour of marketing practitioners, but may also be applied to the study of ethical consumer behaviour (Marks and Mayo, 1991; Vitell et al., 2001). This model is based upon the philosophical principles of *deontology* (obligations or rules) and *teleology* (guided by the consequences of actions). It enjoys wide acceptance and its hypothesised relationships have been tested in numerous empirical studies (Vitell, 2003). According to Hunt and Vitell's model, ethical decision making begins with the perception of an ethical problem and is influenced by a number of exogenous variables. Individuals (e.g. consumers) make deontological and teleological assessments of all possible alternative behaviours to arrive at an overall ethical judgement which guides their inten-

tion and hence their behaviour. The model postulates that in a final stage the consequences of behaviour are absorbed into learning, an aspect that is important in ethical consumption, where enhanced satisfaction might result from purchasing ethically sourced goods, or guilt from buying a less ethical alternative (Chatzidakis et al., 2006).

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1980) identifies two factors: individual attitudes and social norms, as the antecedents of behaviour, while the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1988) proposes that behaviour depends on three factors: one's attitudes, one's perceptions of societal pressure and the control one feels one has over the purchasing action. However, the relationship between these factors and ethical principles is not clear. For instance, Rest (1986) proposes a version of the planned behaviour model, in which individual consumers pass through four consecutive stages towards an ethical purchase: recognition of the ethical issue; application of ethical judgement; resolution to place ethical concerns ahead of others; and finally action on the ethical issue. However, Jones (1991) suggests that the moral intensity of an issue impacts upon all stages of Rest's model, such that two separate moral issues, simultaneously acknowledged by the consumer, may exert differing levels of influence over the decision process. Hence, a review by Loe et al. (2000, p. 186) concludes that Jones' approach provides 'the most comprehensive synthesis model of ethical decision-making'. However, all of the models discussed above focus on ethical aspects of the decision process and do not readily embrace situations where the ethics of a decision might be secondary to other factors. For instance, ethics might have some influence when buying clothes, but colour, style etc. are likely to be more important. Further, these contributions were intended to model general decision making rather than being specifically concerned with consumption decisions.

Since the mid 1990s, a few researchers have specifically addressed the ethics of consumer behaviour. Strong (1996) suggests a model based on the theory of planned behaviour, in which individuals' beliefs are also considered precursors of attitudes and behavioural intentions. Shaw and her colleagues identify two types of factors affecting consumers'

belief structures: *information* especially that embedded in trustworthy labels, and *normative social factors*, including the influence of peers, family and, in some cases, religion (Shaw and Clarke, 1999). They also include 'ethical obligation' and 'self identity', concepts that first appeared in earlier study by Sparks and others (Sparks and Guthrie, 1998; Sparks et al., 1995). Shaw's group found not only that these two latter constructs influence attitudes, but that the direct contributions of ethical obligation and self-identity may be more significant than the original constructs of attitudes and subjective norm (Shaw and Shiu, 2002; Shaw et al., 2000). They comment: '[this] serves to highlight the deficiency of a model that is underpinned purely by self-interested motives' (p. 114). However, there are some inherent limitations to Shaw's study, most notably in the samples used. In order to collect the views of especially ethically motivated consumers, Shaw sampled subscribers to *The Ethical Consumer* magazine and focused on the purchase of Fair Trade grocery lines. The latter situational factor, together with the 'extreme' (Shaw et al., 2000, p. 884) nature of the sample may have compromised the generalisability of the results.

The approaches discussed so far assume that consumers are actively engaged with at least one ethical issue, to which they give significant consideration, but this is unlikely always to be the case, since consumers may not be fully aware of the ethical issues behind consumption choices. In addition, all of these models (that of Hunt and Vitell (1986) and those based on the study of Ajzen and Fishbein) posit behaviour as a direct consequence of attitudes and intentions, a notion that does not fit with the 'ethical consumption gap' discussed earlier. The research presented here seeks to explore further factors that may intervene between consumers' attitudes and behaviour to inhibit the adoption of 'ethical' products, and thus to enhance the predictive power of existing theories.

Influences on ethical consumption

The identification of consumers who may be more sympathetic toward ethical issues, and hence more likely to choose ethical products is important in both practical and theoretical terms. Although a considerable body of research exists in this area, it has so far produced conflicting and confusing findings (Cherrier, 2005), especially in terms of demographic factors. Thus ethical sensitivity is reported to increase with consumers' age (Hines and Ames, 2000), to be greater in female consumers (Parker, 2002), to increase with affluence (Barnett et al., 2005, p. 22) and to be greater at lower educational levels (Dickson, 2005). On the other hand, a similar number of authors find no such correlations, and it is suggested that demographic factors are poor predictors of ethical views, for a variety of background reasons (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005).

According to Kohlberg (1969) individuals pass through six key stages of moral maturity, which inter alia influence consumption behaviour (Rest, 1986). Related to moral maturity are one's beliefs and one's confidence in them, the relevance of which to consumption patterns is argued by McDevitt et al. (2007). These authors suggest that decision-makers with strong beliefs follow their judgement more confidently, especially when required to take individual action. One's confidence and moral maturity in ethical decision making may also be related to one's perceived locus of control (Forte, 2004). Individuals with an *external* locus of control tend to believe that ethical dilemmas are beyond their control whereas those with an *internal* locus of control are more likely to make ethical decisions in defiance of conflicting social or situational pressures (Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1991). These findings show the complexity underlying decision making in ethical consumption, and suggest a number of ways in which moral and emotional factors might interact to influence the outcome of such decision-making processes.

Research into the situational factors that may impede ethical consumption choices is more limited. Factors identified to date include the limited availability of ethical products (Nicholls and Lee, 2006); the excessive bombardment of consumers with messages (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000); inertia in consumption choice (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000); and consumer scepticism of ethical symbols (Nicholls and Lee, 2006). Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggest that consumers tend to make ethical purchases that do not require them to

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pay more, suffer loss of quality or make a special effort.

Whilst guilt is commonly assumed to occur post–purchase (Hiller, 2008), Steenhaut and Van Kenhove (2006) found that anticipated guilt acted as a partial mediator between consumers ethical beliefs and intentions. In focusing on the emotional aspects of decision making they have found that thinking about the negative consequences that could result from a decision may trigger negative anticipated emotions, in turn deterring the consumer from a perceived unethical course of action. Alternatively, making choices that are likely to have more positive implications can arouse positive emotions making such decisions more likely (Steenhaut and Van Kenhove, 2006). This study examined the role of anticipated guilt in ethically questionable consumer situations such as unjustified product returns, but the effects demonstrated could also have bearing on product selection where alternative choices have different ethical stances.

These contributions are summarised in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1. However, many of the factors listed have been derived either from research within a specific context, or from broad research articles into ethical consumption, none of which specifically focuses upon inhibitors to purchase. Many of the contributions are not grounded in empirical research, and it is possible that factors impeding ethical consumption and leading to the 'Attitude–Behaviour Gap' remain unidentified.

Methodology

Focus group discussion was identified as the most appropriate and accessible technique, given the exploratory nature of the research. This approach has been successfully employed elsewhere to study consumer attitudes in relatively unresearched contexts (Clavin and Lewis, 2005; Nicholls and Lee, 2006). According to Cowe and Williams (2000), a possible reason for the attitude–behaviour gap may be 'social desirability bias', also described as 'over reporting of ethical actions by research respondents seeking to give the ''right'' answer' (Clavin and Lewis, 2005, p. 185). In order to minimise this potential effect, focus groups in this study were constructed and moderated along established guidelines (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Three focus groups were conducted according to the recommendation of Krueger and Casey (2009 p. 21), each containing six participants. It was necessary to use this small group size due to the sensitive nature of the subject, and to minimise the potential for social desirability bias (Falconer, 1976). The three focus groups were conducted respectively in Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset, counties of the southern UK, and included participants from 15 to 78 years of age, to ensure representation from each age group. An equal gender mix was also assured, but beyond this, recruitment was based on convenience sampling through existing networks of colleagues and wider family members. Each participant gave informed consent prior to the commencement of the focus group
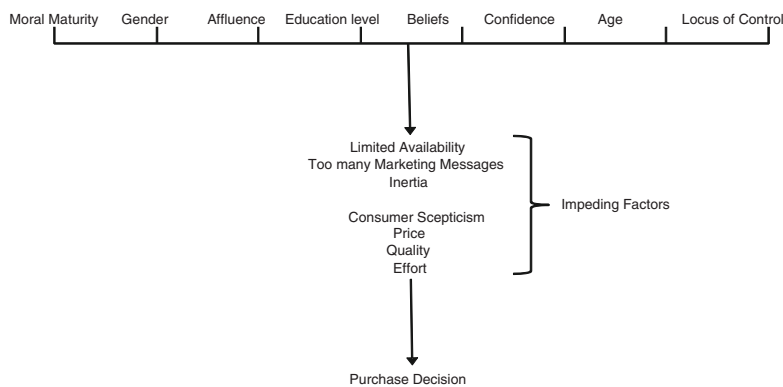
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of factors potentially impeding ethical consumption.

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discussions. It was not an aim of this study to identify differences between different consumer groups, and after preliminary analysis of the three focus groups theoretical saturation of the data appeared to have been reached.

