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Motivations of the Ethical Consumer

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ABSTRACT. There are strong indications that many consumers are switching towards more socially and environmentally responsible products and services, reflecting a shift in consumer values indicated in several countries. However, little is known about the motives that drive some toward, or deter others from, higher levels of ethical concern and action in their purchasing decisions. Following a qualitative investigation using ZMET and focus group discussions, a questionnaire was developed and administered to a representative sample of consumers; nearly 1,000 usable questionnaires were collected. The degree of awareness, concern and action regarding 16 ethical issues was quantified, using a measure developed from the Stages of Change concept within the Transtheoretical model. Motivations for ethical behaviour, in relation to each individual's most salient ethical issue, were investigated using initially 22 motive statements within the framework of the Decisional Balance Scale (DBS). The findings suggest that the DBS and Stages model have an explanatory value within the ethical decision-making context, and that the motives identified do reflect the Decisional Balance Constructs. Indeed the study suggests that respondents' motivational attitudes are a function of their stage of ethical awareness, concern and action. Therefore, the Decisional Balance Scale may well prove useful for designing appropriate interventions and communications to facilitate movement towards more ethical decision-making. These findings yield strategic insight for communicating messages to ethical consumers and for better understanding their purchasing decisions.

KEY WORDS: ethical consumers, ethical motives, transtheoretical model, decisional balance scale, stages models

Introduction

For a number of years, scholars have argued that a highly principled group of 'aware' and 'ethical' consumers has emerged (e.g., Strong, 1996; Shaw and Clarke, 1998; Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Hendarwan, 2002; Harrison et al., 2005). They are boycotting real animal fur products, or products that involve the use of animals in product testing. They are also examining a company's record on hiring and promoting minorities and women (Roberts, 1996, p.79). Cowe and Williams (2000, p.2) assert that, ''shoppers are highly aware of ethical issues and many are ready to put their money where their morals are''. Thus, there is an increasing body of evidence to suggest that shoppers take their morals, in addition to their wallets, when they visit the high street (Thogersen, 1999). During 2004, U.K. consumers spent an estimated £25.8 billion a year on ethical goods and services (Osborne, 2005). This figure represents an increase of approximately 40 per cent in the six years since the inception of the Co-operative Bank's Ethical Purchasing Index (EPI).[1] This ''ethical shopping basket'' is based on household consumption in the areas of food, household goods, cosmetics and toiletries, energy, housing, transport, leisure and charity.

Ethical goods and services, defined below, are experiencing growing market shares (Simms, 2003) and consumers are becoming more aware of ethical consumption through market and information campaigns (Harrison et al., 2005). Direct consumer action in the form of boycott activity, pressure groups and other forms of consumer activism is also on the rise (Auger et al., 2003; Harrison et al., 2005). Hence, it may well be that consumer values are experiencing a shift from the inward facing materialistic outlook, often associated with the ''yuppie'' mindset of the 1980s, towards a more socially and environmentally proactive mindset, epitomised by what some scholars have labelled the ''caring-sharing'' 1990s (Hemingway and Maclagan,

2004). This phenomenon is not restricted to Europe. Kahle et al. (1998) note that the American consumer is becoming increasingly concerned with establishing warm relationships with others. More are now pursuing a sense of accomplishment, a notion suggestive of Maslow's goals of self-actualization and self-fulfilment (Solomon et al., 1999). Macchiette and Roy (1994) also report on ''America's concern with social responsibility'', as reflected in shifting consumer values. From a national US survey, Fullerton et al. (1996) conclude that consumers overall do have moral values and do not tolerate ethical abuses.

While this evidence supports the view that a shift in consumer values is occurring, there is little substantive empirical research that addresses how this motivational process operates. It is this gap in the existing knowledge that this paper seeks to address. The overall objective is to operationalize the Decisional Balance Scale (DBS) construct from within the Transtheoretical Model (TTM), in the context of ethical consumer decisions. Through this, it is hoped to establish whether it has utility in this context and, if so, suggest how stakeholders may influence this decision-making process. More specifically, the empirical study aims to:

1. investigate whether ethical decision-making can be represented by the positive-negative dichotomy of values and motivations found in other decision-making contexts (e.g., Migneault et al., 1999);
2. test whether a decisional balance shift operates as individuals move through stages of ethical awareness, concern and action, analogous to the 'Stages of Change' represented within the Transtheoretical Model;
3. establish whether a ''tipping point'' occurs for ethical decision-making, at which the relative strengths of the positive decisional balance motives starts to exceed those of the negatives;
4. establish whether the relative strength of decisional balance motives is relatively stable across a number of different issues relevant to ethical purchasing decisions.

Defining the ethical consumer

Webster's Online Dictionary describes an ''ethical'' person as an individual who is likely to ''conform to accepted standards of social or professional behaviour''.[2] Of course, this is a rather wide definition and could be applied equally to an individual's attitudes to shopping, personal relationships or work. This study investigates the ethics of consumption and therefore focuses its concern on ethical consumerism.

The concept of ethical consumerism is generally accepted as being borne out of the environmental movement and green consumerism. Hendarwan (2002, p.16) defines green consumerism as that which involves ''beliefs and values aimed at supporting a greater good that motivates consumers' purchases''. Elkington and Hailes (1989) elaborate that a green consumer avoids products that might ''endanger the health of the consumer or others; cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy; cause unnecessary waste; use materials derived from threatened species or environments; involve unnecessary use or cruelty to animals [or] adversely affect other countries''.

The distinction between green consumerism and ethical consumerism is important because ethical concern encompasses a broader range of issues and therefore a more complex decision making process for consumers (Shaw and Shiu, 2002). Cowe and Williams (2000, p.4) therefore extended the green definition to encompass wider ethical issues associated with purchase behaviour, including ''matters of conscience such as animal welfare and fair trade, social aspects such as labour standards, as well as more self-interested health concerns behind the growth of organic food sales''.

Ethical consumers, therefore, are additionally concerned with the ''people'' element of consumerism (Strong, 1996), being ''distinguished by their concern for deep seated problems, such as those of the Third World'' (Shaw and Clarke, 1999, p.109). Furthermore, Harrison et al. (2005, p. 4) note that ethical consumers ''care whether a corporation promotes employees from minority ethnicities, plan their consumption to avoid harm to other animals, worry about product transportation distances and probably a plethora of other concerns''.

According to Harper and Makatouni (2002, p.289), being an ethical consumer means ''buying products which are not harmful to the environment and society. This can be as simple as buying free-range eggs or as complex as boycotting goods produced by child labour''. Regarding ethical consumption, Shaw and Clarke (1998. p. 163) refer to this as ''the degree to which consumers prioritize their own ethical concerns when making product choices''. Ethical Consumer magazine defines ethical purchasing as ''buying things that are made ethically by companies that act ethically''.[3] The corporate perspective highlights the ''importance of non-traditional and social components of a company's products and business process to strategic success – such as environmental protectionism, child labour practices and so on'' (Auger et al., 2003, p.281).

Conceptualization and hypotheses

Values and motivation

Through understanding a person's motivations and values, greater insight can be gained into why individuals behave as they do (Solomon et al., 1999). Motivations are ''the processes that cause people to behave as they do [and] occur when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy'' (Solomon et al., 1999, p. 91). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, p. 551) define values as ''concepts or beliefs about desirable end states or behaviours, that transcend specific situations, guide selection or evaluation of behaviour or events, and are ordered by relative importance''. This view of values is well supported in the literature (e.g., Agle and Caldwell, 1999; Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Solomon et al., 1999). Motivations are closely linked to values (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002), in that values are the criteria that individuals use to select and justify behaviour. Individual's values influence the attractiveness of different goal objects and, consequently, the motivation to attain these goals (Feather, 1992). In the context of green consumerism, for example, Hendarwan (2002, p.16) refers to ''beliefs and values aimed at supporting a greater good that motivates consumers' purchases''.

