

**RECONCILING DEMANDS OF CONSCIENCE: A GROUNDED  
THEORY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE FAIRTRADE  
CONTEXT**

by

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*A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Cardiff  
University*

*Marketing and Strategy Group of Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University*

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## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to....*

*My parents for their constant support*

*Sabahat for her love*

*Fouad and Asma for their moral support*

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## ABSTRACT

Fairtrade is a trading partnership which contributes to sustainable development by offering better conditions while safeguarding the rights of marginalised producers in the global South. This study presents a grounded theory of consumer purchase decision making in the context of Fairtrade. This thesis has identified the consumers' main concern to be the Demands of Conscience when faced with the choice of buying Fairtrade products, and presents the emergent grounded theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which explains conceptually the means by which consumers process this concern. The emergent process of 'Reconciling Demands of Conscience' is conceptualised as consisting of the four distinct stages of Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting and Reflecting, with an experiential feedback loop from the purchase outcomes which could affect subsequent purchase decisions. This study also conceptualises consumer behaviour as mutable as a result of external or internal influences. Furthermore, five emergent behavioural types of Supporting and Committed, Supporting but Vacillating, Questioning but Supporting, Sceptical, and Cynical are presented on a behavioural continuum and the concept of Behavioural Mutability as emerged from the data, which explicates the potential for behavioural change within these five behavioural groups is proposed.

The theory has been developed employing the complete gamut of classic grounded theory procedures and is based on seventy one-to-one, in-depth interviews, and observations with an eclectic mix of consumers. These interviews were further augmented by having respondents provide till receipts so as to identify any difference between stated and actual behaviour.

The theory contributes to the extant fair trade consumer behaviour literature by explaining the significance of behavioural nuances involved in the consumer's purchase decision making, highlighting some important considerations for fair trade academics and practitioners. Furthermore, the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, because of its conceptual nature also demonstrates relevance outwith its substantive area. Most notably, offering contributions to current research on attitude-behaviour discrepancy in ethical consumer behaviour, guilt coping mechanisms, and to ethical decision making literature by offering a conceptual explanation of consumer purchase behaviour when faced with an ethical option.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behaviour, Classic Grounded Theory, Fairtrade, Behavioural Mutability Reconciling, Conscience.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATO	Alternative Trade Organisation
BSP	Basic Social Process
BSPP	Basic Social Psychological Process
BVS	Beginner Voluntary Simplifier
FLO	Fairtrade Labelling Organisation
FTF	Fairtrade Foundation
NVS	Non-Voluntary Simplifier
Oxfam	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
VS	Voluntary Simplifier
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction and Background

### 1.1. Introduction

The discourse surrounding rampant capitalism has stimulated interest in the growing potential of alternative arenas (Davies, 2013). Ethics in business and management of the environment, once regarded as at best a trend or simply the target of activist groups, nowadays is a subject which pervades the everyday life of consumers and businesses (Emery, 2012). In this context, the concept of Fairtrade has received considerable attention, with some academics regarding it as being a market driven consumption pattern rather than a politically divisive weapon of either suppression or support (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). It attempts to confront not only the human inequalities but also environmental destruction caused by the capitalist exploitation of the planet (LeClair, 2002). Researchers in the field of marketing (Golding, 2009; Smith & Barrientos 2005) have highlighted the distinction between ethical trade and fair trade. While ethical trade focuses on rectifying the problems in the already controlled environment of mainstream production, fair trade focuses on the sustainable development of the marginalised producers of the developing countries (Friedberg, 2000). However, there is a lack of consensus over a universal definition of fair trade (Hira & Ferrie, 2006). Both academics and fair trade<sup>1</sup> organizations usually cite the definition developed by FINE<sup>2</sup> as:

*A trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organizations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade (FINE, 2001, p.1).*

From the above definition, it is clear that fair trade seeks to support sustainable development of the producers, and works to raise awareness among consumers of conventional international trade. However to understand the position, impact and rationale behind the phenomenon of fair trade, it is important to reflect upon the different enabling threads in its background and the discourse surrounding the movement to date.

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis uses the term 'fair trade' to denote the wider concept of fair trade movement. However, the present study aims at understanding consumers attitudes and behaviour towards the concept of fair trade in the UK, therefore the term "Fairtrade" is used in relation to data analysis and study findings.

<sup>2</sup> FINE is an informal association of four international fair trade networks- Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International, World Fair Trade Organization, Network of European Worldshops and European Fair Trade Association.

This chapter therefore, begins by explaining the origins of the fair trade movement, followed by describing the fair trade labelling initiatives. The development of the Fairtrade Foundation (FTF) is explicated because the present study of Fairtrade consumer behaviour is based in the UK. The chapter then explains the research rationale, justification for selecting grounded theory methodology and the study's aims and research questions and the justification for the structure of the thesis. The chapter ends by presenting the organisation of the study and the conclusion.

## **1.2. Origins of the Fair Trade Movement**

Over the last decade, fair trade has undergone a considerable transformation and has become increasingly mainstream. It has its origins substantially in faith-based roots, and offers a challenge to capitalism (Low & Davenport, 2005). Beginning with the collection and sale of handicraft/artefact goods to raise money for disaster relief, post WWII, the Mennonite Central Committee in the USA, 1946, started SELFHELP (which subsequently became transmogrified into Ten Thousand Villages), as a religious duty, to assist Palestinian refugees. While four years earlier, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam), a predominantly Quaker influenced organization was founded (in 1942) in the UK to enable the lifting of Allied blockade of famine ridden Axis-held Greece. To support the underprivileged craftsmen, basically in the global south, the philosophy of empowerment and self-sufficiency pervaded in the 1950s, politically backed by the World Shop Movement.

Later, Oxfam branched out by opening second-hand shops, staffed by volunteers and run as a charity, to provide funds for its relief efforts, subsequently selling new craft goods created by Chinese refugees alongside the second hand wares. Oxfam Trading was established in 1964 as the first fair trade organisation in the UK. From a political standpoint, the fair trade movement was clear in its opposition to capitalist exploitation and the neo-colonialism of hegemonic control of the producers by might of purchasing power (Low & Davenport, 2005).

Over time, these various fair trade initiatives evolved to take consideration of longer term improvements in sustainability, and fair trade became involved with the strategy of *Trade not Aid* promoted by UNCTAD<sup>3</sup> in 1968. The aim was to demonstrate the benefits of investing in infrastructure and development in the target nations as opposed to the presumed detriment which would accrue from simply providing more money year in year out.

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<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body. It deals with trade, investment, and development issues, and its aim is to maximize trade and investment opportunities for the developing countries on an equitable basis.



As these changes progressed in the 1970s, the reduction in international trade barriers allowed other mainstream organisations to compete in the fair trade handicraft market, as a result fair trade became more involved in food products, so that as one market began declining, so another was growing.

The fair trade movement branched out in the early 2000's from Alternative Trade Organisations (ATOs) into a mainstream but "fair" organisation, and increasing its profile and its visibility. Alternative trade entails progress in society by taking advantage of new political scenarios which operate at all levels of a nation state (Tickell and Peck, 2002). ATOs gave way gradually to the fair trade organisations since ATOs and fair trade, although apparently sharing the same objectives differ substantially in the ways in which they are controlled. Fair trade was established to address perceived inadequacies in the ways in which ATOs operated. These included governance, access to markets, standardisation, and certification. Alternative trade was able to target small groups of urban manufacturers and provide access to western markets, selling through small alternative shops, churches, trade unions and local interest organisations. Whereas fair trade, targeting sustainability as much as fair wages, was growing to the point where it was increasingly able to write its own contracts with supermarkets and with the producers, driving better practice in the production of food crops, and ensuring future demands would not be jeopardised by current needs. Fair trade products were also being sold by exclusively fair trade shops, which are a specialised chain of shops selling and promoting fair trade products.