In order to ensure that each focus group followed the same structure and that key objectives were addressed, a structured discussion guide was compiled with broad, open-ended discussion prompts as recommended by Krueger and Casey (2009). This guide was piloted by addressing the discussion prompts to three separate respondents in one-to-one interviews, thus ensuring as far as possible that the prompts were easily understood and initiated a free discussion. In keeping with qualitative research principles the moderator did not follow this guide rigidly, and the discussion was allowed to develop freely, so that as far as possible ideas could emerge freely and be adequately probed. Moderation was deliberately relaxed and conversational to produce an unpressured environment and a free flowing discussion. Moderator involvement was kept to a minimum so that the group could discuss issues freely without unnecessary intervention.

All focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, including notes on tonality, hesitation and intonation. Open and axial coding was used to develop a template of emergent factors, which was refined through iterative coding and recoding to ensure robustness of the findings. This process identified eight key themes that are explored below.

Findings

Key themes emerging from the data were price, which was mentioned the most frequently in the discussion, followed respectively by experience, ethical obligation, information, quality, inertia, cynicism, and guilt. The contributions of each in understanding the Ethical Purchasing Gap are discussed below.

Price sensitivity

Focus group participants often mentioned price, suggesting that they cared more about financial than ethical values, particularly with reference to food and other frequently purchased items. One participant stated:

> I don't... consider ethical products in a supermarket because it is a bill you pay weekly and you need it to be as small as possible.

When they purchased an ethical alternative, people seemed to experience post-purchase dissonance as soon as they noticed that the price was higher. In some cases, this resulted in the future avoidance of ethical products. For instance, one individual abandoned the purchase of Fair Trade tea and coffee due to the higher price. Participants said that on balance they did care about ethical issues and were willing to pay slightly more; however they were reluctant to pay more than a few pence extra for goods where they saw no significant tangible reward:

> A little bit more, yes... I wouldn't mind paying a bit more but when you've got [a] limited amount of money to spend each week, you can't afford these things.

Price appeared less of an issue for locally produced goods. Participants seemed able to justify the premium asked and to understand, in this familiar context, how the extra pence could be justified. Thus, the physical remoteness of other ethical issues may hinder consumers' attachment and commitment to their beliefs as suggested by Whalen et al. (1991). Despite their stated focus on price, some participants appeared more fixed in their habitual purchasing than they were prepared to admit. Faced with a hypothetical situation where price considerations were removed, they did not immediately opt for ethical products as might have been expected.

Personal experience

According to McDevitt et al. (2007), the biggest hurdle to ethical consumption is that individuals may not recognise the ethical consequences of their purchasing choices. Participants in this study seemed most receptive to changes in their habitual purchasing when a particular news story forced them to think about an ethical issue or when they were personally affected, for instance:

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If it… is not put straight in your face, eventually you will just forget about it and go back to your day-to-day business until it comes up again.

Participants reacted most strongly to recent negative news stories; positive information generated less interest, was often viewed with cynicism and seemed less likely to affect purchase decisions, as has also been noted by Herr et al. (1991).

When asked outright, participants said they did not consume ethically as an alternative to giving to charity. However, it became apparent in discussion that there were links between charitable donations and ethical consumption. For instance, a number of participants had donated generously to the relief fund for the 2005 Tsunami, only to read reports that the money was not reaching the people for whom it was intended. As a result of this, they switched their ethical purchasing behaviour from Fair Trade goods to local produce, where they felt greater confidence that their money was making a difference.

Ethical obligation

Participants saw the relevance of personal values to ethical purchasing, and constantly maintained that they would like to make a difference. However, as the discussion continued, contradictions between rhetoric and action kept appearing, where ethical obligation was more concerned with suppressing qualms of conscience. Thus, although they spoke of an obligation to 'do one's bit', especially when the price differential was small, participants gave various reasons why it was 'too difficult' to consume on a purely ethical basis. Individuals' perceptions of what was ethical also varied considerably. When a vegetarian member said it was unacceptable for her to consume a chicken, another participant commented that she

[…] would be a vegetarian but at the end of the day they are still going to kill all the animals.

This recalls Forte's study on locus of control (Forte, 2004). The vegetarian participant felt her actions could make a difference (internal locus of control), while the second one thought a change in her consumption pattern would have no impact. This exemplifies how an external locus of control

was used to justify existing purchasing behaviour (cf. Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1991).

Lack of information

Consumers need to be fully informed to make effective purchasing decisions (Sproles et al., 1978). Although the public domain contains much information relevant to ethical consumption (Jones et al., 2007), focus group participants suggested they did not have enough knowledge to make ethical decisions. This contrasts with the study of Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000), where no participant reported a lack of information as being a consideration.

Avoiding unethical products or companies that had received bad press seemed more important, and more achievable to group participants than proactively purchasing ethical products.

I think you would be turned off from the unethical one if there had been loads of bad stories, but this wouldn't necessarily push you towards the most ethical one.

This opinion presents implications for ethical brands, but also highlights difficulties in measuring the scope of ethical purchasing. It suggests that monitoring sales of products and brands that have been the subject of negative ethical publicity may give an important insight into the effect of ethical beliefs on consumption behaviour. Although participants seemed to acknowledge the problem, its moral significance and its relationship to the lifestyles of citizens of the developed countries, they felt that without prominent communication of these issues, lack of knowledge would continue to limit their ethical consumption.

Quality perception

Quality perception issues took two clear forms. Some participants perceived products branded 'Fair Trade' as poorer in quality. However, others believed that, for instance, free-range chicken tasted nicer, so that their quest for quality drove them incidentally to ethical consumption.

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Some focus group members felt that foods produced in a less ethical way could not be harmful, for instance:

> They are not going to be poisonous to you if the government has passed them as safe to eat.

Carrigan and Attalla ([2001](#)) note a perceived synonymy between 'ethical' and 'legal' where consumers consider 'acting within the law' to be adequate and also that consumers will not tolerate a loss in quality to purchase ethically. In this research, the perceived quality of ethical goods emerged as a clear influencing factor in the decision-making process.

Inertia in purchasing behaviour

Although price and quality were prominent, purchasing inertia appeared a stronger barrier to consumption, as it was ultimately this that prevented any change, or even consideration of change, in consumption patterns. This became apparent when participants were asked to disregard price, which had initially been claimed as the key impeding factor in ethical consumption. Group members found themselves admitting that their allegiance to certain brands would always make them less likely to move towards an overtly ethical option. Typical endorsements of brand loyalty were: 'I am a Heinz person'; 'PG tips: everyone has their own tea'; and 'got to have your Weetabix in the morning'. These brand attachments had come to be accepted by group participants, though they were not necessarily considered ethically correct.

Cynicism

Participants expressed cynicism about retailers' ethical claims to justify their reluctance to purchase on a more ethical basis. There was a feeling that ethical claims were just another marketing ploy, commanding higher prices by taking advantage of consumer goodwill, for instance:

> It's purely for company profit. I think it begins and ends there.

There is an inherent moral conflict in the ethical practice of commerce (Nash, [1990](#)) and consumers may suspect ethical issues raised in marketing unless there seem to be sincere underlying values. Participants in all the focus groups believed that most of the extra premium they paid did not reach the end beneficiary and that much of it was intercepted by corporate or governmental organisations (Shaw and Shiu, [2003](#)). Some claimed that this was a key factor in their decision to disregard ethical products.

A number of participants mentioned a growing advertising trend toward claiming ethical practice for competitive advantage. They were also aware of news stories about instances of malpractice, for example:

> These multinationals, you can find a story associated with all of them.

Participants' cynicism seemed related to a lack of information about the benefits of ethical practices combined with an excess of information about unethical practices. This led to confusion and a perceived vulnerability.

Guilt

Hall ([2007](#)) suggests that consumers have evolved past a sense of guilt towards identification and solidarity with exploited groups, but the focus group discussions showed a different situation. Although guilt was a reoccurring theme throughout the research, it was not an early part of the decision-making process as Steenhaut and Van Kenhove ([2006](#)) have suggested, tending rather to manifest itself as a retrospective feeling following a choice not to purchase an ethical alternative. Participants also tended to suppress their feelings of guilt, for instance, by expressing doubt whether their purchase would have actually made a difference (cf. Chatzidakis et al., [2007](#)).