Following Rokeach (1979), Feather (1992) defines values as a set of stable, general beliefs about what is desirable and postulates that these emerge both from society's norms and from the individual's core psychological needs and sense of self. Values play an important role in consumption behaviour, especially within an ethical context, since many goods and services are selected with value-related goals in mind. Values may serve both individual and collective interests, in addition to a mixture of these (Hofstede and Bond, 1984). As when managers advocate corporate social responsibility initiatives, this can also be construed as self-interest in the form of psychological egoism (Baier, 1993). This represents the view that all actions can be traced back to self-interest; in the ethical context, feeling good (or avoiding guilt) by doing good (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004). Likewise, a consumer with a genuine interest in being ''green'', for the sake of society and the wider environment, may also have a strong self-interest in being seen to be green. While personal and social values can be closely intertwined, efforts are made within the empirical investigation to sample both these broad domains of ethical motivation.

When making decisions, individuals often ''trade-off'' values and needs. For instance, when purchasing organic foods consumers may trade off the personal cost of a potentially higher priced product against the social benefit of a potentially more environmentally friendly purchase. Equally they may be concerned about their personal health and prefer organic products to processed foods (Padel and Foster, 2005). It is this cost-benefit analysis approach that forms one of the platforms of this investigation. By applying a modelled approach, adapted from the realms of psychology and psychiatry, the study aims to yield greater insight into the motivational processes that operate when individuals make ethical consumer decisions. The chosen approach is derived from the Transtheoretical Model, it's Stages of Change concept and the Decisional Balance Scale embedded within the model.

Decisional Balance Scale

The Decisional Balance Scale (DBS) and its related techniques offer a powerful schema for assessing the cognitive and motivational aspects of an individual's decision making (Janis and Mann, 1977; Velicer

et al., 1985). In brief, the main assumption of the DBS is the trade-off between anticipated gains (benefits) and losses (costs) associated with a course of action (Carey et al., 1999). In this ''conflict'' approach to decision making, a decisional ''balance sheet'' of comparative gains and losses is established. This cost-benefit analysis has been widely utilised in the past in the domains of psychology and psychiatry to assess motivations for various behaviours or cessation measures. These include investigating substance use and misuse (Carey et al., 1999; Migneault, 1999), smoking cessation (Velicer et al., 1985; Fava et al., 1995), exercise behaviour in adolescents (Nigg and Courneya, 1998) and readiness for change in anorexia nervosa (Cockell et al., 2002). To date, however, no known published empirical study exists which applies the DBS construct to ethical decision-making and the trade off between consumers various personal and social values.

The gains and losses that form the basis of the DBS construct can be elaborated into four sub-categories of losses and gains (Janis and Mann, 1968, 1977). These are the broad interests served by adopting a course of action relating to an ethical decision. The categories below therefore broadly reflect positive gains and negative losses for the individual and wider society.

1. Utilitarian gains and losses for self.
2. Utilitarian gains and losses for significant others.
3. Self-approval or self-disapproval.
4. Approval or disapproval from significant others.

We later explore the value statements that were assimilated to represent these broader interests. Past research has consistently found these eight categories balanced as two factors: positive gains and negative losses (Migneault et al., 1999). These are usually referred to, for brevity within the TTM literature, as ''pros'' and ''cons'' (e.g., Prochaska et al., 1992, 1993; Rossi et al., 2001). Of course, this is not to imply that individuals are always conscious of this balancing process. This would assume that individuals consistently behave in a rational manner, which past research has shown is not always the case (e.g., Miller and Rollnick, 2002; Jacoby, 2002). Rather, the utility of the DBS is that it allows observation of an individual's decision-making process via their interconnected values and motivations, which can be broadly categorized into the personal and the social, the positive and the negative values via a series of motivational statements. Hence:

H1. *A two component analysis will group the decisional balance items into positive gains (pros) and negative losses (cons)*.

The DBS concept is anchored in a larger model of behaviour change known as the Transtheoretical Model and its Stages of Change. This model has been effective in understanding a variety of health-related behaviours (Prochaska et al., 1994; Migneault et al., 1999) but, until now, no known studies exist which attempt to adapt this model for use in the ethical decision-making context. Therefore, a brief description of this model is provided.

The transtheoretical model and the stages of change

The Transtheoretical model (TTM) was originally developed as a general model of intentional behaviour change (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984; Rossi et al., 2001) and has gained widespread acceptance in the fields of psychology and psychiatry (Migneault et al., 1999). It was founded upon the notion that behavioural change occurs in a series of incremental steps (Miller and Rollnick, 2002). TTM is composed of another construct that complements the Decisional Balance Scale – the 'Stages of Change' (SOC).

The five Stages of Change; Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Maintenance, were originally conceived by Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) to help practitioners understand how a person might change their smoking habits, and are illustrated in appendix A. These stages have been widely validated across many differing behaviours (Prochaska et al., 1994; Migneault et al., 1999). The descriptions of each stage in appendix A depict both the application to the cessation of smoking, from Prochaska and DiClemente's (1983) original study, and its adaptation to the ethical decision making context of this study.

It is the latter in which we have a primary interest, since an aim of this study is to test whether a DBS shift operates as individuals progress through stages of awareness, concern and

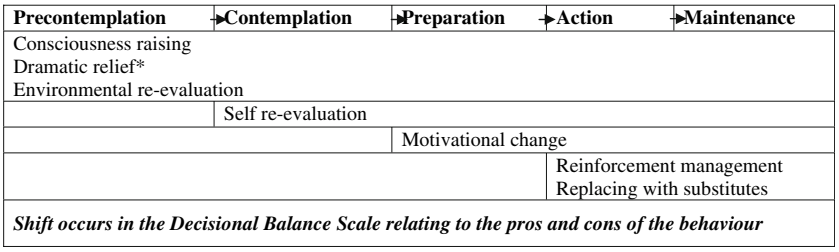

Figure 1. Adaptation of the change processes in the SOC model. ⋆Occurs when a person experiences a strong emotional reaction to events. Adapted from Prochaska et al. (1992) and Hotz (1995).

action, analogous to the 'Stages of Change' represented by the Transtheoretical Model. Essentially the SOC model posits that individuals employ different change processes as they move through the stages. Some of these change processes are summarised in Figure 1, The decision to move from one stage of change to the next is largely governed by the salience and/or valence a person ascribes to the positive and negative value statements as part of the Decisional Balance Scale.

When an individual is in the earlier stages of ethical awareness, they are less likely to agree with motivational statements that suggest an ethical course of action is beneficial to them as a person, and to wider society. Rather, the negative aspects of any change in behaviour outweigh the positives, thus, preventing said behaviours taking place. This is analogous to the Precontemplation stage in other applications of the Transtheoretical Model, wherein the ''cons'' of changing problem behaviour exceed the ''pros'' (Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995). However, as awareness and concern of the issue increases, the individual moves through the stages towards action. The evidence from the body of TTM research suggests that their level of agreement with positive motivations (or gains) will increase, whilst their level of agreement with negative motivations (or losses) will decrease. Hence:

H2a. *The personal positives scale will be at higher levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

H2b. *The social positives scale will be at higher levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

H3a. *The personal negatives scale will be at lower levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

H3b. *The social negatives scale will be at lower levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

During the Precontemplation stage, the individual will be more strongly influenced by the ''cons'' of the behaviour. In the action stage, the reverse will be observed, with the ''pros'' outweighing the ''cons'', thus tipping the behaviour into action. The TTM theory postulates that, at some point between the two stages, the ''pros'' and ''cons'' will cross over (Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995), suggesting that a ''Critical Ethical Point'' will exist. Prochaska (1994) investigated this generalization across 12 behaviours and identified some differences in the relationships. In spite of these differences, the concept of a ''tipping'' or cross-over point between the ''pros'' and ''cons'' was supported, assuming that the DBS scales are standardised by using z or t scores.