However, the need of the hour was to develop a third party auditing system which could be relied on, and hence the first fair trade label, Max Havelaar was launched in 1988, from an initiative from the Dutch development agency, Solidaridad, guaranteeing that the coffee had been produced and traded in line with social and environmental concerns (FTF, 2011). This was one of the first social auditing schemes which operated at the international level. An important aspect of this scheme was the independence of the auditing body which legitimised the claims of Solidaridad and similar organisations (Courville, 2003; Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, 2004). The concerns of earlier scholars (Low and Davenport 2006) that mainstreaming of fair trade would undermine its ethical stance seems to be unfounded, its economic strength is increasing, allowing it the power to still apply pressure for a fairer world (FTF, 2011). In the span of a little over half a century, fair trade has emerged from a small group of volunteers trying to help the oppressed and exploited, into a global entity. This development is represented as a timeline in Figure 1.

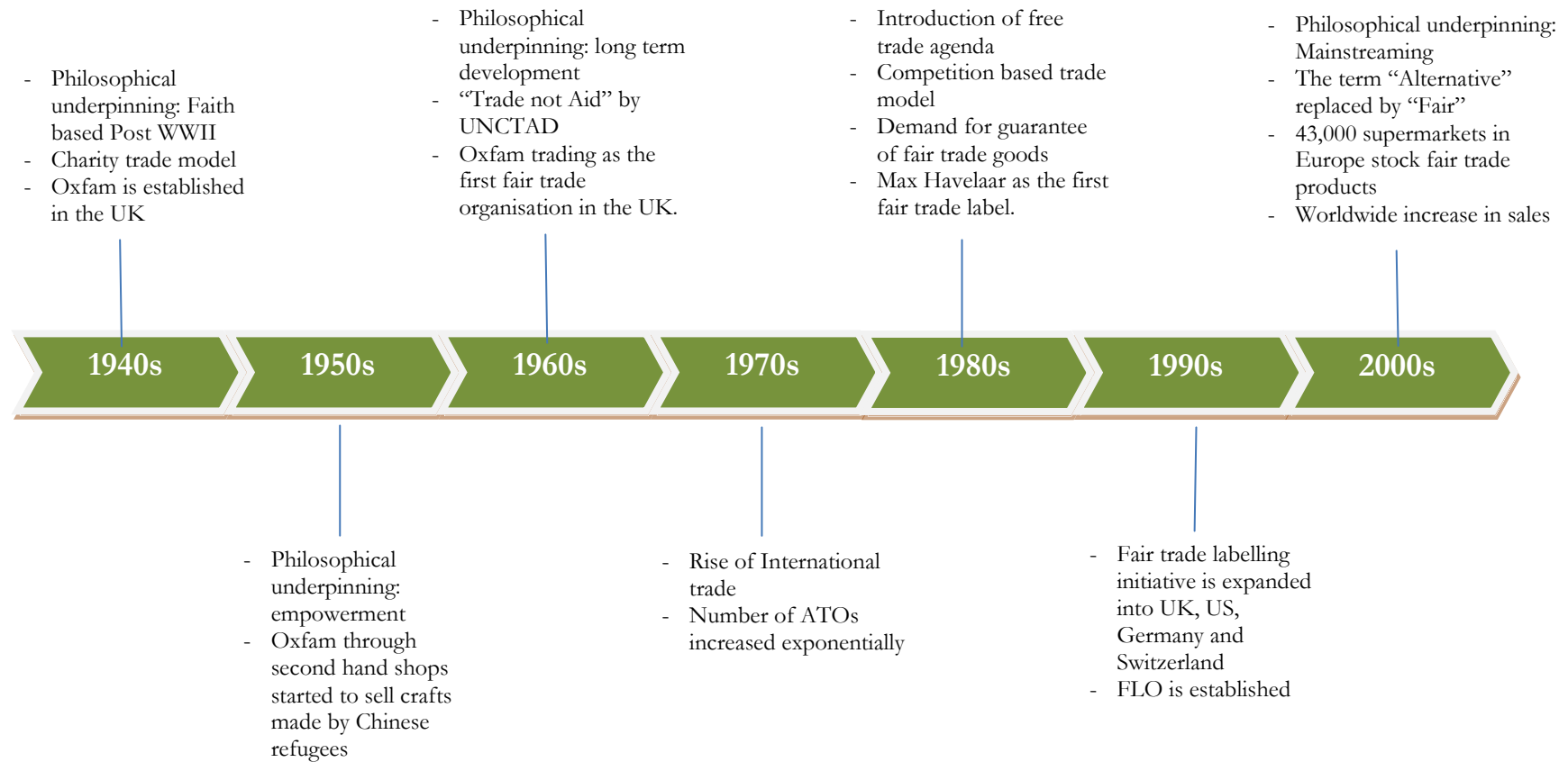


Figure 1: Fair trade timeline (Source: this research)

This next section discusses the development of the various fair trade labelling initiatives. These labelling initiatives give credibility to the product, to reassure and to involve consumers directly with the product and the grower. They provide certified governance whose legitimacy comes from an independent labelling body, (Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, 2004).

### **1.3. Fair Trade Labelling Initiatives**

As mentioned in the previous section, the first fair trade coffee from Mexico was sold into Dutch supermarkets under the Max Havelaar label introduced in 1988. In the late 1980s/early 1990s, the Max Havelaar mark became well established in Belgium, Holland, France, Switzerland, Denmark and Norway, while in the UK and Ireland the name Fairtrade was adopted for the fair trade label. Luxembourg, nominally an integral part of the Benelux, aligned itself with Germany, Austria and Italy, under the label of Transfair, which was also adopted by the USA and Canada. Sweden and Finland separately went their own ways, the former adopting the Rattvisemarkt (rattvist meaning fair), and the latter adopting the name Reilu (fair) Kauppa (commerce).

In 1997, the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO) was launched in Bonn, Germany which united all the different fair trade labelling systems and established a modicum of control over the existing initiatives. However, by 2002, the FLO, upholding its focus on a standard approach, launched the International Fairtrade Certification Mark to enhance visibility of fair trade products. National bodies which had been responsible for validation of fair trade goods were now superseded by an international standard which was a single certification Mark, the 'brand' of fair trade (Raynolds, 2000). For the purpose of setting standards, in 2004, the FLO was divided into two organisations, with FLO International setting the standards, and FLO-CERT inspecting and certifying producers and auditing traders. However unification of the mark was still a long way off, with the USA, Canada and Switzerland still going their own way, but by 2007, some 21 countries including Mexico, Australia and New Zealand had signed up to the fair trade Mark.

The provision of information, through fair trade labelling initiatives, helps customers “cross a philosophical bridge where meaning is attached to something someone has made” (Littrell & Dickson, 1999, p. 184). Further to quote Marsden et al. (2000, p.425)-

*It is not the number of times that a product has been handled or the distance over which it is ultimately transported which is necessarily critical, but the fact that the product reaches the consumer embedded with information... It is this which enables the consumer to confidently make connections and associations with the place/space of production and potentially, the values of the people involved and the production methods employed,*

Not only do fair trade labelling initiatives involve the consumer with the product, they also enable justification for price differences and the fair trade social premium<sup>4</sup>, thus allowing fair trade goods to compete on an even playing field. However uptake of fair trade has been patchy in some countries but very successful in others, in particular the UK (Devinney, 2010). The present study of consumer behaviour situated in the fair trade movement in the UK directs the discussion to describing the origins of the fair trade labelling initiative in the UK as the background for this research.