Discussion

Figure [2](#) summarises the factors identified in this study as impeding the consumption of ethical goods. The range of potential exogenous factors is not conclusive, but factors discussed in previous publications are acknowledged here to account for the
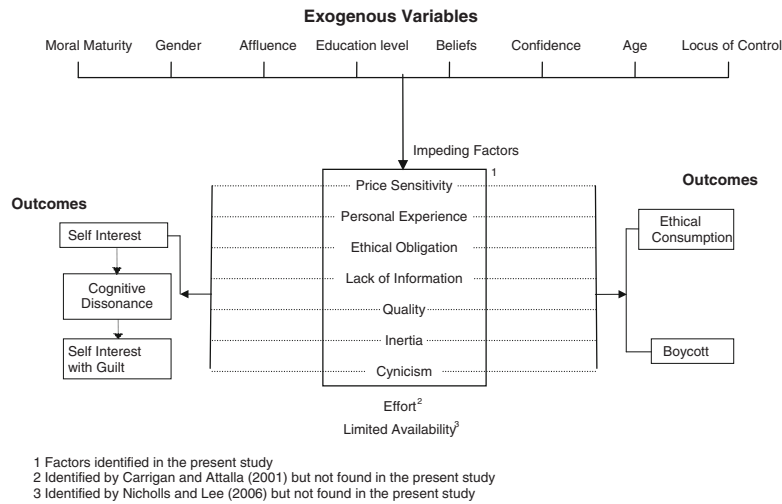
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Exogenous Variables

Moral Maturity   Gender   Affluence   Education level   Beliefs   Confidence   Age   Locus of Control

Impeding Factors

Outcomes

Self Interest

Cognitive Dissonance

Self Interest with Guilt

| Price Sensitivity [1] |
| Personal Experience |
| Ethical Obligation |
| Lack of Information |
| Quality |
| Inertia |
| Cynicism |

Outcomes

Ethical Consumption

Boycott

Effort [2]
Limited Availability [3]

1 Factors identified in the present study
2 Identified by Carrigan and Attalla (2001) but not found in the present study
3 Identified by Nicholls and Lee (2006) but not found in the present study

Figure 2. Model of factors impeding ethical consumption.

diversity of response between different consumers. It was not within the scope of this research to confirm the predictive value of these factors. The model shows possible consequent outcomes of the purchase decision, with those representing a form of 'ethical consumption' on the right-hand side and those reflecting self interest on the left. While it is acknowledged that there is a likely continuum between purchase decisions dominated by concern for ethical aspects, and self-interest devoid of such considerations, the range of possible outcomes are depicted in this way for clarity. Many participants have described purchase situations as being influenced by ethical considerations (depicted here as 'ethical consumption'), or a scenario where a particular product or brand is avoided due to perceived or reported poor ethical standards (depicted here as 'boycott'). Guilt was identified in this research as caused by post-purchase cognitive dissonance, and so it has been allied to self-interested purchase, but these links are represented by dashed lines to acknowledge that such dissonance does not occur for all consumers or in all situations, and may not always lead to the feelings of guilt described by participants in this study.

This research provides the first focused examination of the factors impeding ethical consumption,

but the findings do correspond in most cases to influences identified in previous broader studies. Concerns about the price and quality of goods, highlighted by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), were found to be important, and price was the barrier to ethical consumption most discussed in the focus groups. Nicholls and Lee (2006) suggest that consumers' scepticism of ethical claims is influential, and participants in this study described similar feelings, summarised here as cynicism. However, Nicholls and Lee also highlighted the limited availability of ethical alternatives, a factor that was not identified as a problem in this study. Again, in contrast to Carrigan and Attallas' (2001) findings, participants in this study did not see additional effort required to buy ethical lines as a barrier. Ethical products are becoming more widely available, and many items have only recently appeared in mainstream retail outlets. This may help to explain why concerns about availability (and hence purchasing effort) may no longer be so relevant for many products.

In extended discussion during the focus groups, participants complained about not having enough information to select products according to their ethical principles. It became clear that there is a need for more information in point of sale merchandising. This finding contrasts with that of Boulstridge and

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Carrigan (2000) who comment on the number and density of messages with which consumers are bombarded. Thus, increasing awareness and interest in such issues over the last decade may have increased consumers' appetites to be informed.

An important aspect of ethical consumption seemed to be post-purchase dissonance in the form of guilt at not opting for the ethical alternative. For respondents in this study, price appeared to be a key barrier to consuming ethically. Consumers believed that the benefactor from their ethical choices should be the underpaid producer or labourer, but cynically supposed that many corporate organisations profit from such products. The quality of ethical goods was questioned, with the exception of local food produce, and most Fair Trade products were thought to be of inferior quality. The common perception was that if a company is primarily focused on maintaining ethical standards, then the quality of its products is likely to be lower. Consumers also showed great brand loyalty and image consciousness, such that when other tangible factors such as price were ignored, brand loyalty and purchasing inertia still often prevented them from buying an ethical alternative.

The limited scope of this study makes it impossible to claim that this depiction is comprehensive, but it does provide insight into the key impeding factors that may explain the ethical consumption gap outlined in the literature. While a multiplicity of consumption choices might be made, previous studies have highlighted the growing incidence of 'ethical consumption' with consumers selecting products marketed as 'Fair-Trade' or Organic (Clavin, 2008; Davis, 2006; Nicholls, 2002). Similarly, other studies have highlighted the importance of boycotts that companies have suffered as a consequence of stories emerging questioning ethical aspects within their supply chain (Clouder and Harrison, 2005). Both of these possible outcomes have found some support in this study with participants seeking ethical alternatives in some cases, and avoiding particular products and brands in others where they have reason to question the companies' ethical credibility. It is acknowledged, however, that the majority of purchase decisions are not subjected to such scrutiny, decisions being mostly based on self-interest. Where this is the case, many participants in this study described post-purchase feelings of guilt if they were aware that they had not made the ethically optimal choice.

Conclusions

Leading theories of ethical decision making use behavioural intention as a direct antecedent to behaviour, an assumption which clashes with an attitude–behaviour gap that is well documented in the ethical consumerism literature. This study identifies a range of factors that intervene between consumers' attitudes, behavioural intentions and actual behaviour. The seven key factors that emerged from analysis of the qualitative data provide greater understanding of why ethical attitudes might not result in ethical purchase decisions. While doing so, they provide a useful step forward in understanding ethical consumption. These findings do not aim to challenge existing theories of decision making, but suggest an additional stage between ethical intention and behaviour, increasing the predictive power of existing attitude–behaviour models.

However, it is clear that this study represents only a starting point for research in this area. Each individual factor identified here warrants further individual examination, and other studies may also uncover further factors that will improve our understanding of the ethical purchase gap.

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An Exploratory Study into the Factors Impeding Ethical Consumerism

ABSTRACT *Evidence suggests that consumers are increasingly aware of, engaged with, and influenced by ethical factors when forming opinions on products and making purchase decisions. Despite this, a number of recent studies have highlighted significant differences between consumers' intention to consume ethically, and their actual purchase behaviour. This paper contributes to an understanding of the factors contributing to this 'Ethical Purchasing Gap'. A model of the impeding factors to ethical consumption is constructed based upon a review of existing literature, and the inductive analysis of focus group discussions. While exogenous variables such as Moral Maturity and Age are well covered in the literature, a further range of impeding factors have been identified as important. For some consumers, such is their purchasing inertia that the decision making process is devoid of any ethical considerations. For others, ethical views are displayed through post purchase dissonance and retrospective feelings such as guilt. Some consumers display a reluctance to consume ethically due to personal constraints, a perceived negative impact on image or quality or an outright negation of responsibility. For many, the desire to consume ethically is conveyed, yet their cynicism, together with an external locus of control, deters them because they question the impact they, as an individual, can achieve. It is important that future research examines each of the factors identified here to better understand consumers purchasing behaviour in this context.*

KEY WORDS: Ethical consumption; attitude-behaviour gap; fair-trade.

Introduction

It is commonly stated that ethical consumerism is growing (Berry and McEachern, 2005; Davis, 2006; Nicholls, 2002; Webster, 2000). In its long running longitudinal study the Co-operative bank has shown sales of ethical goods rising at around 15% a year to stand at £35.5bn in 2007 (Clavin, 2008). Such growth patterns undoubtedly show great potential, however still only represent a very small proportion of the overall consumer market of some £600bn (Macalister, 2007).

Previous research has identified a so called 'Ethical Purchasing Gap'(Nicholls and Lee, 2006), 'Attitudes Behaviour Gap' (Kim, Forney *et al.*, 1997), or 30:3 syndrome whereby approximately a 'third of consumers profess to care about companies' policies and records on social responsibility, but ethical products rarely achieve more than 3% market share' (Cowe and Williams, 2000). This phenomenon suggests that while ethical awareness and engagement might be widespread, most of the time this is not being translated into purchasing action. While research into ethical consumption has increased significantly in recent years, few studies have explored the factors that prevent the vast majority of consumers from purchasing in line with their ethical values.

Ethical consumption

Many authors have commented on the difficulty in defining ethical behaviour (Singhapakdi, Vitell *et al.*, 1999; KPMG and Synovate, 2007), ethical retailing (Whysall, 1998) and ethical consumption (Howard and Nelson, 2000; Cherrier, 2005; Clavin and Lewis, 2005). There are a plethora of issues which could be questioned ethically; however such assessments can be highly subjective and complexly interlinked (Cherrier, 2005; Kent, 2005). Ethical considerations can even be contradictory for example the desire to 'reduce food miles and support developing countries' (KPMG and Synovate, 2007; p. 2). Despite these challenges, a number of common ethical issues do emerge from the literature: Fair Trade principles (Loureiro and Lotade, 2005; Nicholls and Opal, 2005; DePelsmacker and Janssens, 2007); use of Organically grown and processed materials (Tomolillo and Shaw, 2004; Shaw, hogg *et al.*, 2006; Tsakiridou, Boutsouki *et al.*, 2008); working practices in developing nations (Dickson, 1999; Anniss, 2003; Joergens, 2006) and depletion of natural resources (Ford, Nonis *et al.*, 2005; Sanfilippo, 2007).

Cooper-Martin and Holbrook (1993) define ethical consumer behaviour as 'decision making, purchases and other consumption experiences that are affected by the consumer's ethical concerns' p. 113.