If an individual is in the 'aware but not concerned' stage, then their motivations for taking any form of action on an ethical issue are not strong. However, TTM research suggests that movement along the stages model will be associated with increasingly strong positive personal and social motivations, and weakening negative personal and social motivations. Hence, it could be assumed that, at some point along the stages paradigm, the positive and negative motivations would cross over (Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995), resulting in a change of the motivational state of the individual towards the issue. We will refer to this point as the ''Critical Ethical Point''. The evidence from the TTM literature

TABLE I

Component loadings for two-factor solution

Principal Component Loadings – Two-Component Solution (Orthogonal)		
Decisional Balance Items	Component	
Positive Motivations (Pros) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.833	I	II
It would help if people bought from firms that address this issue	0.779	
It would be better for everyone in the long run if people favoured products that address this issue	0.723	
I feel better about myself if I take some form of action against firms that violate this issue	0.717	
I feel more responsible if I favour products that address this issue	0.713	
People could make fairer choices if they were aware of which companies had high ethical principles regarding this issue	0.697	
Society would benefit from the removal of products that violate this issue	0.625	
This is an issue that I like to be associated with	0.620	
People who matter to me would respect me for being concerned about this issue	0.520	
My friends are concerned about this issue	0.478	
Negative Motivations (Cons) Cronbach's Alpha: 0.831		
Having to take account of this issue would make shopping less convenient for people		0.811
It would make shopping less convenient if I had to choose only from products that support this issue		0.757
People's choices would be unreasonably restricted by the removal of products that disregard this issue		0.722
It would take the pleasure out of shopping if I had to choose only from products that support this issue		0.659
People would be annoyed if they were pressured into being concerned with this issue		0.622
People are too busy today to be concerned with this issue		0.600
People might think it was a waste of time to try to influence big business over this issue		0.591
It would be too much hassle to buy only from businesses that do not violate this issue		0.584
My friends would think it was uncool to be concerned with this issue		0.441
It costs more to take account of this issue when shopping		0.424

Total variance explained = 42.9%; KMO = 0.853; Bartlett's Test Chi-sq = 5756.7, df = 171, $p = 0.000$

would suggest this tipping point occurs during either the contemplation or precontemplation stages of change (Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995), which corresponds to either the aware/not concerned or the aware/concerned stages for ethical behaviour. Hence:

H4a. *A ''Critical Ethical Point'', whereby the positive motivations will outweigh the negative motivations, will occur during the aware/not concerned stage.*

H4b. *A ''Critical Ethical Point'', whereby the positive motivations will outweigh the negative motivations, will occur during the aware/concerned stage.*

The internal validity of the ''pro-con'' model of Decisional Balance has been established in past studies across a variety of behaviours (Prochaska et al., 1994; Migneault et al., 1999). Prochaska 1994 identified differences in the levels of ''pros'' and ''cons'', at different stages of change, according to whether behaviour adoption (e.g., condom use) or cessation (e.g., stopping smoking) was involved. Clearly, ethical consumption can involve both behaviour adoption, such as recycling, or behaviour cessation, such as product boycotting, or not using the car for short shopping journeys. This study deploys a common measure of awareness, concern and action stages, applied in relation to a range of issues and situations of particular salience to consumers. Consequently, it is of interest to test the stability of the DBS scales across this range of issues under investigation.

The final hypothesis is based on the assumption that the motives and values individuals use to select and justify behaviour ''transcend specific situations... and are ordered by relative importance'' (Agle and Caldwell, 1999; Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987; Solomon et al., 1999). This hypothesis is motivated by previous TTM research that suggests that, if the model is to yield explanatory power, its pattern should be generalizable across a variety of behaviours (Prochaska et al., 1994; Migneault et al., 1999). Hence:

H5. *The relative strength of the various ethical motivations will remain stable across a range of ethical issues.*

The focus of this paper now turns to the methodology employed to test these hypotheses.

Methodology

Decisional balance instrument

A large pool of possible positives and negatives of ethical decision-making was generated from a number of sources. These included adapting items from Rokeach's Value Survey (1973) and the List of Values scale (Beatty et al., 1985; Solomon et al., 1999). Additional items were developed via insights garnered from the qualitative work, which included focus group interviews and one-to-one ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) interviews. Given the multiple methods used in the derivation of these statements, and their strong theoretical underpinnings within the DBS concept, we feel confident of their content validity. Following pilot testing, the resultant 22 items were chosen for the final set of motivational statements. Table I shows 19 of these DBS statements, after the removal of three, which also are explained below.

ZMET

ZMET is a hybrid methodology, including the use of visual and sensory imagery, to uncover and stimulate thought processes during a personal, one-on-one interview (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995). Ten respondents were each asked to collect 12 images (magazine pictures, photographs or other sources) that represented their key conscience concerns: each respondent was interviewed for about two hours (Doherty and McGoldrick, 2003). The elicitation processes and interviews helped the respondents to convey their thoughts and feelings regarding the motivations for their key ethical concerns. The advantage of such a technique is that issues emerge from the data collected by the respondents, as opposed to the researchers imposing their own thoughts and structures. Participants were deliberately drawn from a diverse spread of the population, with five respondents from the (higher status) ABC1 groups, five from the (lower status) C2DEs. Again it must be emphasized that, at this stage of the investigation, the aim was not to generalize the findings to the wider population, but to explore current and emerging ethical issues in depth.

Awareness, concern and action stages

A six-point measure was developed to record the level of consumer concern for the variety of mainstream ethical issues, identified during the literature review and the qualitative research. The measure was influenced by research into the Transtheoretical model (TTM) and its Stages of Change. Most investigations of ethical concern do not include a longitudinal element, this one included, so change per se could not actually be measured within this study. However, motivational characteristics of the stages could be analyzed across a fairly large

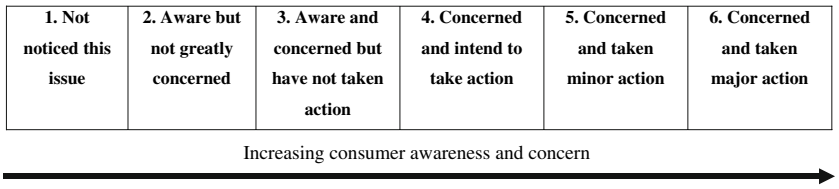

Figure 2. Stages of ethical awareness, concern and action.

cross-section of consumers. Our stages measure shares some attributes of the long established AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) and DAGMAR models from within the marketing literature (e.g., McGoldrick, 2002, p. 443). However, the constructs of the TTM model provide the richest insights into the stages and their associated motives. The measure developed for this study was tested repeatedly through protocol interviewing to ensure its construct validity, and the final version is illustrated in Figure 2.

1. *Not noticed an issue* refers to the stage whereby the individual is neither aware nor concerned about the ethical issue. Much like Carrigan and Attalla's (2001) 'oblivious' consumers, the person may have the potential to be made aware and ethically concerned about this issue, but by the same token may also have the potential to show little concern, even if made aware. This is analogous to the early part of the precontemplation stage of the TTM model, or the unawareness stage of the DAGMAR model.
2. The *Aware but not greatly concerned* individual represents the person who has knowledge of the existence of an issue but is unaffected by it and therefore unlikely to alter their purchasing behaviour in relation to the issue. They may well be Carrigan and Attalla's (2001) 'cynical and disinterested' persons. The possibility of future events turning an individual at this stage of awareness and concern into someone exhibiting greater levels of concern, possibly action, cannot be discounted. However, no particular concern is currently recorded, so those in this group are also at a precontemplation stage, but not through lack of awareness.
3. Those at the *Aware and concerned but have not taken action* stage are contemplating what course to follow. They are conscious of the issue and care about it, but have not yet felt the need to act upon it. Perhaps they are confused and uncertain (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). Perhaps they lack the necessary means to take action or perhaps they feel powerless to effect a change. Given the opportunity, these individuals could become more ethically active. In relation to the TTM, these may be seen as being at the stage of contemplation.
4. *Concerned and intend to take action*; whilst still a contemplative phase in the individual's behaviour, this represents a bridge between those who may still be uncertain and those who are caring and ethical (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). These are at the most advanced stage of contemplation within the TTM model. Parallels can be drawn between this stage and the desire stage of the traditional AIDA model. Both these models are useful to marketers, as they look to appeal to consumers' emotional and social needs.
5. The *Concerned and taken minor action* stage is the first level of active ethical behaviour the individual may demonstrate. Here they are both aware and concerned about the issue and discuss it openly with friends or family. They may be prepared to take stronger action in the future.
6. Stronger action is represented by the *Concerned and taken major action* stage. These persons certainly care and are likely to have switched brands, signed a petition or even boycotted a product completely as a result of some violation of an ethical issue.