#### **1.4. Fairtrade Foundation: a UK Perspective**

Fair trade has had a greater success and penetration in the UK than elsewhere in the world (Devinney, 2010). In 1992, the Fairtrade Foundation (FTF) was established by CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft, the National Federation of Women's Institutes, and the World Development Movement in UK. Two years later, the first Fairtrade certified product, Green and Black's Maya Gold Chocolate was launched, followed by certification of Cafédirect and Clipper tea. The following year, 1995, the first annual Fairtrade Fortnight took place, aimed at promoting Fairtrade.

Subsequently, in 1997, the momentum built up, as restaurants, chains and institutions were targeted by the FTF to increase market penetration of Fairtrade, including the House of Commons, with MPs supporting its introduction throughout the Palace of Westminster and Divine Chocolate launched the first farmer-owned fair trade chocolate. The story now is one of rapid penetration and expansion. Local councils such as Bath, Bristol, Nottingham and Cardiff converted to Fairtrade. Political impetus began to grow, with politicians seizing the opportunity, and backing the increased introduction of Fairtrade, and by 1999, Fairtrade products, primarily beverages, were common among Britain's major Institutions and Companies. In the late 1990s Fairtrade also started spreading into the South West and the North East of Wales.

Meanwhile, from a commercial viewpoint, new products were increasingly being introduced and supermarkets began to adopt Fairtrade products for their *own label* ranges of produce, the first of these being the Co-operative who introduced own label Fairtrade chocolate in 2000. Two years later, Sainsbury's was selling over a million Fairtrade loose and pre-packed bananas a week, and had introduced own-brand Fairtrade coffee, tea, chocolate and cocoa. Contemporaneously, Tesco, Waitrose, Asda, and Safeway were selling Fairtrade products including bananas. In 2001, the retail value of annual Fairtrade sales reached £30 million (FTF, 2014). In 2002, Fairtrade

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<sup>4</sup> The amount of money paid on top of the fair trade price, as agreed by the FLO standards, for investment in the economic or social development projects, agreed upon by producers is called the social premium

gained momentum in Wales and Cardiff became the world's first Fairtrade capital city. As this impact continued to grow steadily, other manifestations of the Fairtrade influence began to appear. In 2005, the conurbation of Manchester and Salford became the 100th Fairtrade town. There were more than seven hundred Fairtrade catering and retail products available, including cotton, rice and coconuts. Many different charitable and volunteer organisations began to align themselves with the movement, adding still more impetus. While churches and synagogues have been increasingly associating themselves with the movement, more recently, so have mosques. The FTF launched *Tipping the Balance* in 2008, an initiative to double the impact of Fairtrade in UK by 2012. In the same year Wales became the world's first Fairtrade Nation.

By 2009, the value of Fairtrade sales in the UK had reached £836 million, (FTF, 2011). The rate of increase of uptake remained steady even at times when there was an economic downturn, and with this increase in the growth of fair trade, there has been an increase in consumers' interest in Fairtrade (García, Martínez & Poole, 2009). From this increasing demand for Fairtrade products, a new initiative was launched recently, - known as *let's make Fairtrade the norm*, - by the FTF (2013). This is aimed at making Fairtrade a part of a normal purchasing pattern of consumers in the UK. The development of the 'Fairtrade' labelling initiative in the UK is shown in Figure 2.

In March 2013, the retail sales estimate for Fairtrade products sold in the UK in 2012 topped £1.57 thousand million, an increase of 19% on the previous year, thus demonstrating the continuing growth of the Fairtrade movement. Furthermore, the Fairtrade label has been preferred by consumers above other ethical labelling initiatives (FTF, 2013).

The increasing interest in fair trade on the part of the consumer, extends to more than just the remittance of the social premium, but includes environmental issues as well as those of health and safety (García, Martínez & Poole, 2009). The consumer is becoming more emotionally linked with the smallholder-producer (Gabriel & Lang 1995), although the motivation for this is tinged to some extent by the consumer's interest in his own well-being (Ethical Consumer, 2003). Furthermore, according to a recent report quoted in FTF (2013) more than 35% of shoppers chose to buy Fairtrade compared with 9% in 2006, and 37% showed interest in buying Fairtrade given evidence and proof of impact on the producers in the developing countries.

All these developments promote a very positive image of Fairtrade in Britain, but there are a few fins circling, and the vessel may not be as strong as it seems. Claims that very little of the premium charged is going to the producer have been made, for example, Sidwell (2008) in his report issued by the Adam Smith Institute, argues that only 10% of the premium charged goes to the producer and also argues that promoting Fairtrade via the Fairtrade Fortnight is a marketing exercise and that it helps land owners and not the agricultural labourers (Sidwell, 2008).

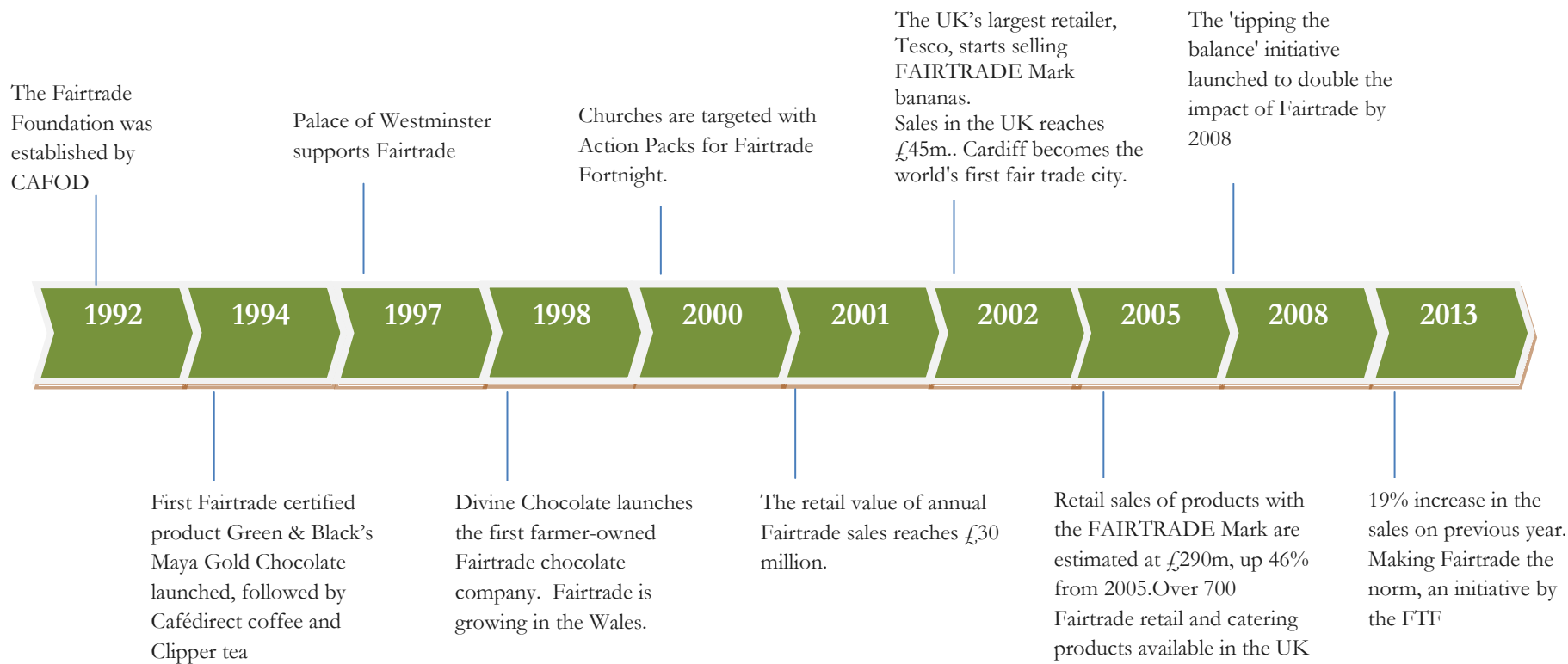


Figure 2: Fairtrade Foundation, UK timeline (Source: this research)