Two prominent approaches have been used in the examination of ethical consumer behaviour, that based upon Hunt and Vitell's general theory of marketing ethics (Hunt and Vitell, 1986), and work that draws on the attitudinal model presented by Ajzen and Fishbein, and Ajzen (Chatzidakis, Hibbert *et al.,* 2006). These models suggest that consumers make decisions through a process of knowledge formation, the construction of attitudes or judgments about a particular consumption activity's ethical impact, the formation of purchase intentions and finally purchase. Factors relevant to ethical consumption such as 'Self Identity' and 'Ethical Obligation' were reported to act upon both attitude formation, and purchase intentions, but not directly on purchase action(Shaw, Shiu *et al.,* 2000; Shaw and Shiu, 2002; Sparks, Shepherd *et al.,* 1995; Sparks and Guthrie, 1998). Given that such a wide difference is reported between consumer attitudes and final purchase behaviour, a wide range of currently unreported impeding factors may exist.

Studies have identified some variables that can influence ethical decision making such as age, religious beliefs (Hegarty and Simms, 1978) and moral maturity (Kohlberg, 1969). McDevitt *et al.,* (2007) also suggests variables related to the personal beliefs and confidence of the

individual may also be relevant. Strong decision makers will be confident in following their judgement especially when required to take individual action. The attributes of confidence and moral maturity in the context of ethical decision-making can be closely linked to the work of Forte (2004) on the locus of control (Rotter, 1954). Consumers with an external locus of control believe ethical dilemmas are beyond their control whereas research by Singhapakdi and Vitell (1991) shows that people with an internal locus of control are more likely to take action to settle ethical problems and defy social pressure to make unethical decisions.

A small number of factors have previously been identified as impeding ethical consumption: limited availability of ethical products (Nicholls and Lee, 2006); the consumer being bombarded with too many messages (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001); inertia in consumption choices (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000); and consumer mistrust and possible scepticism of ethical symbols (Nicholls and Lee, 2006). Further, (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001) state that 'it would appear consumers do not wish to be inconvenienced', suggesting that consumers will only make ethical purchases if it does not mean they have to pay more, suffer loss of quality or have to make a specific effort. These suggestions have, however, been made as part of research either into a specific context, or as broad papers into ethical consumption, none being specifically focused on the identification of possible inhibitors to purchase.

Methodology

An inductive approach was adopted to enable a range of impeding factors to emerge. Given the complex nature of the subject area, focus group discussions were most appropriate, enabling the issues to be debated, fully explored, and the widest possible range of factors to be identified.

One of the possible reasons for the attitude-behaviour gap is thought to be the 'social desirability bias' in the research design of many studies (Cowe and Williams, 2000). The problem of social desirability bias is well covered in the literature, with Clavin describing the issue as an:

> 'over reporting of ethical actions by research respondents seeking to give the 'right' answer.'

(Clavin and Lewis, 2005; p185)

Focus groups were carefully constructed and moderated to minimise this potential effect. Three focus groups were conducted, each containing six participants. This small group size was used due to the sensitive nature of the subject, and to minimise the potential for social desirability bias (Falconer, 1976). Participants were selected according to convenience, but an equal gender mix and broad age range were assured.

All focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, including, where appropriate, notes on tonality, hesitation and intonation. After a period of data immersion, open and axial coding was used to develop a template of factors that emerged. This template was refined further through a repetitious process of coding and recoding to ensure robustness of the findings.

Data analysis and findings

Seven key themes emerged from the data, each contributing part of an explanation into why consumer attitudes are not translated into purchasing behaviour.

Price sensitivity

Price was a reoccurring theme, with consumers suggesting that they care more about value in financial terms than ethical values. With particular reference to food and other frequently purchased items it was nearly always the consumers' first consideration. One participant stated:

> 'I don't even consider ethical products in a supermarket because it is a bill
> you pay weekly and you need it to be as small as possible.'

When members discussed the occasional time when they had purchased the ethical alternative and not considered the price, a high level of post-purchase dissonance was experienced and this resulted, in some cases, in a future permanent avoidance of ethical products. One example given was with reference to purchasing fair-trade tea and coffee in the workplace, the inflated price was held responsible for a return to old habits.

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The consensus amongst participants was that they did care about ethical issues and were willing to pay slightly more, but beyond a small premium, their cynicism surfaced. They were reluctant to pay more than a few pence extra for goods where they saw no significant tangible reward to their efforts.

> A little bit more, yes I am expected to pay, I wouldn't mind paying a bit more but when you've got [a] limited amount of money to spend each week, you can't afford these things

The price appeared less of an issue with regard to locally produced goods. Participants were able to quantify the premium asked and understand, in a familiar context, how the extra pence could be justified. This suggests that the vicarious nature of ethical issues hinders the consumers' attachment and commitment to their beliefs.

Despite this stated focus on price, some participants appeared more attached to their habitual purchasing than they realised. When faced with a situation where price considerations were removed, it did not immediately result in the purchasing of ethical products as was initially implied.

Personal experience

Due to the emotive nature of ethical consumerism, participants seemed most receptive to changes in their habitual purchasing when it impacted them personally or when a particular story grabbed their attention, forcing them to deliberate on the subject. McDevitt *et al.* (2007) implied that the biggest hurdle to ethical consumerism was getting the consumer to recognise that their imminent actions could be ethical or unethical. One member stated:

> If it is not in your eye, if it is not put straight in your face, eventually you will just forget about it and go back to your day-to-day business until it comes up again

Participants were most vocal with regard to negative stories they had been exposed to and in most cases expressed concern. Positive information did not generate as much interest; it was often viewed with cynicism and therefore was less likely to affect purchase decisions. This supports Herr *et al.* (1991) who asserted that consumers' attitudes are influenced more by negative information than positive.

When asked, participants said they did not consume ethically as an alternative to giving to charity. However, it became apparent that with regard to personal experiences, group members made links between consumption and charitable donations. Any desire or obligation to consume ethically was reduced if they had had encountered a bad experience when giving to charity. An example of this was the Tsunami of 2005: a number of participants had donated generously to the relief fund only for it to be reported that the money was not reaching the people for whom it was intended. This transferred into their ethical purchasing behaviour which favoured purchasing local produce to fair-trade goods as they could have greater confidence that it was making a difference.

Ethical obligation

Participants understood the link between their ethical purchasing and their values, and constantly maintained they would like to make a difference. However, as discussion evolved, it became apparent there was an underlying reluctance to help, but a feeling of obligation.

The ethical obligation of group members seemed to centre on suppressing a conscience. On many occasions it was suggested that it was too difficult, for many reasons, to 'tow a purely ethical line' however the obligation to 'do your bit' was still strong, particularly when the price was comparable.

Individuals' perception of what was considered ethical varied significantly, for one member, a vegetarian; it was categorically unethical to consume a chicken. Another participant commented that they:

> [...] would be a vegetarian but at the end of the day they are still going to kill all the animals.

This variation in levels of obligation can be aligned with Forte's recent work around the locus of control (2004). The vegetarian expressed an internal locus of control, believing that their actions could make a difference, (Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1991) whereas the second respondent displayed an a prominent external locus of control, believing that any change in their consumption pattern would not have any impact; this view being used to justify their existing behaviour.

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Lack of information

It is argued that in order for consumers to make efficient decisions they must be fully informed (Sproles *et al.* 1978). Although there is now far more information in the public domain regarding ethical practices (Jones *et al.,* 2007) this research has found that consumers still believe they do not have enough knowledge to make ethical decisions.

In some focus groups, a preference to hear about unethical practices was expressed. It was felt that to be informed and then avoid unethical options or companies was more achievable than to proactively purchase the most ethical product.

> 'I think you would be turned off from the unethical one if there had been loads of bad stories, but this wouldn't necessarily push you towards the most ethical one.'

This opinion presents implications for the future of intrinsically ethical brands, but also highlights difficulties in measuring the scope of ethical purchases, indicating a need for the monitoring of sales of products and brands that have been the subject of negative ethical publicity, and products considered intermediaries to truly understand the effect ethical beliefs are having on consumption behaviour.

Although participants acknowledged the enormity of the problem and in contrast, the luxury of their own lifestyles, they suggested that unless it was pushed upon them and they were made to listen, their lack of knowledge would continue to render low levels of ethical consumption.

Quality perception

Quality perception was a reoccurring theme throughout the research yet took two clear forms. For some participants, products branded fair-trade were perceived as poorer quality. Conversely, others believed ethical goods such as free-range chicken tasted nicer and it was their quest for quality that inadvertently drove them to consume ethically.

The group members who did not consume ethically felt that unethical goods could not be bad quality or harmful because as one participant highlighted. 'They are not going to be poisonous to you if the government has passed them as safe to eat'.This viewpoint can be aligned to that of Carrigan and Attalla (2001) who highlighted the perceived synonymy

between 'ethical' and 'legal' and indicated that consumers deem 'acting within the law' to be adequate.

The perceived quality of ethical goods emerged as a clear influencing factor in the decision making process concurring with the findings of Carrigan and Attalla (2001) who state that consumers will not tolerate a loss in quality in order to purchase ethically.

Purchasing inertia

During the focus group it became clear that although factors such as price and quality were prominent barriers to consumption; far stronger was the purchasing inertia of the individuals, it was ultimately this that prevented any change, or even consideration of change, to their consumption patterns. This finding supports Boulstridge and Carrigan's (2000) view that consumers will not change their behaviour and become more ethical until the alternative has no negative impact upon them.