Sample

The sampling frame used in this research was drawn from a database of approximately two million U.K. consumers, provided by the direct marketing company Claritas. Two-stage, stratified random sampling (Gill and Johnson, 2002) was used to obtain a list of 6000 individuals. The sample was firstly stratified according to the age and gender profiles of the total population of consumers from all regions of the U.K. (between the ages of 16 and 75), then randomly drawn from within each of the strata. This was used to obtain a sample of individuals from the total population of consumers from all regions of the U.K., evenly divided by gender and, as far as possible, representing the national distribution of ages from 16 to 75.

This sample procedure and size ensures a high level of external validity, giving confidence that the results are representative of the U.K. population. Every effort was made to ensure that each individual had an equal chance of being selected for the final sample of approximately 6000 consumers, thereby minimising selection bias. Furthermore, measures were taken to reassure respondents of complete confidentiality, especially important in avoiding evaluation apprehension in an area where some respondents may otherwise have been deterred from co-operating. Although it is not possible to eliminate all the potential threats to internal validity, we have addressed those most applicable to this type of sample, based in one country at a single point in time.

Results

Respondent overview

Of the 6000 questionnaires dispatched, 1002 were returned, of which 14 were declared unsuitable for use in the final analysis, giving a total usable sample of 988 questionnaires (a usable response rate of 16.5%). Early respondent characteristics were compared to later respondent characteristics as a test of non-response bias. The results revealed no significant differences between the early and late respondents, which suggested an absence of non-response bias.

Exploratory Principal Component Analysis

An exploratory Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was conducted on the original 22×22 matrix of item inter-correlations using listwise deletion ($N = 876$). The suitability of the data for PCA was established through an initial Bartlett's test (Chi-sq. = 6474.2, $p = 0.000$) and the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy, which at 0.845 is well above the recommended minimum of 0.50. The number of components to retain was determined by comparing the results of two established procedures for factor extraction. The A Priori criterion (Hair et al., 2006) suggested a two-component solution whereas the Scree Test (Cattell, 1966) and Eigenvalue criteria indicate that five was the appropriate number of components to extract.

Two-component Solution

The two-component solution summarized in Table I clearly indicates that the motivational statements were represented by the ''pros'' and ''cons'' of ethical decision-making. Orthogonal (Varimax) rotations were performed, as the objective of this analysis was to partition the original items clearly into two components. Three items were deleted because of relatively low loadings, using the conventional cut-off criterion of 0.40 (e.g., Hair et al., 2006, p. 149: Malhotra and Birks, 2006, p. 585). The deleted items, with their scale loadings obtained in the preliminary screening, are:

- It does not cost me any more money to take this issue into account when shopping (0.178);
- People around me do not pay attention to this issue (0.346);
- It is not my responsibility to punish firms that ignore this issue (0.307).

It is apparent that these three items share the characteristic of being negatively framed, which possibly caused misunderstanding amongst some respondents. The effects of such misunderstandings may be especially marked in this analytical context, where the purpose is to explore the division between positive and negative motives. The two components explain 42.9% the variance in the reduced 19-item

scale. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is 0.833 for the ''pros'' subscale and 0.831 for the ''cons'' subscale. Items with component loadings in excess of 0.40 are presented below in table I, which also reports the KMO and Bartlett's statistics, after the elimination of the three measures.

Hypothesis 1– *A two component analysis will group the decisional balance items into positive gains (pros) and negative losses (cons)* – has been strongly supported by this result. All of the 19 items that were retained, on the basis of having loadings in excess of 0.40, are grouped consistently with the ''pros – cons'' dichotomy. Although the intention was not to calculate these overall ''pros'' and ''cons'' scales for further analyses, the high values of Cronbach's Alpha confirm their reliability. Two of the items representing the positives for other people have the highest loadings within the ''pros'' scale, followed by the personal positives of feeling more responsible and feeling better about myself. The three strongest loading negatives within the ''cons'' scale reflect the potential loss of convenience or choices, through taking the (selected) ethical issue into account when shopping.

Five-component Solution

Although orthogonal (Varimax) rotation was considered appropriate for the two-component solution, oblique (Direct Oblimin) was deployed to explore the five-component solution. This decision was based upon both the conceptual argument advanced earlier, that social and personal motives can be closely intertwined, and the empirical evidence from many TTM studies, that social and personal positives (and negatives) do, to an extent, co-vary (e.g., Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995). The choice of oblique rotation therefore reflected the likelihood of some degree of correlation between the components and the priority of testing the association of each item with the relevant component. In this solution, both the ''pros'' and the ''cons'' identified in the previous analysis separated once more, revealing two components for each valence, i.e. four constructs that represent the DBS. Furthermore an additional component comprising the cost motivations was revealed. Four items were removed at this stage because of low loadings. This resulted in an 18-item scale, with four items in each of the DBS Scales and two items in the cost Scale. The five components explained 62.6% of the variance within the 18 retained variables.

Cronbach's coefficient Alphas were 0.707 for Personal Positives, 0.794 for Social Positives, 0.726 for Personal Negatives, 0.749 for Social Negatives and 0.676 for Money Issues (two items only). Hair et al. (2006, p. 137) note that ''the generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70, although it may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research''. A further test of reliability investigated the correlation of the items to the summated scale scores, i.e. the item-to-total correlation, and found them to be in excess of 0.50 for all components. In addition, the inter-item correlations were found to exceed the accepted 0.30 levels in all cases (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore the component scores demonstrated an acceptable level of internal consistency for exploratory research. Items with component loadings are presented in Table II.

It is evident from Table II that the highest mean levels of agreement with the motivational statements all occurred within the social positives dimension (overall mean 5.75). The most strongly agreed with statement was ''People could make fairer choices if they were aware of which companies had high ethical principles regarding this issue'' (mean 5.85). The lowest mean levels of agreement all occurred within the personal negatives dimension (overall mean 3.61). This is consistent with the social orientation within ethical consumption and can also reflect a greater reluctance to ''admit'', in this context, to agreement with some of the negative statements, especially when applied personally. Interestingly, two of the statements that factored out as Personal Positives, ''My friends are concerned with this issue'' and ''People who matter to me would respect me for being concerned about this issue'' could be also viewed as Social Positives. However, equally they can be viewed as relating to the self, since they are concerned with ''*My*'' friends and ''People who matter to *me*''. This does lend some further support to the view that social and personal ethical motivations are very closely interrelated.