This has interesting overtones since according to the FTF, most small producers are land owners, each smallholding being a family-run affair, usually farmed by women (Tran-Nguyen & Zampetti, 2004). Equally there is doubt expressed on the adoption of, or investing in the ethos of ethical marketing by global corporates, suggesting that the increasing corporate presence could bring about the collapse of ethical marketing initiatives (Fridell et al., 2008). In addressing the investment by such companies as Nestlé in an ethical ethos, it is suggested that companies will seek to profit from this investment by changing the concept into a marketing oriented scheme targeted at a certain niche market (Raynolds, 2000).

Furthermore, the consumers' attitude to Fairtrade has been challenged in the Press both positively and negatively, for example, Hilary Parsons, Head of the Partners' Blend Project at Nestlé UK, quoted in the BBC The Money Programme admits that it was not altruism but market forces which caused Nestlé to change its mind about Fairtrade.

With this background, the behaviour of consumers (who are aware of Fairtrade), in the Fairtrade marketplace, is subject to variable and changeable winds which could affect their decision to invest in the concept and how they subjectively accommodate the ethos of Fairtrade. These countervailing arguments would presumably have an impact upon consumers' behaviour towards fair trade and therefore became a jumping off point for this research. The value of this, as a study subject is therefore considerable and the impact of findings emanating from any rigorous study of Fairtrade may be expected to possess a very considerable relevance for marketing strategy.

### **1.5. Research Rationale**

The growth of Fairtrade in UK is found to be a means of gaining competitive advantage, and therefore attracting the ethically concerned consumers to adopt the Fairtrade mark as a marketing strategy (Connolly & Shaw, 2006). Consumers are considered to play a pivotal role in the success of the fair trade movement (Wilkinson, 2007). It is suggested that consumers should be included within the discourse of business ethics (Brinkman & Peattie, 2008); however the consumer side of the discourse is under researched (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Consumer behaviour in the context of fair trade consumption is clearly of interest, but has also been under-researched, and scholars are only just beginning to understand and explain individual fair trade consumption (Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). Furthermore, the current literature has limitations deriving from the narrow and outdated understanding of the dynamics of consumer behaviour and the application of the limited extant models in an attempt to understand this complex phenomenon (Brinkman & Peattie, 2008). Marketing firms, in their attempt to segment

consumers for the purpose of targeting the ethical consumer, fail to understand the complexities of consumer purchase behaviour. Segmentation is difficult since the consumer pursues an idiosyncratic purchasing pattern which cannot be readily pigeonholed (Connolly & Shaw, 2006). Furthermore, ethical consumers do not always behave as they predictably should (Carrington et al 2014). Moreover, the focus is on investigating the causal relations proposed by theories whereas a more theory based understanding and discussion is needed to fully comprehend consumer behaviour in the substantive area of fair trade (Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). As a result, this current research is increasingly timely, in studying and explicating as it does, consumer behavioural patterns and changes, self-promises, arguments, grounded entirely in the substantive context of Fairtrade in the UK.

### **1.6. Justification for Selecting Grounded Theory Methodology**

In management research, qualitative or quantitative methods are usually applied in designing an empirical research (Bryman, 2012; Saunders and Rojon, 2011). In developing the research design for this study, a quantitative approach was not deemed appropriate on the ground that quantitative design explains the causal relationships and there is not much room for in-depth understanding of the phenomena. It does not address the *how* and *why* questions. A qualitative enquiry route was not considered, because of the issues surrounding its generalizability of results, reliability and validity, and its very descriptive nature, which, it was felt would limit the scope of the research. Furthermore, one of the limitations of both quantitative and qualitative research is the use of preconceived questions, which prevent the emergence of the participants' opinions since their responses are constrained by the nature of the questions (Connolly & Shaw, 2006). In order to comprehend consumers' purchase decision-making processes, it is important to understand consumers' concerns from their own point of view. As a result, the decision was made to employ grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1998) as the most suitable research design. The intent of grounded theory methodology is to approach a subject inductively with as few preconceived ideas as possible in the quest to investigate the substantive area, (Glaser, 1998), and to identify the latent patterns of behaviour from the viewpoint of the participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The conceptualisation of data grounded in reality provides a powerful means for understanding the situation.



## 1.7. Aims and Research Questions<sup>5</sup>

The overall aim of this research is to develop a grounded theory which explains and contributes to the understanding of consumers' attitudes and purchase behaviour towards Fairtrade. To achieve this overall aim, the two research questions, as guided by the grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967) are:

- What is/are the main concern(s) of consumers when faced with the choice of buying Fairtrade commodities? *and*
- How do the consumers process these concerns?

## 1.8. Structure of the Thesis

This research study started with two broad research questions, as guided by the grounded theory approach:

1. What is the main concern of consumers when faced with the choice of buying Fairtrade labelled products?
2. How are consumers processing these concerns?

It was therefore deemed important to explicate the research methodology in Chapter Two, after presenting an overview of the thesis, the substantive area of the study and the impetus for its selection in Chapter One.

To answer these research questions in accordance with the requirements of a grounded theory approach, data collection and analysis were carried out in tandem. This iterative process of data collection and analysis resulted in the emergent substantive grounded theory. The emergent grounded theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is explicated in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. In grounded theory, only after the substantive theory is developed, is the next step that of nesting the emergent theory into the extant literature. The emergent theory is compared and contrasted with the extant literature in Chapter Five of this study, hence modifying and further substantiating the theory. The rationale behind presenting Chapter Five, which comprises the literature review and discussion after the findings chapters is that, firstly, the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is not based on any pre-existing theory but is developed from primary data, collected to answer the above research questions, and therefore not guided by the literature. Secondly, once the theory was developed from the data, it guided the researcher to

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<sup>5</sup> Research questions in quantitative and qualitative methodologies are formulated prior to the selection of study methodology. However grounded theory methodology seeks to conceptualise participants' main concern and the ways in which they resolve those concerns.

search the literature for research which was the most relevant to the concerns of consumers when faced with the choice of buying Fairtrade products. Thirdly, since the emergent theory is grounded in data and not based on any pre-existing theory, it is difficult to know at outset what will be the relevant literature since the entire process is emergent. However, attempts were made initially to place the literature review chapter before the findings chapter as is done traditionally, but it was realised that due to the fact that the emergent theory guided the literature search and not otherwise the flow of the thesis could have been compromised. And fourthly, by presenting the emergent theory and then nesting the theory in the extant literature, a better understanding of the steps proposed by the grounded theory methodology is provided. Therefore, by reviewing the extant and relevant literature, and presenting a comprehensive discussion, Chapter five substantiates, modifies and eventually nests the emergent grounded theory in the extant literature.