The sheer strength of inertia and subsequent brand loyalty became apparent when the participants were asked to disregard the price of products. It had initially been expressed as the key factor, but group members found themselves admitting that their allegiance to certain brands would always hinder their ability to move towards the ethical option. 'I am a Heinz person'; 'PG tips, everyone has their own tea'; and 'Got to have your Weetabix in the morning' were common responses. This strong attachment was not necessarily something the consumer believed was correct but something that they had come to accept.

Cynicism

A high level of cynicism toward ethical claims was found amongst consumers as a key driver of their reluctance to consume ethically. Participants believed they were being coldly marketed to and their goodwill taken advantage of through the application of disproportionate price premiums. Demonstrating the prominent conflict with the concept of morality when attempting to relate ethical practice to the business of making money (Nash, 1990). It is suggested that consumers will disrespect any attempt to apply an ethical layer to their marketing without sincere underlying values. This scepticism of corporate motivations behind ethical stances was recognised by participants, with one commenting: 'It's purely for company profit. I think it begins and ends there'.

Participants in all focus groups suggested that a key factor, in deciding to disregard ethical products was that they did not believe the extra effort required on their part, (Shaw and Shiu,

2003) was transferred completely to the end benefactor; presuming instead, that a proportion was intercepted by corporate or governmental organisations.

There was acknowledgement by a number of Participants not only of the growing trend to communicate about ethical practices, for competitive advantage, but also of the rising number of emerging news stories about pockets of malpractice. One group member exclaimed 'These multinationals, you can find a story associated with all of them'. Participants cynicism was fuelled by a lack of information about the benefits of ethical practices combined with an excess of information about unethical practices, leading to confusion and perceived vulnerability.

Guilt

Although Hall (2007) suggests that consumers have evolved past a sense of guilt to identification and solidarity with others, focus group discussions suggest that this is not universal. Guilt is still a factor but is often a retrospective feeling following the choice not to purchase ethical goods.

There was a clear trend amongst participants to suppress their feelings of guilt through conveying doubt as to whether or not, their purchase would have actually made a difference; this seeming to be an attempt to neutralise the guilt (Chatzidakis, Hibbert *et al.,* 2007). Although guilt was a reoccurring theme throughout the research it was not an early part of the decision-making process, but something considered following the purchase and then, in the majority of cases dismissed.

Conclusion

The complexity of the subject suggests that the impeding factors identified and discussed cannot be placed in a generic hierarchy as different consumers can feel the impact of individual factors or combinations and not necessarily consider all in the same logical manner. It must be considered that most factors are interdependent and expressed in different ways and to varying degrees, by different consumers. Figure 1 below summarises the impeding factors to ethical consumption that have been identified.

Fig. 1 Model of the Impeding Factors to Ethical Consumerism
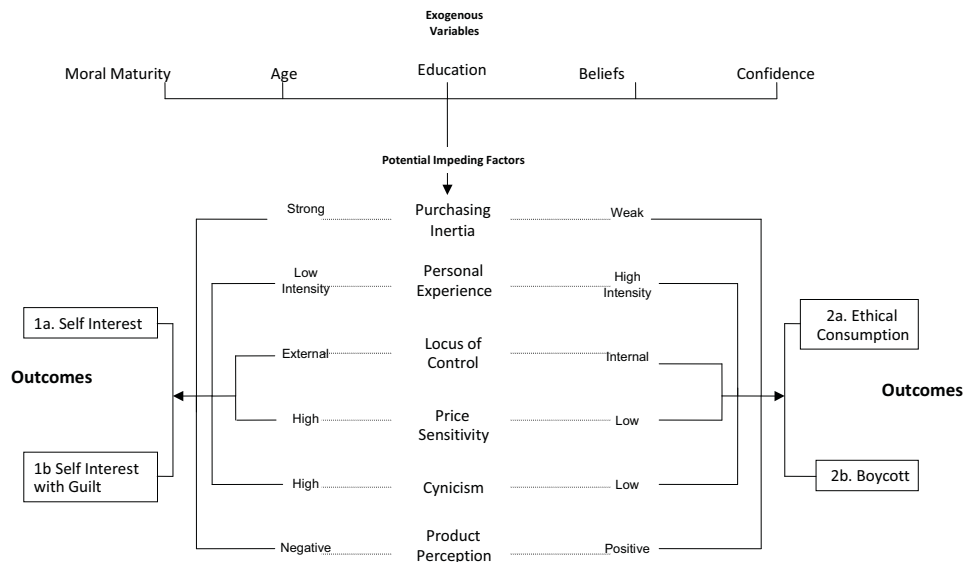
Due to the limited scope of the study it is not possible to claim that this depiction is comprehensive, however it does present the first conceptualisation of the key impeding factors that may explain the 30:3 problem outlined in the literature. While a multiplicity of consumption choices might be made, for clarity these have been grouped as Self Interest, Self Interest with Guilt, Boycott and Ethical Consumption. Two 'ethical' outcomes are highlighted, acknowledging that for many consumers, the intermediary was often chosen following a boycott of the unethical option.

An important aspect of ethical consumerism has been found to be post purchase dissonance, in the form of guilt at not opting for the ethical alternative. For most people price appears as a key barrier to consuming ethically. Consumers believe the benefactor from their ethical choices should be the producer or underpaid labourer but are cynical, suggesting that many corporate organisations profit from such products. Consumers question the quality of ethical goods, with the exception of fresh food; most fair-trade products were viewed to be of inferior quality. The common perception is that if a company is first and foremost focused on achieving an ethical product then it is likely to be of lower quality.   Consumers are also

heavily brand loyal and image conscious. When other tangible factors such as price are ignored, brand loyalty and purchasing inertia still prevents them, in many cases, from trying an ethical alternative.

This paper has identified a range of factors that might prevent consumers from converting their ethical attitudes into ethical purchase decisions, and in so doing provides a useful step forward in understanding consumer behaviour in this regard. It is clear however that this study should represent only the start of research in this area, with each individual factor that has been identified here warranting individual examination, and other general studies may uncover further impeding factors that will build knowledge into these phenomena.

Implications for retailers

Given consumers cynicism toward ethical claims, it is unlikely that positioning on this criterion alone will be attractive to a mass-market group. However, it is essential for all retailers to ensure that their practices are appropriate and well controlled as the damage that can be caused by any publicity highlighting ethically questionable behaviour throughout the supply chain is significant.

The concept of ethical consumerism appears secondary to the strongest attribute of choice. Whether it is a retailer who is focused on price or a brand that is focused on quality products, an ethical approach must work only to reinforce integrity; consumers do not feel strongly enough yet to prioritise it above the other attributes they associate with their habitual purchasing.

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Ethical Dimensions in Clothing Purchase

Jeffery Bray

Abstract:

It is widely reported that consumer interest in environmental and ethical issues is growing. Evidence suggests that ethical considerations are now impacting on a broad range of consumption decisions. The focus of this paper is the impact such concerns may hold in clothing purchase decision making. Through an inductive qualitative approach, clothing purchase decision making has been explored before discussing consumers' knowledge and concern of ethical issues within the supply chain. Any impact that these concerns may exert has been discussed.

It is identified that although there is widespread knowledge and understanding of the ethical issues that may be present in the manufacture of clothing, these concerns do not play a primary role in consumers' selection of items. Product attributes such as colour, style and fit dominate the decision making process in most cases. Despite this, ethical considerations can be seen to impact on the consumer in three key ways: initial boycott of particular products or brands; influencing final purchase decisions if items are similar on other criteria and, impacting on post-purchase satisfaction with the product.

Key Words: Ethics; Consumer Behaviour; Apparel; Clothing; Attributes of Choice.

1.   Introduction

The consumption environment and influences on the consumer decision making process have changed significantly over the past century, and continue to evolve. Consumer behaviour research highlights a number of factors which are currently influencing changes in consumption choices and practices. These include:
• Increasing concern for environmentalism,[1]
• Increasing politicisation of the consumer whereby the consumers' assessment of companies' ethical standards proves influential in their consumption choices,[2]
• Growing awareness of global issues such as resource depletion, and the working practices in developing nations.[3]

Due to the moral dimensions of these factors, it is commonly stated that 'ethical consumerism' is growing.[4]

Research focusing on the role ethical issues plays in purchasing behaviour is limited, with disproportionate attention being directed at the food sector[5] leaving the clothing sector under explored. The clothing industry has in the past received negative publicity surrounding 'sweatshop' type manufacturing resulting in partial boycotts of the affected brands. In recent months publicity of these issues has grown significantly, with 3 high profile television programmes in the UK in the spring of 2008 alone.