As anticipated, the two Positives scales are quite strongly correlated at 0.515 ($p > 0.001$), as are the two Negatives scales at 0.496 ($p > 0.001$). Although

TABLE II

Pattern matrices for five-component solution (Oblique)

Component Scales	Measures	Loading	Mean Scale 1–7	S.D.
Personal Positives *Alpha = 0.707; Inter-Item Corrs Mean = 0.377*			5.12	1.10
	My friends are concerned with this issue	0.844	4.36	1.46
	People who matter to me would respect me for being concerned about this issue	0.823	4.57	1.67
	This is an issue that I like to be associated with	0.523	4.99	1.53
	I feel better about myself if I take some form of action against firms that violate this issue	0.408	5.31	1.52
Social Positives *Alpha = 0.794; Inter-Item Corrs Mean = 0.496*			5.75	1.01
	It would be better for everyone in the long run if people favoured products that address this issue	0.877	5.77	1.28
	It would help if people bought from firms that address this issue	0.772	5.83	1.26
	Society would benefit from the removal of products that violate this issue	0.750	5.55	1.43
	People could make fairer choices if they were aware of which companies had high ethical principles regarding this issue	0.704	5.85	1.17
Personal Negatives *Alpha = 0.726; Inter-Item Corrs Mean = 0.399*			3.61	1.29
	It would be too much hassle to buy only from businesses that do not violate this issue	0.774	3.57	1.69
	It is not my responsibility to punish firms that ignore this issue	0.754	3.58	1.74
	It would take the pleasure out of shopping if I had to choose only from products that support this issue	0.655	3.42	1.78
	It would make shopping less convenient if I had to choose only from products that support this issue	0.508	3.86	1.76
Social Negatives *Alpha = 0.749; Inter-Item Corrs Mean = 0.429*			3.95	1.04
	People would be annoyed if they were pressured into being concerned with this issue	0.861	4.60	1.57
	People are too busy today to be concerned with this issue	0.855	4.36	1.70
	People might think it was a waste of time to try to influence big business over this issue	0.641	4.17	1.69
	Having to take account of this issue would make shopping less convenient for people	0.494	3.88	1.69
Money Issues *Alpha = 0.676; Inter-Item Corr = 0.511*				
	It does not cost me any more money to take this issue into account when shopping *(item reversed for these analyses)*	0.854	4.53	1.94
	It costs more to take account of this issue when shopping	0.831	4.38	1.85

these correlations are quite high, they are well below the threshold of $r = 0.85$, beyond which questions of discriminant validity would arise (Messick, 1989). These results indicate that the respective social and personal constructs are sufficiently differentiated to warrant their further development as distinct scales; Figure 3 below also shows the personal and social scales to be differentiated in terms of their valencies.

Decisional Balance Scales

The scales representing the four main dimensions of the Decisional Balance Scale were constructed as arithmetic means of the component statement scores. Many studies then express these composite scales as z scores, or further convert them to *t* scores, and *z* score conversions are likewise used in the later testing of Hypotheses 4a and 4b. At this stage however it is

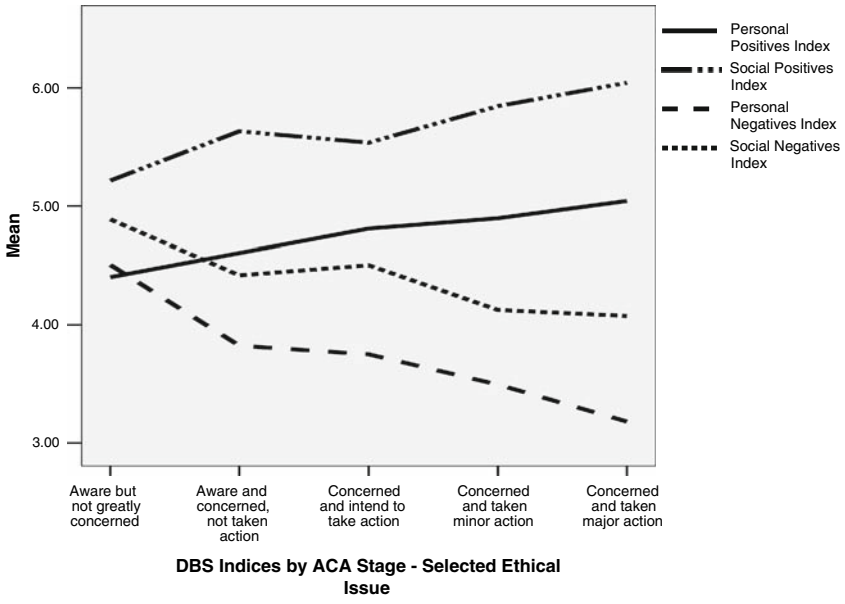

Figure 3. Decisional balance scales by awareness, concern and action stages.

considered more informative to represent the original item valences through the scale means. These four scale means are presented graphically in Figure 3, for each stage of ethical awareness, concern and action; the ''not noticed this issue'' stage is excluded from these analyses, as this stage could not apply to a salient issue selected by the respondent.

Figure 3 provides visual support for hypotheses 2a and 2b, in that both the Personal and Social Positives scales respectively increase through the awareness, concern and action (ACA) stages. As expected with two scales that are fairly strongly correlated, they follow a similar progression, although the social positives means are considerably higher at each stage. Visual analysis alone is not a sufficiently rigorous test of these hypotheses, so ANOVA and post-hoc tests were used to compare the means of each decisional balance item across each of the ACA stages. All four decisional balance dimensions demonstrated significant differences between group scores for the five stages tested ($p < 0.05$), as illustrated in Table III. Two levels of post-hoc testing were undertaken. The LSD test offers valid tests between each pair of means but does not adjust for the cumulative error rate in multiple comparisons. Consequently, it identifies significant differences that are not evident from the more rigorous Tukey HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) tests. Differences that meet the LSD but not the HSD criteria are represented in italics within the final column of Table III.

These tests showed that, for the personal positive and social positives dimensions, those in the Aware but not greatly concerned category registered significantly lower mean scores than those individuals in the more advanced ACA stages ($p < 0.05$). Those in the Aware and concerned but have not taken action differed significantly from those in the Concerned and taken major action category ($p < 0.05$). In the case of the Social Positives, the Aware but not greatly concerned group differs significantly from all the other ACA stages, reflecting the steep initial gradient of that line in Figure 3. Although more inter-stage significances are reported in the case of the Social Positives, the Tukey HSD tests strongly support both hypotheses, namely:

Hypothesis 2a. *The personal positives scale will be at higher levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

Hypothesis 2b. *The social positives scale will be at higher levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

Figure 3 also offers visual support for hypotheses 3a and 3b, in that both the Personal and Social Negatives scales respectively decline through the ACA stages. Table III again provides more formal

TABLE III

Analysis of variance and post hoc tests for DBS by ACA stage

DBS Scale	Awareness, Concern, Action Stage	Mean	SD	Post Hoc*
Personal Positives	(2) Aware but not greatly concerned	4.31	1.40	*(4)* (5) (6)
	(3) Aware and concerned but not taken action	4.61	1.17	*(5)* (6)
	(4) Concerned and intend to take action	4.82	0.98	*(2)*
	(5) Concerned and taken minor action	4.88	0.96	(2) *(3)*
	(6) Concerned and taken major action	5.05	1.08	(2) (3)
ANOVA: Personal Positives		df	*F*	*p*
		4	6.538	.000
Social Positives	(2) Aware but not greatly concerned	4.98	1.21	(3) (4) (5) (6)
	(3) Aware and concerned but not taken action	5.66	1.01	(2) (6)
	(4) Concerned and intend to take action	5.57	0.99	(2) *(5)* (6)
	(5) Concerned and taken minor action	5.84	0.89	(2) *(4)*
	(6) Concerned and taken major action	6.01	0.94	(2) (3) (4)
ANOVA: Social positives		df	*F*	*p*
		4	12.314	.000
Personal negatives	(2) Aware but not greatly concerned	4.58	1.15	(3) (4) (5) (6)
	(3) Aware and concerned but not taken action	3.84	1.12	(2) (5) (6)
	(4) Concerned and intend to take action	3.71	1.31	(2) (6)
	(5) Concerned and taken minor action	3.49	1.21	(2) (3) *(6)*
	(6) Concerned and taken major action	3.21	1.30	(2) (3) (4) *(5)*
ANOVA: Personal negatives		df	F	*p*
		4	14.568	0.000
Social negatives	(2) Aware but not greatly concerned	4.70	.86	*(3) (4)* (5) (6)
	(3) Aware and concerned but not taken action	4.16	1.02	*(2) (5)* (6)
	(4) Concerned and intend to take action	4.14	.87	*(2) (6)*
	(5) Concerned and taken minor action	3.87	1.03	(2) *(3)*
	(6) Concerned and taken major action	3.77	1.07	(2) (3) *(4)*
ANOVA: Social negatives		df	*F*	*p*
		4	6.344	0.00