Hence, Chapter One contains the introduction to the substantive study area, presenting the proposed grounded theory methodology selected for the study and giving an overview of the thesis. Chapter Two discusses the rationale behind the selection of grounded theory methodology, examining the dichotomies which exist within the general corpus of the methodology and justifying its employment in this study. Chapter Three is the first of the two chapters which present the emergent theory, and proposes the concept of consumer Behavioural Mutability which emerged from this study. Chapter Four presents the Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience as the emergent theory from this study.

At this point the literature review and discussion are presented, as Chapter Five nests the emergent theory in the relevant extant literature and integrates it into the Theory itself. Chapter Six concludes the study by presenting the contributions, recommendations and conclusions of the thesis. This structure is explained more fully below.

**Chapter 1 Introduction:** This chapter provides a brief overview of the fair trade movement as a background, leading into the importance of understanding the buyer side of fair trade marketing in the present study. Grounded theory is proposed as the most suitable methodology to comprehend consumers' purchase behaviour in the context of Fairtrade. The overall aim and the two broad research questions are posed. The justification for the structure of the thesis is presented. The difference between an open mind and an empty mind, with reference to preconceptions from the literature review at the outset of the research study is explicated, and the chapter is concluded by presenting the organisation of this study.

**Chapter 2 Methodology:** Addressing the limitations of the extant methodologies, this chapter begins by justifying the selection of grounded theory methodology as suitable for comprehending the under-researched phenomenon of Fairtrade consumer behaviour. Since its origin, schisms have emerged in grounded theory, deriving from a basic disagreement between Glaser and Strauss, the founders of the grounded theory methodology. The present study, however, in agreement with the tenets of Glaser and Strauss' methodology, explicates the utilisation of Glaser's classic grounded theory as opposed to Strauss and Corbin's or Charmaz's grounded theory. These schisms cause what Glaser describes as an unnecessary *rhetorical wrestle* which should be avoided. Therefore, the philosophical position of grounded theory as a general methodology as opposed to positivist and interpretivist methodologies is then explained. After discussing the selection, origin and philosophical orientation of grounded theory, the chapter then elaborates on the fundamentals of conducting a study based on grounded theory. The research design applied in the present study, including sampling techniques, data collection methods and the process of theory generation, in the substantive area of research is expounded. A critical reflection of the research process is illustrated. The chapter concludes by presenting the criteria for judging the credibility of grounded theory research and the ethical considerations taken into account in the present study.

**Chapter 3 Fairtrade Consumer Behaviour Groups and Behavioural Mutability:** Having explained, in detail the methodology applied in the previous chapter, this chapter is first of the two chapters which explicate the contributions of this study- the five behavioural types and the concept of Behavioural Mutability, and the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience<sup>6</sup>. Although six behavioural types emerged from the data, the consumers whose behaviour is one of indifference and apathy towards the concept of Fairtrade are omitted since they have no interaction with Fairtrade at all. This leaves five behaviour types for discussion

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<sup>6</sup> Nomenclature of the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is capitalized throughout.

which are Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Vacillating but Supporting and Supporting and Committed behaviour. These behaviour types, however, are described as nodes along a continuum of behaviours. The flexibility of consumer behaviours and the movement of consumers along the behavioural continuum resulted in the concept of Behavioural Mutability as emerged from this research. It was found that different factors could modify the consumer behaviour, and that behaviour was therefore mutable as a function of both extrinsic and intrinsic influences. The influences which drive consumers to change their behaviour are examined from the participant narratives as they appear in the interview transcripts, supported by till receipts provided by them.

**Chapter 4 Reconciling Demands of Conscience:** This chapter presents the emergent Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, as a process which demonstrates the means adopted by the respondents in the processing of their main concern. During a purchase decision, the respondents' main concern when faced with the choice of buying or not buying Fairtrade products, is conceptualised as the Demands of Conscience deriving from the appeals to conscience which the eleemosynary nature of Fairtrade produces. However, the intensity of the demands impinging upon the consumer's conscience was found to vary depending on the five behaviour types, expounded in Chapter 3. The theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience explicates the purchase decision making process in the context of Fairtrade products. For consumers to feel internally satisfied with their purchase decision regarding Fairtrade products, they need to reconcile and reinforce their actions with their conscience. As emerged from the data, the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience consists of four stages: the stage of Comfort Zoning, the stage of Evaluating, the stage of Acting and the stage of Reflecting. The stage of Comfort Zoning is composed of *Forming* and *General Purchase Pattern* as its properties, the stage of Evaluating, includes *Ambivalence*, *Weighing Up* and *Situational Prioritising*, the stage of Acting involves *Buying* and *Not Buying*. Not buying is further classified into *Not Buying because of Desirability*, *Ethical Substituting* and *Going Without*, and the stage of Reflecting which entails coming to terms with purchases and purchase decisions and involves *Reinforcing* and *Reconciling* as its properties. These stages form the framework around which the chapter is constructed and are fully explicated therein.

**Chapter 5 Literature Integration and Discussion:** In classic grounded theory, the literature review is conducted after the emergence of theory to avoid preconception. This chapter therefore, reviews and discusses the extant literature as guided by the emergent theory. It nests the emergent theory in the consumer behaviour literature, specifically within the ethical decision making literature. *Firstly*, the extant literature pertinent to consumer segmentation is compared

and contrasted with the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability and the five behavioural types. *Secondly*, the ethical decision making models developed in areas such as marketing ethics, organisational behaviour and marketing management are compared and contrasted with the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, and the Fairtrade purchase decision making process, grounded in data, highlighting the implications for managers of Fairtrade organisations. Lastly, the extant literature pertinent to the psychological processes which are related to Reconciling Demands of Conscience, such as the dissonance and guilt coping mechanisms are reviewed, which ends the review, integration and discussion of the extant literature pertinent to the emergent grounded theory.

**Chapter 6 Conclusion:** All the threads are drawn together in this chapter by presenting a summary and conclusion of the thesis. Achievement of the study's aims, contributions and implications for theory and research are presented. The chapter then proposes implications for practitioners. The chapter ends by the acknowledgement of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. This chapter is the culmination of the present research study.

### **1.9. Rationale for Avoiding Pre-Conceptual Literature**

For a non grounded theorist to enter the constituency of grounded theory praxis is unsettling since a fundamental criterion of grounded theory is that the researcher should enter the study field with as few preconceptions as possible. Hence the researcher would endeavour to avoid contamination of thought from prior knowledge. This also results in the researcher avoiding reading substantively relevant literature at the outset of the study. This is not taken to imply that the researcher has absolutely no knowledge relevant to the study subject, only that the less he or she has, the more representative will be the emergent theory.

The reason for this is remarkably straight forward. Grounded theory depends for its validity on being grounded thoroughly and completely in the data which are initially extracted from interviews in the substantive area. It does not seek to understand opinion: it seeks to understand behaviour. Were a grounded theorist to read the opinions of other researchers in the field, there is the very real possibility that he or she would be strongly influenced and would therefore direct questioning to extract answers which would fit into earlier theories.