Clothing sales represent a fast growing retail sector, currently accounting for 15% of total consumer expenditure in the UK.[6] Both the EU and DEFRA have highlighted that Clothing is 'high impact' accounting for some 5-10% of the EUs total environmental impact. Other issues outlined include:

> 1.5-2m tonnes of waste generated in the UK
> 70m tonnes of waste water
> Child Labour
> Poor Working Conditions
> Low Wages
> H&S Risks
> Animal Welfare Issues
> Inequitable Trade[7]

The fashion retailing sector has changed significantly in recent years with dramatic unit price deflation feeding consumers' desire for highly fashionable items at a 'disposable price',[8] adding further pressure to clothing suppliers and retailers to tolerate lower ethical standards in the quest for competitive prices. Not only value clothing retailers, but mainstream players are seeking to serve this trend for disposable fashion, with H&M reported to be designing clothes that are expected to be used less than 10 times.[9]

Given the size of the clothing market, and the ethical issues that surround clothing manufacture there is a need for research to explore the role that ethical considerations may play in consumers' assessment and selection of clothing lines.

2.   Consumer Decision Making

How consumers make their decisions has long been studied, however it is only in the last 50-60 years that consumer behaviour researchers have acknowledged the full range of influences that may impinge on the

process.[10]   A number of different approaches have been taken to explain consumer decisions. Economic theories were first posited, describing the consumer as entirely rational and self interested;[11]   psychodynamic approaches suggested that behaviour is subject to biological influence through 'instinctive forces' or 'drives' which act outside of conscious thought,[12] while behavioural approaches take the opposing view, suggesting that behaviour is explained by external events, and causation is attributed to factors external to the individual.[13]

Most contemporary theories recognise the role of the consumers' individual cognition, with these cognitive approaches acknowledging a broad range of influences both internal and external to the actor guiding decisions.[14] One of the most cited such cognitive models is the Consumer Decision Model proposed by Blackwell, Miniard and Engel.[15] This model describes consumers passing through six key stages in the process of consumption, namely: need recognition; information search; pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives; purchase; consumption and post-consumption evaluation. Impinging on this process are a wide range of factors internal to the consumer and stimuli from the wider external setting.

While such cognitive models are widely accepted, a number of researchers have highlighted the egoism that is implied in such depictions,[16] suggesting that they may require some modification to encompass ethical product choices that may contain elements of altruism.

A number of researchers have attempted to model ethical decision making,[17] with the main studies adopting a similarly staged approach as depicted in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Synthesis of the main stages in Ethical Decision Making Theory[18]
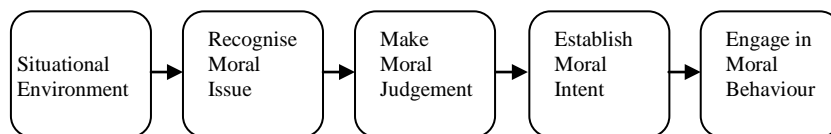
This approach focuses solely on the ethical elements of any decision process and do not readily embrace decision settings where the ethicality of the decision may be secondary to other more important attributes. Further, these contributions were intended to model general decision making and were not specifically aligned to a consumption setting. These models are entirely reliant on the actor perceiving an ethical issue,[19] and deeming it to be

significant enough to warrant extended processing: assumptions that may not be appropriate in the context of clothing purchase.

3.   Clothing Choice

        There are a number of inherent challenges with studies into clothing purchase due to the diversity of purchase motive possible, and the variety of roles that clothing can perform. Studies have shown, for example, that the attributes of choice differ between casual clothing and smart clothing;[20] that body shape influences preferences;[21] that significant differences exist when looking at a product in-store or observing it in a catalogue;[22] and that demographic variables alter the key attributes assessed.[23] The variety of product attributes considered can, however, be broadly categorised as functional or symbolic.[24]

        The growth of consumer interest into the ethicality of their fashion purchases has been well documented in recent years. However ethics has not been highlighted in the general literature on fashion evaluative considerations. A small number of studies have examined the influence of ethical attributes on fashion choice specifically; notably all of these studies have been published in the last 10 years highlighting the contemporary nature of these concerns. The most recent study found 'Commitment to social and environmental issues' to be very important to consumers,[25] with 82% of the 1,185 respondents believing that retailers are not doing enough to tackle social and environmental issues. However this variable was identified by the researchers, possibly leading respondents to give socially desirable answers.[26] A consistent finding across all studies is that ethical or environmental factors are secondary to other product attributes for most consumers, with shoppers unwilling to compromise or reduce personal benefit to purchase more ethical products.[27] Despite these challenges it does appear that ethical considerations do hold some impact on the purchase decision with consumers experiencing guilt when selecting the less ethical alternative,[28] and feeling emotionally better (having higher self-esteem) when purchasing the ethical or more environmental choice.[29]

4.   Methodology

        An inductive exploratory approach was adopted to explore fashion purchasing, ascertain the key attributes used in the decision making process, and to identify any contribution that ethical factors might hold in influencing purchase decisions in this context. Firstly a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore consumers' awareness of ethical issues within the clothing industry and to identify the most widely understood

terminology. These interviews informed the design of focus groups which were used to explore the issues in depth.

Focus group discussions were the most effective method to generate ideas and ensure that the subject area was probed from a number of different angles and from different perspectives that could not necessarily have been imagined by the researcher in advance. In a short writing task, participants identified the key factors that they considered when selecting an item of clothing. This free response method ensured minimal researcher interference, and provided an up-to-date list of the attributes considered by consumers. Using these lists as a starting point, participants discussed how they selected clothing lines, at this point unaware of the precise nature of the research; this semi covert approach being necessary and justifiable[30] due to the low risks that it posed to participants, and the need to reduce any social desirability bias.[31] After these attributes had been fully explored, participants were asked to identify any ethical factors that they were aware of before these factors were discussed in relation to their clothes purchasing behaviour.

A total of three focus groups were conducted, each of which was transcribed verbatim prior to analysis. Data submersion followed by a repetitious process of coding and recoding allowed the key themes to emerge.[32] After preliminary analysis, findings were discussed with six participants in validation interviews to ensure that the findings were presented in a clear manner and were a true reflection of the focus group discussions.

4.   Results and Analysis

When asked to identify the attributes used to select clothing items no participant identified any ethically relevant factors. Despite this, participants had a good level of awareness of potential ethical issues in the clothing supply chain, and had a clear preference toward the purchase of ethical alternatives where these were available and did not require compromise in other areas such as the look of the item. Further, some respondents described feelings of guilt when outlining that their own purchasing may be directed toward ethically questionable products.

Analysis of the focus group discussions suggests that ethical factors may influence the consumption process in three specific ways labelled here by the author as:
Ethical Red Line
Ethical Clouding
Post Purchase Reflection

Ethical Red Line

Early in the process of selection, some consumers will boycott selected items based on a small number of ethically relevant factors. For one focus group member, a critical decision point such as this was reached with the boycott of items using fur. While the use of fur was the most readily recalled example of this effect, other participants more generally stated that 'everyone's got their own line that they won't want to cross' (Female, 19) suggesting that for a number of consumers, products could be ruled out if the perceived ethics of the item were strongly dissonant to their own beliefs.

Ethical Clouding

With no respondent identifying any ethically relevant factors when recalling the attributes they have recently used to select clothing lines, it could be assumed that such factors hold no significance in purchasing. Even though the evaluative content of clothing purchase was discussed in each focus group at length, with such a wide number of factors influencing decisions it would not be possible to identify every attribute.

Given this, it would be unwise to discount the possibility that ethical attributes may play a role in the evaluation of alternatives. Discussions suggested that these issues are not influential in the consumer reaching a preliminary choice; however, once such a preliminary choice had been made, the preference for ethically positive or benign products may then influence the likelihood of purchase, or sway a decision should the consumer be undecided between two or more similarly attractive items. This effect has been labelled here as 'Ethical Clouding'. When discussing this relationship in one validation interview the interviewee concurred giving the example of shopping for a pair of socks: "I'd firstly look for those that were black, the right size, within my price range, and made of cotton, then if one type were Fair-Trade, I'd probably take those." (Female, 29) This view is supported by many comments in the focus group discussions and each of the validation interviews where respondents were keen and enthusiastic to consume ethically but were unprepared to compromise on other attributes.

The importance of most individual product attributes varies dependent on the item of clothing being sought. However, given that ethical assessments pertain to fixed principles detached from the item considered, it is likely that any influence of ethical indicators will be constant irrespective of the specific item being examined. Thus for some items the influence of ethical attributes is sufficiently prevalent to direct purchasing, where for other items the same scale of influence may not be sufficient to differentially affect decisions due to strong preferences on other attributes. This might go some way to explain why ethically labelled clothing lines are often basic

clothing lines such as undergarments where a smaller range of attributes are considered important leaving greater potential influence to the constant, though minor in most cases, influence of ethics.

Post Purchase Reflection

A preference towards ethically labelled products was discussed in all focus groups, and in some cases members described feelings of guilt when purchasing items that they felt might have been produced in an unethical manner. Given this, it is probable that an item of clothing labelled as fairtrade, or organic would engender positive feelings in the consumer when using the product, with the converse applying if there were any negative ethical indicators. The resulting post-purchase reflection and resulting satisfaction may influence future purchase decisions and the importance afforded to these factors.

Memory and Retail Brand

The research found that consumers use their existing knowledge of the retail brands on the high-street to guide their search for items, using retail brand as a heuristic, informing likely price, quality and style of the goods contained within. Participants also appeared comfortable using the retail brand to indicate the ethical standards likely to be present throughout the supply chain.

5.   Conclusions

It is clear from the research conducted here that ethical considerations are not primary in most clothing purchase decisions. Despite this, it has been found that ethics might hold some influence in three key points within the decision making process. It is likely that the scale of this influence will depend on the individual consumer and situational factors.