*Significant differences at the $p < 0.05$ levels between individual ACA Stages, according to the Tukey. HSD test (large font) or LSD test only (small italics).

tests of these inter-stage differences, using the post-hoc tests outlined above. Both the Personal and the Social Negatives reveal significant differences between the early and the later ACA stages, based on the more rigorous HSD tests. Interestingly, it is now the Personal motives that demonstrate the greater number of significant inter-stage differences but the Social Negatives are also clearly at a higher level in the early than the later stages. Consequently, both hypotheses 3a and 3b are supported, namely:

Hypothesis 3a. *The personal negatives scale will be at lower levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

Hypothesis 3b. *The social negatives scale will be at lower levels in the later stages of awareness, concern and action, compared with the early stages.*

The inverse pattern to the positive dimensions was apparent in that, as the ACA Stages progress towards higher levels of concern or action, the mean level of agreement for the negatives decreases as the mean level of agreement for the positives increases. One exception to this general trend is that the levels of motivation associated with concern (but not taken action) are similar to those associated with concern with the intention to take (at least minor) action. Overall, however, as individuals become more

prone towards ethical action, their motivations have become increasingly benefit associated, whilst beliefs about any negative losses associated with the change in behaviour have diminished in strength. This suggests that the relationships between the DBS and the awareness, concern and action stages reflect closely those demonstrated between the Stages of Change by TTM researchers. This provides additional support for the construct validity of the stages measure used in this study.

The critical ethical point

Early in the ACA Stages, as Figure 3 illustrates, the personal positives index increases to outweigh the personal negative index, creating a point at which the balance of positive motivations outweighs the negative. This point occurs closest to the aware/ not concerned stage, providing some support for hypothesis 4a. However, the social positive motivations never actually cross paths with the negatives, being at a consistently higher level throughout. It must be remembered that hypotheses 4a and 4b were founded upon the evidence from TTM studies, in which the norm has been to convert DBS indices to either *z* or *t* scores. While there is limited justification for doing this, in terms of differences in the item scales or the numbers of items per scale, conversion to z scores does still have merit. Firstly, it was noted earlier that respondents may have been more reluctant to ''admit'' to agreement with negative statements, especially those relating to themselves. Secondly, the z scores do give a better comparison of relative movements, having standardised each scale mean to zero and their standard deviations to 1. Consequently, Figure 4 presents the same relationships as those shown in Figure 3, but with the DBS scales now converted to z scores.

The normalized scores shown in Figure 4 demonstrate distinct cross-over points between the respective positive and negative scales. In the case of the two personal scales, this point occurs shortly after the intention stage. For the two social scales, the point of intersection occurs closer to the point where minor action is taken. Within both the social and the personal domains, this ''critical ethical point'' occurs between the intention and the action stage. Consequently this analytical approach does not support hypotheses 4a and 4b, namely:

Hypothesis 4a. *A ''Critical Ethical Point'', whereby the positive motivations will outweigh the negative motivations, will occur during the aware/not concerned stage. (limited support)*

Hypothesis 4b. *A ''Critical Ethical Point'', whereby the positive motivations will outweigh the negative moti-*

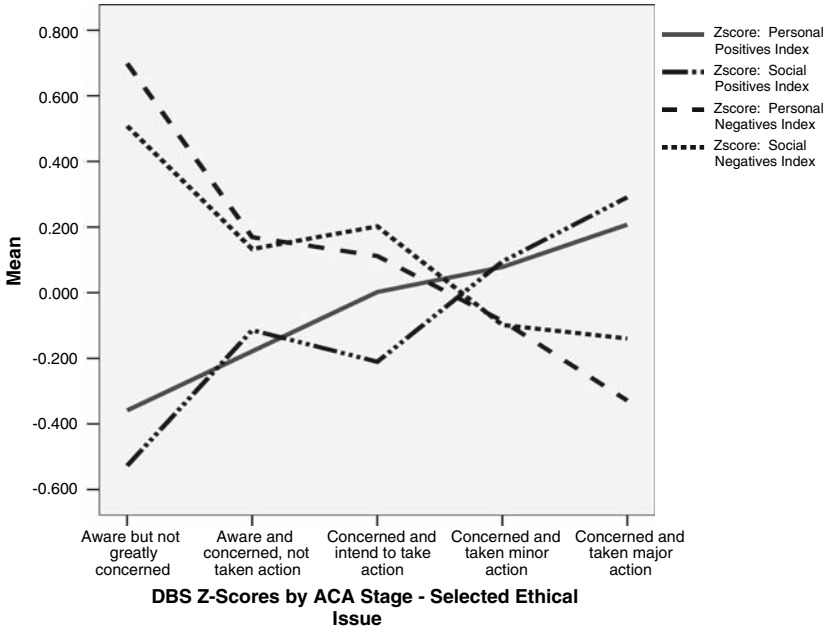

Figure 4. Decisional balance scale z scores by ACA stage – selected ethical issue.

vations, will occur during the aware/concerned stage. (not supported)

The limited support for H4a and the lack of support for H4b does not detract from the conclusion that there are indeed distinct cross-over points between the positive and the negative scales, when normalized in line with TTM research practices. It should also be bourn in mind that it was not feasible, within the context of this study, to collect data on motivations towards (or against) issues of which the respondents were not aware. As a result, the equivalent of the early pre-contemplation phase within the Stages of Change could not be included, which may have led to cross-over points appearing between more advanced ACA stages, when the scales are normalized. This presents a further argument against discarding the analyses of the non-normalised scales; in that they are based on common item scales, they do provide an alternative perspective upon the decisional balance across the stages. They also provide more realistic starting points for stakeholders seeking to enhance the positive motives and/or reduce the perceptions of negative losses associated with ethical behaviour.

Stability of TTM and DBS across Issues

In order to test hypothesis 5, the Spearman's correlation coefficient was used as a non-parametric test, to assess the level of consistency of rankings for the individual motivational statements across the five most representative issues in the study. As Table IV illustrates, the significance level for the correlations between the rank orders for the five most representative issues is over 99% in all cases. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship and therefore a high degree of consistency in the rank order of the motivational elements for respondents. Hence, based on these tests, hypothesis 4 is supported, namely:

Hypothesis 5. *The relative strengths of the various ethical motivations will remain stable across a range of ethical issues.*

This tendency towards consistency can also be observed in more detail from the item-level analyses and rank orders shown within Appendix B. It should be remembered that each of the five issues columns represents a different sub-sample of respondents relating their answers to a different issue. Consequently, there is no question of ratings given on one issue having potentially influenced their ratings on a different issue: each respondent answered this part of the questionnaire in relation to just one chosen issue. This overall level of consistency in rank order, therefore, makes the support for hypothesis 5 all the more convincing.

The detailed analyses within Appendix B also highlight a few exceptions to these consistencies, which are of potential interest to stakeholders with an interest in understanding and influencing these motives. For example, in relative terms, respondents were less likely to agree that they would gain respect for being concerned about exploitation of the third world, and more likely to agree that people are too busy today to be concerned with the issue. The perceived costs of recycling are seen as relatively low, compared with those associated with the other

TABLE IV

Rank order of motive statements: five most representative issues

Ethical issue	*Spearman correlation coefficients* (all significant at $p < 0.001$)				
	Exploitation of third world	Animal testing factory farming	Damage to environment	Recycling	G M Food
Exploitation of third world	1.000	0.926	0.933	0.876	0.852
Animal testing/ factory farming	0.926	1.000	0.939	0.847	0.925
Damage to the environment	0.933	0.939	1.000	0.892	0.879
Recycling	0.876	0.847	0.892	1.000	0.872
G M Food	0.852	0.925	0.879	0.872	1.000

four issues, yet people are more likely (relatively) to agree with the statement that taking damage to the environment into account may cost them more.