Grounded theory, by being as its name suggests, *grounded*, purely in the data, avoids forcing the facts to fit the theory. It distances itself from opinion, as opinion is not relevant to behaviour, and is abstract of person place and time. By being disconnected in such a manner, grounded theory is able to produce theory which reveals the concealed patterns of behaviour, not the

reported behaviour of the subjects interviewed. The encounters with the respondents allow the respondent opinions to be recorded without being guided or led by the interviewer. This is then subject to an analysis based upon disjointing what is said until the bare bones of behaviour begin to emerge. Thereafter, in conjunction with other analysed interviews, and integration of *relevant* theoretical literature, the core category will emerge and theory will follow, grounded in the data, which demonstrates the ways in which the main concern of the participants is ultimately resolved.

Because, as Glaser (1998) expressed it, all is data, it is not only the strictly relevant literature which can be integrated, but also substantial peripheral literature, which can feed into and hence strengthen the emergent theory by mutating it to take cognisance of interrelated data from whatever source. Hence, grounded theory can use any data to strengthen theory. Once the theory is developed the literature is used as data and is constantly compared with the emergent theory to further substantiate the theory.

#### **1.10. Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the phenomenon of fair trade, and discussed the discourse surrounding the fair trade movement. In, particular, the origin and development of the FTF, UK is presented as the background for this consumer behaviour study. The significance of understanding the complexities of the dynamics of consumer behaviour in the substantive area of Fairtrade purchase behaviour is acknowledged. Grounded theory methodology as the chosen methodology is introduced, posing the research questions for the present study. The distinct structure of a grounded theory thesis is briefly discussed. The following chapter will unpack grounded theory methodology, explaining its suitability for this research, and expounding the process of substantive theory generation in the present study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Research Methodology

#### 2.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explicate the classic grounded theory methodology as an appropriate choice for this research. A logical path is followed, providing justification for the selection of methodology, while schisms in grounded theory methodology and the philosophical debates in the extant area are discussed. The fundamental principles associated with the methodology, the research design including the sampling and data collection are explicated. The criteria for judging the credibility of the emergent theory are presented, clarifying important distinctions between the traditional criteria for evaluating qualitative and quantitative studies and four criteria proposed by Glaser - fit, work, relevance and modifiability and a personal reflection of the research process is presented.. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed in relation to informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality within the context of this research. The chapter concludes with a discussion.

#### 2.2. Selection of Methodology

The word *Methodology* is derived from the Greek word *methodos* which means pursuit of knowledge, scientific enquiry, or investigation, the stem *method*, therefore, means a way of accomplishing or pursuing an end, and *methodology*, having *logos* as a suffix indicates speech, discourse or conversation. Hence, whilst the former is the way by which an undertaking is pursued, the latter is the discourse surrounding that pursuit, so a methodology is the collection and use of methods within a particular research study. The grounded theory methodology and the methods used in this research are explained in the rest of the chapter.

The present study began with an aim to explore consumer attitudes, perceptions and behaviours towards Fairtrade. A methodology was needed which could help understand the nuances in consumer behaviour when faced with a purchase decision with the ethical element of Fairtrade in comparison with a regular purchase decision. A quantitative research method was not deemed suitable because comprehending the underlying complexities of ethical purchase decision making is beyond the scope of survey based research (Shaw et al., 2006; Chatzidakis et al., 2007; Carrington et al 2014). Also, it is not possible to quantify ethical dimensions of consumer

behaviour, specifically, the emotional complexities, with accuracy (Gregory-Smith et al., 2013). Furthermore, data collected through survey methods could generate socially desirable responses (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001) and thus suffer from the limitations of the attitude-behaviour gap, so frequently discussed in ethical behaviour literature (Carrington et al., 2014).

In contrast with quantitative research, qualitative research provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under research (Goulding, 2005). It lends itself to the study of complex behavioural patterns more readily when compared to data obtained by quantification (Nichols & Lee 2006). Therefore, a qualitative approach seemed appropriate for the study of the complex phenomenon of consumption of Fairtrade commodities. However, qualitative methods utilised in fair trade consumer behaviour research, tend to build on existing theories. For example, the application of the Neutralisation Theory (Chatzidakis et al., 2007), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Shaw & Clarke 1999; Nichols & Lee 2006), and the Schwartz Values System (Shaw et al., 2005) are found to be limited in their utility in the field of fair trade consumer behaviour. Theory development is considered to be the way forward in fair trade consumer behaviour research (Goulding, 2009; Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). Therefore, grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978, 1998, 2001) was considered appropriate for this research study.

While the application of grounded theory in consumer behaviour research is in its infancy, it has been applied to areas such as alcohol consumption (Pettigrew, 2002) and advertising (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997; Andronikidis & Lambrianidou, 2010). Consumer behaviour researchers have increasingly suggested that more marketing studies should employ a grounded theory methodology (Goulding, 2000, 2005; Rindell, 2009). As grounded theory possesses the ability to understand and illuminate complex multivariate issues, it is employed in this research context in the knowledge that it will produce concepts which capture the complexity of consumer behaviour in the substantive area of Fairtrade, and thus have significant research and practitioner relevance.

The key reasons for using grounded theory in the current study are manifold. Firstly, grounded theory does not force the data to comply with *preconceptions* or any rigid formalisation of investigation, research, theory and analysis. Instead, it allows the theory to emerge freely from the data. It seeks to understand human experiences and actions, and looks at ways in which people experience the world, without any preconceptions at the outset of the research (Glaser, 1978). It differs from qualitative and quantitative research *per se* on the fundamental points of preconception and conceptualisation. It eschews preconception, as the researcher does not start



the study with pre-set questions, and it is conceptual since it does not describe the phenomena being studied, rather, it conceptualises the behavioural patterns in such form as to account for all the variations in the data (Glaser, 1978). Secondly, it is an *inductive-deductive methodology*, ideal for an exploratory study, in this research context, Fairtrade consumer behaviour (Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). Thirdly, grounded theory gets metaphorically *under the skin* of the respondents, revealing true and real motivators and concerns. Therefore, when dealing with human emotions in a socio-economic and ethical situation, such as Fairtrade, the only way to obtain the truth is to allow it to emerge, from the point of view of the consumer, (Glaser, 1998), therefore grounded theory is best suited to comprehend consumers' emotional nuances associated with the purchase of Fairtrade products.

Once grounded theory was selected as the methodology for the current study, it was necessary to cut away the underbrush of variations on the methodology, particularly those voiced by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and Charmaz (2006). Historically speaking, grounded theory was discovered by both Glaser and Strauss, following a study of clinicians, families and patients in wards for the terminally ill, which resulted in the publication of *Awareness of Dying in 1965*. In pursuing their research, they developed a revolutionary method in social sciences, of studying people's latent patterns of behaviour, which they referred to as grounding the theory in the data. In response to many queries about how the work had been carried out, Glaser and Strauss then published *Discovery of Grounded Theory* in 1967, which discusses how the methodology applied in *Awareness of Dying* (1965) had been developed. A constant comparison method (explained in later sections) was considered a fundamental principle for theory generation from the data, thereby understanding the underlying behavioural patterns, not the researcher's own interpretations (Glaser, 1967). It was suggested that understanding of participants' perspectives, concerns and behaviour could be achieved by attaching the theory to the data by constant comparison, thereby not straying from what was reality and what was going on.

### **2.3. Schisms in Grounded Theory**

Since its discovery in 1967, grounded theory has increased in authority among researchers, in particular, among qualitative researchers, although they often appear to adopt an ad hoc, inadequate scholarship approach to it. However, an offshoot of this surge in interest has been an increase in explicatory opinions, resulting in some researchers moving away from the core tenets. Today, grounded theory has three main strands- the original, classic grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and its extensions by Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2011), grounded theory by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and constructivist grounded theory by Charmaz (2006). The

following two sub-sections compare classic grounded theory with the other two strands and justify the selection of Glaserian grounded theory as being the most suitable methodology for this research. Prior to a detailed comparison, a summary of the differences between three strands of grounded theory is presented in Table 1.