Figure 2 presents a Model of Ethics in Clothing Purchase Behaviour which summarises the research findings. At first glance it appears that the model is suggesting a strict and formalised process, however the individual and situational differences introduce the flexibility to account for passage through the model at different speeds and affording differing depths of engagement at the various stages. Further, many aspects may be accomplished without conscious thought, the selection of key stores for example may not be thought about, rather a product of habits formed through previous experiences. Dashed lines have been used to make clear that the ethical influence exerted at this point is variable dependant on the individual's personality and moral views, and acknowledges that for some consumers no obvious effect may be apparent.

Given the size of the clothing industry, it is important for producers, retailers and marketers to fully understand each factor that may influence the consumer. This research provides a starting point from which the effect of ethical influences that are currently subject to much media attention may be assessed. Further research is required in this area, possibly of a more quantitative nature to test the relationships suggested here, and to assess their relative importance on purchase decisions.

Figure 2: Model of Ethics in Clothing Purchase Behaviour
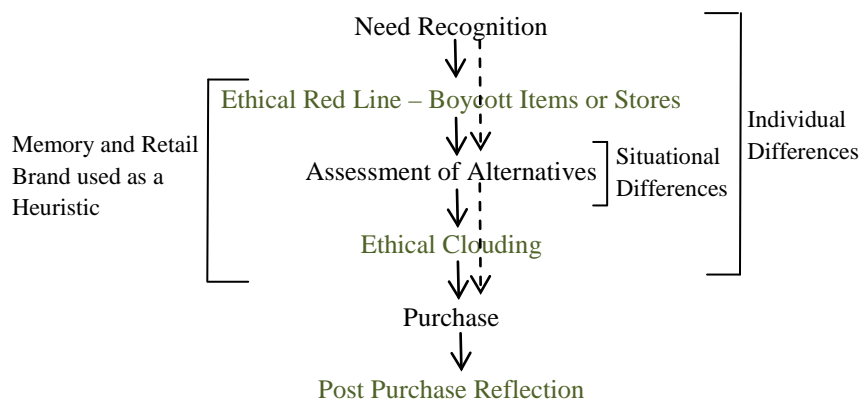
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Ethics in Fashion Purchasing Behaviour: A Conceptual Framework.

Over recent years, both academic and commercial publications have noted increases in consumer awareness and interest in environmental and ethical issues (Williams *et al.* 2006). There is evidence that ethical considerations are impacting on a broad range of purchasing decisions including fashion apparel. Fashion purchase decision making processes are, however, likely to be significantly different to those employed when buying other goods, as the consumption of fashion is especially conspicuous and status revealing (Schiffman and Kanuk 2006, Wang et al. 2004). With £35.6bn of clothing sold each year (Mintel 2006), it is important that consumer influences in the decision making process are fully understood.

To date, the area of ethical fashion has attracted only limited academic and commercial research (Jorgens 2006). In spite of this, a large number of enthusiastic entrepreneurs have started to market 'ethical fashion'. The burgeoning number of independent suppliers is demonstrated in a recent edition of the *New Consumer* magazine which showcased 101 ethical brands (Hamnett 2006). There is a need for further research in this area to help understand the role that ethics plays in consumer purchase decision making to ensure that retailers provide an appropriate range of products that are marketed and priced effectively.

This paper provides a review of the ethical decision making literature, and uses it in combination with pilot elicitation interviews to construct a conceptual framework outlining the role that ethics plays in consumer fashion purchase decision making. The key areas in which ethics impacts upon this decision making process will be identified and discussed.

The development of this conceptual framework is work in progress, and part of a larger study into consumers' consideration of ethical fashion.

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Semi-Structured Scoping Interviews Questioning Route

Interview guide to be used loosely allowing any unanticipated discussion paths to be fully explored.

Maintain conversational/relaxed tone.

Welcome

Discuss anonymity & seek consent to record and analyse discussion on this basis.

- What does the term ethical fashion mean to you?

  No further probing at this point.

- What do you perceive to be ethical issues in fashion?

  Provide scope for participant to exhaust their perceptions of ethical issues. Introduce and glean views on the following factors that are covered in the literature if not introduced by interviewee:

  'sweatshops':

  pesticide use;

  child labour;

  use of fur;

  use of Fair-Trade;

  Organic cotton:

- To what extent do you consider ethical issues when buying fashion/clothing?

  Probe further depending on question to gain discussion around the relative importance of such factors.

  How would interviewee respond to Fair Trade, 'no sweat' or Organic labelled clothing?

- Are you able to identify fashion retailers that have bad / good ethics?

  Why have you identified these?

- How would you find out more about a retailer's ethical stance?

Reseek consent and thank for participation.

Fashion Purchase Focus Group: Discussion Guide

Timing	Action	Notes
3 Mins	**Introduction** Many thanks for coming along to participate in this focus group. I am currently conducting a series of focus groups as part of a large research project into fashion purchasing behaviour. This discussion will last for approximately one hour and be split broadly into three parts. Firstly, discussing what we mean by fashion in order to develop a commonly understood definition; secondly talking about the kinds of factors that you consider when choosing fashion clothing & finally discussing a couple of specific factors in a little more depth. There will be time at the end of the discussion to discuss my research if you are interested, and I will leave you with my contact details if you wish to discuss any aspect of my research beyond today. I intend to record the discussion today to enable more effective analysis, and Melanie is here to observe and make a few notes which again will aid in the analysis. Does anyone have any questions? Before we start I would like you to read and sign this short form providing consent for your views to be recorded and used in my research (verbal consent already given when participants were recruited).	Introduction to set the scene & outline the formal necessities. No individual to be identified at any time outside of this room, recording simply to aide the write up and to ensure accurate representation of discussion
4 Mins (7)	Emphasis that there are no right or wrong answers, and that all opinions are valid. • By way of an introduction and so we all know each other, could you introduce yourself to the group & briefly state what you do here at university. • First of all can I ask you to share with the group the item of clothing that you have most recently	To create an open, non-judgemental and informed environment So participants can identify the common links between them and relax into the group.

Timing	Action	Notes
	bought? What was it? Was it for yourself?	Opening question, simply designed to get everyone in the group to talk at an early stage.
	Part one: The topic for this discussion group is fashion clothing purchase. Could I ask you to identify what the term 'fashion' means to you?	Introductory question – getting participants to think about the subject area.
	For my research it is important that I identify a commonly understood definition for 'high-street fashion' or clothing purchase. It seems like these factors are important, what about this definition?	Developing and discussing a commonly understood definition based upon the factors that emerged from previous discussion.
	What kind of products would this definition encompass? What products would not be encompassed in this definition?	
12 Mins (19)	Ok, so can we all agree that this definition is easily understood and means the same to us all?	Write finalised definition on a flip chart/white board.
	Part 2: Thinking back to the clothing that you have purchased recently could I ask you to take a couple of minutes and write down on the pad in front of you the key factors that you considered when selecting the item?	Ensures that each group member thinks about the question and is not overly led by the subsequent group discussion.
	Would you like to identify and discuss with the group the considerations that you had & as you do so I'll write each down?	**Writing Task 1**

Timing	Action	Notes
20 Mins (49)	Are there any other factors that you considered but aren't there yet?	Identifying variables and writing on post-it's for later use.
	Nobody has mentioned X – is this factor not important to anyone?	Prompt to encourage further disclosure.
	Ok, if this is a fairly exhaustive list of factors, would it be possible to arrange them or group them in order of importance?	Compare the list built up with that derived from the literature – prompt or question on any factors that appear to be missing, or those that appear to be completely new.
	Are there specific ways in which these factors will interact with each other?	
	In a few years when you all have your dream jobs, do you think that these groupings/ this hierarchy will change at all? How?	
	Part 3:	
	Looking at this list of factors I'm just thinking; what about any ethical considerations?	The distinction between part 2 & part 3 will not be clear to the participants.
	Can I ask you to take a minute or so to write down any ethical issues are you aware of in fashion?	Sound conversational. **Writing task 2**
	What issues if any have you come up with?	
	Do you know any shops that stock 'ethical' products?	

Timing	Action	Notes
20 Mins (69)	Do you know any shops that stock 'ethical' clothing lines? Could you classify any particular clothing retailers as ethical or unethical? Why do you think that? Looking at this discussion around ethical factors or considerations how do they come into your purchasing decisions? What importance would they have? Where would ethics fit in? How would ethics interact with the other factors discussed? Again once you have your dream job and more money do you think that the influence of these ethical attributes will change at all? Close: How do you think that the future looks for retailers specialising in 'Ethical' clothing? Moderator provides a 2-3 minute summary of the focus group discussion. How well does this capture what was said here?	
5 Mins (74)		Ending Question – designed to bring the discussion to a close. Summary Question to see if all participants are happy my understanding of the key points from

Appendix F: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Timing	Action	Notes
	Outline the focus group objectives in greater detail. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn't? Would anyone like to add anything?	the focus group. Insurance question to provide the opportunity to add anything additionally that any participant feels has been missed.

Things to take:

Digital Camera & Spare Batteries

2* Dictaphone, microphone, spare batteries

Tea, Coffee, Water, Biscuits

Plates and Mugs

Consent forms

Post-it notes

Pens

Flip Chart Pens

Flip Chart

Kettle

Tasks for Observer:

Draw seating plan, naming and numbering participants. – collate age and occupation.