Testing the DBS scales across the selected ethical issues

To support further the assumption that the DBS scales are indeed applicable across a number of ethical issues of concern to the consumer, the researchers tested a proposed four-factor solution using the ethical issues most frequently highlighted by the respondents in the survey. The Money Issues component was not tested as it does not relate to the established DBS Concept. The five most frequently cited issues were selected as sub-samples sample and are detailed in Table V below. These are the ethical issues that each respondent felt most aware or concerned about. They account for almost two thirds of the total number of issues that respondents selected. The remainder are spread over a wide range of other issues, so the sub-samples are too small to permit meaningful analyses.

The four decisional balance dimensions for these five representative ethical issues was then tested to see if these Decisional Balance dimensions are reliable across individual issues. These results are displayed in Table V. All of the DBS dimensions proved to be reliable indicators of motivations for ethical awareness or concern across the frequently selected cited issues, above the level normally regarded as acceptable for exploratory research (alpha > 0.60) (Robinson et al., 1991; Hair et al., 2006). This further supports the convergent validity of these dimensions, evidenced by their acceptable levels of internal consistency across samples.

Discussion

The results of this study provide new data to assist in understanding motivations for changes in ethical behaviour. These results provide evidence to support the application of the Decisional Balance Scale for ethical decision-making to measure the positive and negative motivational statements for the population under study. Furthermore they demonstrate that the DBS construct of the Transtheoretical Model has an application in understanding ethical decision-making, as hypothesized from earlier conceptual discussions.

Exploratory factor analysis observed that the motivational statements under study did indeed represent a positives-negatives balance, and could be further dissected into both personal and social components of each category. Reliability and discriminant validity analysis then confirmed that the motivational statements reflected the four constructs of the Decisional Balance Scale. When applied to the five most commonly cited ethical issues, the DBS was a reliable indicator of motivational direction for these issues. Given the suggestion that motivation can be operationalized as the trade-off between the costs and benefits of undertaking behaviour (e.g., Cunningham et al., 1997), measuring the respondents

TABLE V

Reliability and validity of DBS dimensions: five most frequently selected issues

Issue *(n of valid cases)*	Decisional Balance Indices							
	Personal Positives		Personal Negatives		Social Positives		Social Negatives	
	Mean	Alpha	Mean	Alpha	Mean	Alpha	Mean	Alpha
Exploitation of third world *(153)*	4.90	0.699	3.49	0.694	6.01	0.676	4.34	0.736
Animal testing, factory farming *(134)*	5.10	0.623	3.01	0.660	5.84	0.732	4.02	0.723
Damage to environment *(119)*	4.94	0.643	3.62	0.704	6.01	0.783	4.24	0.788
Recycling *(105)*	4.78	0.693	3.82	0.635	5.73	0.705	4.32	0.758
G M food *(68)*	4.52	0.709	3.73	0.778	5.76	0.856	3.84	0.601
F-Ratio *(p=)*	3.746	*(0.005)*	8.039	*(0.000)*	2.618	*(0.034)*	3.010	*(0.018)*

perceived positives and negatives is a logical step in understanding the motivation for ethical behaviour. Hence, the Decisional Balance Scale may provide researchers with a useful framework for measuring the stages an individual moves through towards making more ethical purchasing decisions.

As suggested by the Trantheoretical Model and the Decisional Balance Scale research (e.g., Prochaska et al., 1994; Hotz, 1995), individuals in the precontemplative, unconcerned stage are more likely to view greater costs than benefits to a possible change in behaviour. Thus, their motivations for change are more negative, with personal and social costs appearing strong relative to benefits. However, in this case the social positive motivations were stronger throughout the whole change process for the five major ethical issues highlighted. Again, this may be due to either strong utilitarian motives, or a desire to project a socially conscious outlook in the responses.

Regarding the stages of awareness, concern and action, it is apparent that very early in the process, both the social and personal positive motivations experience growth, whilst both the social and personal negative motivations wane. We have sought to identify the Critical Ethical Point, representing the tipping point where positive motivations outweigh negative motivations for an ethical course of action. The location of this point depends largely upon whether scales are plotted in unstandardized or standardized form. Taking the latter approach, which is common within the TTM literature, this appears to occur around the point where concern is leading to action. These results are broadly in line with past studies, within which positive motivations and negatives change as an individual progresses from precontemplation towards action (Prochaska et al., 1994), pointing to a systematic approach to ethical behaviour change.

In terms of the levels of agreement or disagreement with the motivational statements, the results also indicate a high level of consistency in the ranking of the statements. Therefore as previous authors have suggested, motivations may be ordered by their relative importance, which appear relatively stable within the ethical domain (Agle and Caldwell, 1999; Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987; Solomon et al., 1999).

Interestingly, the social positive motivations on the Decisional Balance Scale registered consistently higher mean levels of agreement than the personal positives, suggesting that social motivators were stronger levers for ethical behaviour than personal ones. These findings may therefore support the argument that consumers are developing more socially conscientious mindsets (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004; Kahle et al., 1998; Macchiette and Roy, 1994).

Perhaps in the wake of heightened public interest in ethical and social responsibility (Strong, 1996), such principles are becoming more widespread. Indeed Harrison et al. (2005) note that the growth of market campaigning and ethical consumption has led to the development of the ''Citizen consumer'', someone who acts beyond his or her own interests as a consumer and takes responsibility for wider concerns beyond the individual level (Varney, 2002). An alternative explanation is that some respondents may have wanted to project a socially concerned image (Malhotra and Birks, 2006), despite the questionnaire being anonymous.

Limitations and further study

In addition to this possible issue of socially desirable response bias, other potential limitations to the study should be noted. Clearly, it is difficult to predict confidently that all individuals will follow the same trajectory along the stages path, since ultimately there are elements of subjectivity and situational influence upon motivations and behaviour patterns. The research suggests a broadly linear route towards stronger levels of concern ad ethical behaviour, which may not be appropriate in all cases.

While it was possible to collect a large database, enabling a range of detailed analyses, these data are essentially cross-sectional, not longitudinal. It has not therefore been possible to study change at the individual level, due to the impossibility of controlling all the temporal influences upon ethical awareness, concern and action. Conclusions as to the characteristics of the various stages are therefore based upon aggregate, cross-sectional data, from which inferences are drawn.

The sample size and procedures adopted were designed to produce a sample representative of the U.K. population between the ages of 16 and 75. These gains in external validity may have reduced

some aspects of internal validity, compared to a more homogeneous sample. Future researchers may wish to explore the same relationships between motives and ethical stages using a more narrowly defined sample, especially if their work involves longitudinal or experimental approaches.

The study is limited to the one country and to one point in time. The values that motivate people are likely to vary across cultures (Solomon et al., 1999). Inevitably, issues that have been the focus of more media and/or government attention are likely to show higher levels of awareness and concern, so longitudinal research may help to assess whether there is a consistent pattern over time. Furthermore, research into differing demographic dimensions, such as gender, socio-economic status and age, may yield interesting comparisons. Replication of this work in other contexts and time periods is therefore recommended.

Implications

The results of this study yield implications for several possible stakeholder groups. The systematic relationship between motives and ethical awareness/concern/action suggests that it may be possible to influence decision making by targeting the positives and negatives, as represented by the motivations in this study. Indeed accurate measures of Decisional Balance items, as elicited by the motivational statements, would prove useful for designing appropriate interventions and communications to facilitate movement towards more ethical decision-making. Although social and personal motives are fairly highly correlated (within the positives and negatives respectively), they have sufficient discriminant validity and practical utility to warrant their separate evaluation. Clearly, in constructing social or commercial advertising messages, the personal and social domains suggest very different communication opportunities.

The significant differences found between the Decisional Balance Scales, across the ethical stages, suggest that the respondents' motivational valencies are a function of their ethical awareness, concern or action stage. Therefore, stakeholders could further progress consumers towards greater ethical concern or action by intervening and targeting motives associated with transitions between the stages. In the past it has been proven in other behaviours that intervention in a behaviour using TTM constructs, such as the Decisional Balance Scale, is more effective than other approaches (Prochaska et al., 1993). For instance, a campaign stressing the social benefit of purchasing products from firms concerned with ethical issues, or studies highlighting which companies have high ethical principles, could heighten the social motivations for change in ethical purchasing behaviour for those individuals in the early stages. This may move them towards greater awareness and concern for issues, and those already concerned towards some form of action.