Parameters	Glaser	Strauss and Corbin	Charmaz
Philosophical underpinning	General methodology	Inductive methodology	Constructivist
Objective	Theory development	Theory development or detailed description of a phenomenon	Theory development or detailed description of a phenomenon
Data analysis objective	Analysis is carried out to develop the core category, entailing the participants' main concerns and the ways in which they resolve or process those concerns	Objective of data analysis is not always the development of a core category, especially if theory development is not the objective.	Objective of data analysis is not always the development of a core category, especially if theory development is not the objective.
Coding	The coding process is: open, substantive and theoretical coding.	The coding process is: open, axial and selective coding	Initial line by line coding and focused coding.
Inductive-deductive	It is a combination of inductive and deductive, initially inductive but then deductive at the stage of theoretical sampling.	Inductive methodology	Inductive-abductive Methodology
<i>A priori</i> knowledge	No prior knowledge when researching the phenomenon, eschews preconceptions.	Prior knowledge is used to analyse data, existing theories are used to compare and therefore obtain emerging theoretical insights.	Prior knowledge is used to analyse data, existing theories are used to compare and therefore obtain emerging theoretical insights.
Description-conceptualisation	Conceptual	Descriptive	Descriptive and Conceptual
Methodological procedures	All the procedures of the methodology are rigidly followed	Depending on the research objectives, a researcher could ignore or reject a procedural step.	Depending on the research objectives, a researcher could ignore or reject a procedural step.
Evaluation criteria	Fit	Credibility	Credibility
	Workability	Transferability	Originality
	Relevance	Dependability	Resonance
	Modifiability	Conformability	Usefulness
		Integrity	
		Fit	
		Understanding	
	Generality		
	Control		

Table 1: Comparison of Three Strands of Grounded Theory (Source: This Research)

### ***2.3.1 Comparison with Strauss and Corbin***

Strauss and Glaser came from different backgrounds - Strauss from a qualitative and Glaser from a quantitative, hence the methodology which they discovered bridged both disciplines. As grounded theory began to be adopted and gained more adherents, a schism began to develop between them. Strauss began to introduce procedures influenced by his qualitative background. These procedures were inimical to the emergent nature of grounded theory. Accordingly, two schools sprang up, one led by Glaser, also called classic grounded theory and other developed by Strauss and Corbin. The dispute came to a head in the early 1990's, with the book by Strauss and Corbin '*Basic Qualitative Research*', which Glaser considered distortion of conceptions in grounded theory to "an extreme degree, even destructive degree" (Glaser, 1992, p.1).

Rejecting the positivist paradigm, Strauss and Corbin (1994) posit that truth is not already in existence but needs to be enacted, which according to Mills et al. (2007) is a relativist ontological stance. However other researchers have failed to find mention of the underlying paradigm, if any, which supports Strauss & Corbin's method (Charmaz, 2000). Judging by their published work, Strauss and Corbin seem to be relativist pragmatists, considering that historical situations need to be considered when developing or changing theories (Mills et al., 2007). This approach is opposed to the stance adopted by Glaser (1978, 1998) that truth emerges from the data.

Glaser's repudiation is contained primarily in *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis* (Glaser, 1992), in which he analyses Strauss and Corbin's contributions, highlighting the fundamental differences between his grounded theory and the work they had produced. This was intended to be a "corrected version of Strauss' book" (Glaser, 1992, p.3). In his book, Glaser (1992) raises serious points of difference, beginning with the contention that the approach by Strauss and Corbin "cannot produce a grounded theory" because it employs preconception, it, further, is inimical to grounded theory, because it produces forced description (Glaser, 1992, p.14), whereas grounded theory avoids description, and is abstract of person, place and time (Glaser, 1998). Description permits the entry of bias, while grounded theory "has methods which reduce and forestall this bias through constant comparison, saturation and core relevance" (Glaser, 1992, p.14).

Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998) contend that the researcher builds theory from the interpretation of respondents' narratives, which supports their relativist posture (Mills et al., 2006, 2008), while Glaser (1978, p. 3) argues that Grounded theory requires researchers to be as unencumbered with preconceptions as possible so that they are able to "remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases". Coding

directly from the data is the basic analytical instrument of classic grounded theorists, since this allows the theory to emerge from data. Only two forms of code are employed - substantive open codes and theoretical codes (Glaser, 1978). In contrast, Strauss and Corbin (1998) employ complex coding methods to examine the data.

### ***2.3.2 Comparison with Charmaz***

Charmaz's version of grounded theory leads to it being relativist from an ontological viewpoint, while remaining epistemologically subjectivist. Charmaz does not employ the Glaserian concept of *explication de texte* as she considers that retaining in full what her respondents said enables her to remain close to the data. Thus, she changed the interaction between subject interviewees and the researcher, creating a construct which perceives the researcher as author (Mills et al., 2007). This strand of grounded theory suggests that there is no objective reality, and instead that reality is simply a subjective mental construct, thus implying that there are as many *realities* as there are people (Lincoln & Guba, 2011). Charmaz (2000) in describing grounded theory as specifically constructivist is the first researcher to do so, arguing that reality is constructed from interactions of cultural contexts, and that the contact between the interviewees and the researcher "produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines" (Charmaz, 1995, p. 35). Deviating further from the tenets of classic grounded theory, Charmaz invites the researcher to add a "description of the situation, the interaction, the person's affect and perception of how the interview went" (Charmaz, 1995, p. 33). This is antithetical to classic grounded theory which is abstract of person, place and time (Glaser, 1992).

Although this version of grounded theory appears to give value to the inductive creativity of classic grounded theory, a closer inspection shows that Charmaz is simply doing what Strauss and Corbin did, and her strand of theory has, in the same way, re-modelled Glaser's original methodology, and may no longer be considered as classic grounded theory (Glaser, 2001). Charmaz (2006, 2007), complying with a central tenet of qualitative research, to give a voice to the people so that they can tell their stories, encourages grounded theorists to take into consideration the views of the people. Grounded theory findings are not about people, but are concerned with the patterns of behaviour in which people engage (Glaser, 1978). These patterns may not be vocalised by the participants. Instead, they are conceptually abstracted from the data (Glaser, 1998). When Charmaz (2003, p. 269) criticised classic grounded theory for its concentration on "analysis rather than the portrayal of subjects' experience in its fullness," she criticised it for failing to do something that it was never designed to do. Classic grounded theory is concerned with people's perspectives, and is a perspective methodology (Glaser, 2001). These

perspectives are explored so they can be raised to a conceptual level as they influence the ways in which people behave.

From the foregoing debate, although, it may be considered reasonable to attempt to evolve or *improve* a successful methodology, it is eminently possible that these *improvements* may actually be opposing the core values of the methodology, thus changing it into something very different and destroying the foundations of the original methodology. Therefore, the considerations taken into account while contemplating a research methodology for this thesis, suggested that if classic grounded theory worked, had fit and relevance for the work, then that methodology was the one to be adopted, rather than one that had been tinkered with, modified or ‘improved’. This is not a judgement on either approach, and does not contend that either one is better than the other, just that they are different. The integrity of the Classic grounded theory relies, in part, on bringing no preconceptions, no preformatted structures to the process of data collection and analysis (Glaser, 1998). The final theory is mutable as a function of the arrival of new data, and the conceptual level permits grounded theories to be applicable to different substantive studies, given that the concepts always remain modifiable (Glaser, 2005). Charmaz (2013) revisits the evaluation criteria for grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss and offers the following criteria - credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. The next section turns to the debates surrounding the philosophical position of grounded theory.