Identify any group member who is not participating and try to introduce.

Make sure that no key points are missed & interject as necessary.

Photograph attribute list as appropriate & note the recording time at which these photos are taken.

Keep an eye on timings to ensure that the group is progressing appropriately & to prompt Moderator accordingly.

An assessment of fashion purchasing behaviour

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Jeffery Bray, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour, School of Services Management, Bournemouth University.
jbray@bournemouth.ac.uk (01202) 965232

1. I hereby agree to participate in focus group research moderated by Jeffery Bray for the purpose of his study into fashion purchasing behaviour.

Project outline:
The aim of this focus group research is to identify a commonly understood definition of fashion clothing, and explore the factors that are considered in its selection and purchase. This focus group research form part of a larger study into the role of specific attributes in fashion purchase decision making.

2. The purpose and nature of the focus group has been explained to me.

3. I grant Jeffery Bray permission to document - through audio recording and transcription – the discussion.

4. The information I agree to share with the group is to be used solely for the purposes of the research study.

5. The information contained in the contributions will not be given to any non-project staff.

6. Confidentiality and anonymity in analysis are assured. The content of the interview may be read, quoted, or cited from and disseminated for educational and scholarly purposes only.

Signature participant:
……………………………………………………………………..

Name of participant:
……………………………………………………………………

Date:
……………………………………………………………………………………

I have explained the research project and nature of the interview. I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Signature moderator:
……………………………………………………………………..

Name of moderator:
…………………………………………………………………….

Date:
………………………………………………………………………………………….

Shopping for Clothes

Section A: Selecting items of clothing

Q1 **Think of an item of clothing that you have recently purchased. Outline briefly below the type of item it was (e.g. shoes, smart trousers, casual dress, pair of socks etc.)**

[ ]

Q2 **Please identify when this item was intended to be worn (tick one box only)**

Everyday wear .... [ ]

Going out .... [ ]

Special occasion .... [ ]

Work .... [ ]

Other (please specify) [ ]

Q3 **Did you buy the item (tick one box only)**

For yourself? .... [ ]

For another adult? .... [ ]

For a child? .... [ ]

Q4 **Where did you buy this item? (tick one box only)**

Store (including high-street, supermarket, local shop) .... [ ]

On-line .... [ ]

Catalogue .... [ ]

If you remember the name of the retailer please specify [ ]

Q5 **Thinking about the purchase of this item, please rate on the scale below how important the following factors were in your choice where 7 is Extremely Important and 1 is Unimportant:**

	< Important				Unimportant >			*Not Sure*
	7	*6*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	
The Colour of the item	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
How well the item Fitted..	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The Style of the item	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Low Price of the item	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Whether it was made in accordance to Fair Trade principles .	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
How the item looked when tried on	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The item appeared to be good value for money	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Level of Customer Service given	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Designer Label...	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Advice from friends or family..................................	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The material/fabric it was made from	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Whether the item was easily Washable	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Comfort..	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Whether it was made from Organically certified materials	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
How well the item would Coordinate with other items	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The price of the item was Reduced / in a Sale........................	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
How often I thought it would be worn	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Quality	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Exclusivity...	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Store it was stocked in	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Country of manufacture	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Good Value..	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Brand of the product	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Other Factor (please specify)..............................	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[ ]

Section B: Thinking more generally about buying clothes

Q6 Thinking about the purchase of items of clothing generally, please rate on the scale below how important the following factors were in your choice where 7 is Extremely Important and 1 is Unimportant:

	< Important				Unimportant >			*Not Sure*
	7	*6*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	
Organic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does not contain Leather	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does not contain Fur	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of Sustainable materials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of Pesticides	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Use of 'Sweatshops' in production	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q7 Are there any items of clothing that you would not consider buying (boycott) for any of the above reasons?

Yes .... ☐   No .... ☐

If Yes please specify with brief reasons

Q8 Are there any shops/brands that you would not consider shopping at/buying for any of the above reasons?

Yes .... ☐   No .... ☐

If Yes please specify with brief reasons

Q9 When looking at an item, if you saw that it was labelled as Fair Trade would this influence your purchase decision?

Much less likely to buy .... ☐

Less likely to buy .... ☐

No Influence .... ☐

More likely to buy .... ☐

Much more likely to buy .... ☐

Q10 In what way does Fair Trade labelling influence your purchasing decisions?

Q11 Please indicate below the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Fair Trade clothing is better quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade clothing lines are too expensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't understand what Fair Trade means on clothing items	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade clothing is generally more fashionable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shops do not stock a wide enough range of Fair Trade clothing lines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like shops to provide more information on their production standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade accreditation doesn't make any difference to factory workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade clothing assures better working conditions for employees producing the clothes or fabric	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12 When looking at an item, if you saw that it was labelled as Organic would this influence your purchase decision?

Much less likely to buy .... ☐

Less likely to buy .... ☐

No influence .... ☐

More likely to buy .... ☐

Much more likely to buy .... ☐

Q13 In what way does Organic labelling influence your purchasing decisions?

Q14   Please indicate below the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not sure
Organic clothing is more healthy to wear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organic clothing is generally more fashionable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organic clothing lines are too expensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organic clothing is better for the environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organic clothing is generally not fashionable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't understand what Organic means on clothing items	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have never seen any Organic clothing in the shops I visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organic clothing is better quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am sceptical when retailers claim their clothing is Organic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shops do not stock a wide enough range of Organic clothing lines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15   Would you be prepared to pay more for the following items of clothing?

	I would not be prepared to pay any more	1-5% more	6-10% more	11-15% more	16-20% more	21-25% more	26-30% more	Greater than 30% more
Organic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fair Trade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16   Please indicate below the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
I would feel good wearing an item of clothing that was made with Organic cotton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would feel good wearing an item of clothing that was made in accordance with Fair Trade principles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If I thought that my clothes had been made in sweatshop conditions I would feel guilty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The items of clothing I choose to buy will not make any difference to factory workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am uncomfortable if the clothes I buy are too cheap	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How my clothing was made has no affect on how I feel about it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q17   Would you be prepared to purchase an item of clothing containing animal fur?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, why not? ☐

Q19   How many items of clothing do you buy in an average month (for yourself and others)?

Less than 2 ☐

2-3 items ☐

4-6 items ☐

7 or more items ☐

Q18   In the last 12 months, where did you purchase the most items of clothing. Please list the top three stores/catalogues/web-sites in priority order:

1 ..

2 ..

3 ..

Q20   Which of the stores below do you think stock Fair Trade clothing items (please tick all those that apply)

Debenhams	☐	New Look	☐
M&S	☐	Asda George	☐
Tesco	☐	Primark	☐
Top Shop	☐	Matalan	☐
Next	☐	BHS	☐

Other (please specify) ☐

Section C: Who are you?

Q21 Are you male or female?

Male .... ☐

Female .... ☐

Q22 How many children do you have?

None	1	2	3	4+
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please state their ages

Q23 What is your age?

Under 16 .... ☐

16 to 24 .... ☐

25 to 34 .... ☐

35 to 44 .... ☐

45 to 54 .... ☐

55 to 64 .... ☐

65 to 74 .... ☐

75 and over .... ☐

Q24 What is your Ethnic Origin?

White .... ☐

Mixed .... ☐

Asian or Asian British .... ☐

Black or Black British .... ☐

Chinese .... ☐

Other (please specify)

Q25 What is your Nationality?

Q26 Please provide the first part of your postal code to enable me to group the responses geographically:

Q27 What is your Household Income?

Less than £15,000 .... ☐

£15,000 - £19,999 .... ☐

£20,000 - £29,999 .... ☐

£30,000 - £39.999 .... ☐

£40,000 - £49,999 .... ☐

Greater than £50,000 .... ☐

Q28 What is the highest academic qualification you have attained?

No academic qualifications .... ☐

GCSE (Grades D-G) or equivalent .... ☐

GCSE (Grade C or above) or equivalent .... ☐

A level or equivalent .... ☐

First degree (undergraduate).............................. ☐

Master's degree or above .... ☐

Other (please specify)

Thank You

Thank you very much for completing and returning this questionaire. All the information you have given will be treated confidentially. As part of this research I may wish to contact a small number of people to discuss their thoughts in greater detail. This is optional, however if you would be prepared for me to contact you please provide your contact details below.

Q29

Name ....

Address ....

Post Code......

E-mail Address ....

Telephone Number ....

ID ....

School of Services Management

Bournemouth University

41, Umachan
ERSKINE
PA8 7FG

4th December 2009

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a Senior Lecturer at Bournemouth University conducting a comprehensive and detailed research project into the purchase of clothing. One aspect of this research requires a short questionnaire to be completed by a sample of the UK population. Your address was one of a number that were randomly selected to receive this survey at the end of October. If you have recently posted a return then thank you for your response.

For this research to be accurate and of value, I need the help from as many households as possible and would be really grateful if someone in your household could complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. All responses will be treated with complete confidentiality.

If you would like any further information on the research that I am conducting, my contact details are below and I would be very happy to discuss the project with you. Many thanks in advance for your assistance with this research.

Yours faithfully

Jeffery Bray
Senior Lecturer in Marketing
Bournemouth University

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