This principle bears more than a passing resemblance to many of the advertising based theories, whereby consumers move from basic awareness, through interest, towards a desire to act and then action itself (e.g., Crosier, 1999). Therefore communication messages, which encourage consumer to engage in ethical behaviour, could be targeted at individuals in earlier stages and take account of the motivations which need strengthening to facilitate behaviour, for example, social motivations regarding benefits for all. It can also be a powerful strategy to focus upon the negatives that may be inhibiting greater degrees of concern or action (Migneault et al., 1999). The apparently strong relationship between these decisional motivations and the ethical stages suggests that selectivity in messages would be appropriate when communicating with people at early versus more advanced stages of ethical concern.

Furthermore, if ethical companies and organisations focus their resources more effectively on individuals with high ''social pro'' scores, then these people may serve as mouthpieces for wider dissemination of information supporting ethical products and services. Word of mouth has the characteristic of being both a target and a means for marketing communication, as a highly effective means to disseminate messages from 'early adopters' to the wider market (Ellison and Fudenburg, 1995).

Conclusion

It may not appear particularly groundbreaking to suggest that, as an individual becomes more prone to ethical behaviour, their motivations eschew an

increasingly positive valence, both in terms of personal benefits, and more profoundly in terms of social benefits. However, the value of numerically and graphically modelling this process is an important first step in validating this premise. The results suggest strongly that changes in ethical behaviour can be effected by influencing the balance of motives. They suggest a conceptually and empirically grounded schema for researching and classifying these motives, offering guidelines for researchers, managers, campaigners and policy makers, with a common interest in better understanding the ethical consumer.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: Description of the stages of change and their application to an ethical decision-making context P

Stage	Description
Precontemplation	(a) During this stage, people are not giving any serious thought to quitting smoking and are likely to be defensive to the idea. They are unlikely to be aware of the consequences or are attached to the experience. (b) From an ethical perspective consumers are unlikely to have given much thought to the ethical issue and it is highly probable that they are not interested in taking any steps towards intervention. They may well be unaware or not bothered about the issue. They do not discuss the issue with others.
Contemplation	(a) Smokers in this stage may well have given thought to the decision to quit smoking. Whilst aware of the harmful consequences, they are ambivalent to the next stage in the cessation process and perhaps doubt whether they will see any long-term benefits. (b) In the context of ethics research, during this stage the consumer becomes aware of the issue and moves from not being concerned at all to showing some signs of awareness and concern. However, they may feel that the negative aspects of taking action outweigh the positive and therefore remain in the contemplation stage. From another perspective, they may well be more receptive to information regarding the issue and are more likely to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings regarding the issue.
Preparation	(a) The smoker has made the decision to quit and has built up the motivation to launch a serious attempt at cessation. (b) The ethical consumer is also preparing to take action. The pros begin to outweigh the cons. Motivations such as 'I should do something about this' or 'something has to change' drive the person's movements towards action.
Action	(a) The smoker is actively attempting to stop smoking through a number of techniques. (b) The consumer takes some level of action (minor or major) regarding an issue. They may also seek to influence others.
Maintenance	(a) Smokers in the maintenance phase are successfully avoiding the temptation to relapse back into their former habits. Their motivations suggest that what they are striving for is worthwhile. (b) Consumers in this stage continue to believe it is worthwhile to maintain action regarding an ethical issue.
Relapse	(a) Prochaska et al. (1992) view relapse as a likely and natural stage on the path to permanent cessation of smoking. (b) Whilst this stage is not included in the current model of stages of ethical change, it may prove useful for understanding why people cease taking action or take a break from ethical behaviour.

Appendix B: ANOVAs for most frequently selected issues: mean scores and ranks for motives

Motivational Statement (abbreviated for full statements, please see table III)	Exploitation of third world	Animal testing/ Factory farming	Damage to the environment	Recycle	G M food	ANOVA F Ratio (p =)	Mean of 5 Issues
	Mean *(1 – 7 scales)* (Rank order)						
Personal Positives							
People would respect me for being concerned about this Issue	4.45 (10)	4.76 (7)	4.82 (7)	4.58 (8)	4.34 (7)	1.607 (.771)	4.61 (7)
My friends are concerned about this issue	4.15 (12)	4.62 (8)	4.52 (9)	4.56 (9)	4.32 (8)	2.395 (.049)	4.43 (9)
I feel better if I take action against firms that violate this issue	5.77 (4)	5.82 (3)	5.29 (5)	4.93 (6)	4.97 (5)	10.969 (0.000)	5.44 (5)
This is an issue that I like to be associated with	5.21 (6)	5.22 (6)	5.11 (6)	5.05 (5)	4.43 (6)	3.724 (0.005)	5.07 (6)
Social Positives							
It would help if people bought from firms addressing this issue	6.26 (1)	6.07 (2)	5.93 (3)	5.68 (2)	5.76 (2)	5.069 (0.001)	5.98 (1)
People could make fairer choices if aware of which companies	6.25 (2)	6.11 (1)	5.90 (4)	5.50 (4)	5.94 (1)	8.880 (0.000)	5.97 (2)
Society would benefit from removal of products violating issue	5.56 (5)	5.60 (4)	6.05 (2)	5.66 (3)	5.65 (4)	2.905 (0.021)	5.70 (4)
Better for everyone in the long run if people favoured products	5.95 (3)	5.58 (5)	6.17 (1)	6.08 (1)	5.69 (3)	5.279 (0.000)	5.90 (3)
Personal negatives							
It is not my responsibility to punish firms ignoring issue	3.27 (18)	3.29 (15)	3.50 (18)	3.83 (15)	3.91 (11)	3.177 (0.013)	3.50 (15)
Too much hassle to buy only from firms not violating issue	3.44 (16)	2.88 (17)	3.61 (16)	3.92 (14)	3.81 (14)	7.269 (0.000)	3.48 (16=)
It would take the pleasure out of shopping	3.39 (17)	2.60 (18)	3.58 (17)	3.60 (17)	3.38 (18)	7.279 (0.000)	3.28 (18)
It would make shopping less convenient	3.86 (14)	3.28 (16)	3.82 (14=)	3.93 (13)	3.82 (13)	2.974 (.019)	3.72 (14)
Social Negatives							
People think it waste of time trying to influence big business	4.18 (11)	4.16 (11)	4.13 (13)	4.15 (11)	3.84 (12)	0.571 (.684)	4.12 (12)
People are too busy today to be concerned with this issue	4.56 (9)	4.13 (12)	4.46 (11)	4.41 (10)	3.66 (15)	4.110 (0.003)	4.31 (11)
People would be annoyed if pressured on this issue	4.65 (7)	4.46 (10)	4.55 (8)	4.72 (7)	4.21 (9)	1.506 (0.199)	4.55 (8)
Taking account of this would make shopping less convenient	3.95 (13)	3.33 (14)	3.82 (14=)	4.00 (12)	3.65 (16=)	3.540 (0.007)	3.75 (13)
Money issues							
It costs more to take account of this issue when shopping	4.61 (8)	4.51 (9)	4.51 (10)	3.70 (16)	4.16 (10)	4.665 (0.001)	4.35 (10)
It does not cost me any more to take issue into account *(reversed)*	3.54 (15)	3.79 (13)	3.53 (12)	2.83 (18)	3.65 (16=)	3.950 (0.004)	3.48 (16=)

Notes

[1] The Co-operative Bank, ''Ethical Consumerism Research Report'', 25/01/05, http://www.co-operativebank.co.uk

[2] Sourced 12.10.06 at <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definition/ethical>.

[3] Ethical Consumer, ''Why buy ethically'', Ethical Consumer, Home page of Ethical Consumer magazine, 18/08/03, <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/aboutec/why_buy_ethically.htm>.

[4] (a) Prochaska and DiClemente's (1983) original context: (b) the application of each stage to the ethical decision making process.

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