#### **2.4. Philosophical Position: Rhetorical Wrestle**

Research which seeks to enhance knowledge and crosses the boundaries into the unknown is informed by research paradigms (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). It is suggested that research methodologies are comprised of the basic principles of what is considered to be knowledge and the learning behind it, i.e. epistemology and ontology (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). By dictionary definition, epistemology means information that is knowledge based, while ontology is from Greek *onta* meaning existing things, and *logos* is a suffix meaning doctrine, and is a branch of metaphysics which treats of the nature of being or existence. Ontology is concerned with the *nature of reality*, and discusses, and is more concerned than is epistemology, with assumptions made about the way the world functions (Saunders et al., 2007).

Research methodologies may differ in what they consider to be knowledge or the epistemological position, or in how they interpret their results, thereby implying that epistemology is relative rather than absolute, therefore, knowledge is relative depending on what the researcher is trying to prove (Saunders and Rojon, 2011). Researchers who adopt a positivist ontology attempt to discover reasons for the way in which the knowable world behaves and try

to predict what will occur in it (Charmaz, 2006). Their reasoning, predicated in a belief in scientific, logical positivism, dictates that the world of human experience is objective, may be defined and is quantifiable (Charmaz, 2006).

This approach is opposed to an interpretive ontology, which insists that people need to be studied in their natural environment (Saunders et al., 2007). According to the interpretive paradigm, the observer becomes a part of the observed world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It could be said that by observing the world, the researcher changes it as he or she tries to interpret and understand the meanings which people attach to what is going on around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Criticising qualitative research, researchers pursuing a positivist paradigm claim that qualitative researchers are biased because of their involvement. This bias colours their ability and leads to doubting the validity of the research. In contrast, interpretivists argue that the social world in a business and management context, for example, is far too complex to be reduced to simple *scientific* rules and laws (Saunders et al., 2007).

The simultaneous existence of several paradigms with their associated methodologies and the obvious contradictions involved are considered to discredit the essence of the methodologies, particularly, in fields like consumer behaviour (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). In consumer behaviour research, scholars tend to apply positivist, interpretive or critical ontologies, but for the most part scholarship is vested in the positivist paradigm. To further obfuscate the matter, the characterisation of quantitative research as being positivist and qualitative research as being post-positivist is misleading (McGregor & Murnane, 2010), since qualitative research can be empirical if the methodology is positivist (Rowlands, 2005). It then implies that both qualitative and quantitative research may be positivist. Furthermore, there appears to be no straightforward correlation between epistemological positions and techniques of social research methods, (Bryman, 1984), all of which lends weight to Glaser's contention of the *rhetorical wrestle* (Glaser, 1998). Therefore, that this should apply to all research is too broad a statement, for example in social sciences, methodologies such as grounded theory do not employ paradigms but permit a new world view to emerge (Glaser, 1978).

However there are found to be misconceptions around the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher in a grounded theory study. Glaser, and Strauss and Corbin are separated into dissimilar camps, Glaser being regarded as the traditionalist, whilst Strauss and Corbin, are regarded, ontologically, as being evolved constructivist (Mills et al., 2007). Charmaz (2006) understands classic grounded theory to be ontologically objectivist, an approach in which

the researcher is considered to be neutral, analysing dispassionately, distinct and separate from participants, thereby setting grounded theory, ontologically, as a variation of an objectivist qualitative method. Grounded theory eschews positivism because the theory arises from conceptualisation of the data and preconceptions are avoided (Holton, 2008).

Further, Charmaz (2006) refers to grounded theory as constructivist arguing that its interpretations are themselves constructs. While this could be the case for Strauss and Corbin's version, Glaserian grounded theory is significantly different from the constructivists, particularly in how data should be analysed and reaching conceptual level by constant comparison (Simmons, 2011). Glaser, throughout his publications (1978, 1992, 2001, 2005, 2011, 2012), stresses repeatedly and most strongly that preconceptions must be avoided, and this includes the use of preconceived research questions and categories. While Simmons (2011) preferring the term oxymoron, quoting Glaser, who considers that this might be so at the most fundamental ontological and epistemological levels, as saying that constructivism involves the researcher constructing the data in his own way, thereby achieving the result that the researcher's input is likely to have a greater impact than that of the participant. Glaser himself (1978, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2003) contends that the constructivist approach results in *forcing* the data throughout the research process, contrary to that of classic grounded theory which is grounded in the data. For Glaser's classic grounded theory, everything must earn its place in the theory via constant comparison, rather than by random importation from other sources, (Glaser, 1998). Classifying grounded theory as a qualitative method is a fundamental distortion, because neither does it build on pre-existing theories nor does it use any particular kind of data, it is a general method to use on any kind of data but is specifically useful with qualitative data (Glaser, 1998).

Multiple ontological interpretations of grounded theory lead to obfuscation because each critic chooses his or her own paradigm to address grounded theory, settling with the perspective of that ontological position. It is however altogether possible that classic grounded theory contains traces of both objectivism and constructivism, but that does not indicate that it cleaves to either of them. In claiming that classic grounded theory has positivist objectivist underpinnings, its critics (Charmaz, 2006) are failing to understand the aversion which Glaser has to allowing deductions drawn from literature to creep into the research. It is difficult, not to say problematic, for a researcher founded in qualitative or quantitative analysis to remain completely open to the emergence of theory, since grounded theory expects the researcher to eschew preconceptions, literature review, and established theories. The theory emerges from the data, not from extant theories in the literature (Holton, 2007).

Grounded theory stands or falls by its own vesting in grounding its data, thus it needs to be understood on its own terms. Grounded theory is not specific to qualitative, constructivist or quantitative studies, which, equally, leans towards positivism, but is a general inductive-deductive theory-generating method (Glaser, 1992). Grounded Theory is inductive, but there is some deduction, theoretical sampling fostering deduction upon close examination, the interweaving of induction and deduction is complex and multivariate, and the rhetorical wrestle between induction and deduction is oversimplified (Glaser, 1998)

The philosophical assumptions which lie behind Glaserian grounded theory are that human beings seek to make sense or meaning from their surroundings, and hence their social life is structured around empirically integrated patterns, most of which are latent, and the Core Category is used to organise and explain the principal manner in which the substantive research area's respondents resolve their main concern. All that is needed is to apply a rigorous, systematic way of uncovering and explaining the patterns (Glaser, 1998). In summary, Glaser (1998) refutes the need for a rhetorical wrestle on two counts: firstly, that grounded theory is a general methodology and is not associated with any extant paradigms, and secondly, that grounded theory is a methodology which can work with any type of data (Glaser, 1998).

## **2.5. Fundamentals of Classic Grounded Theory**

The previous sections discussed the history, purpose, philosophical orientation and three variants of grounded theory. The present section elaborates on the fundamentals of conducting a study based on grounded theory: (a) the timing of when to do a review of the literature pertinent to the research question, (b) the role of constant comparison, (c) theoretical sampling, and (d) core category emergence. A glossary of terms used in grounded theory methodology is presented in Appendix 1.

### ***2.5.1. Timing of Literature Review in Grounded Theory***

One of the basic tenets of grounded theory is to keep the researcher's mind as open as possible, so as to allow the theory to emerge. Reading the literature, in the area, prior to theory development could create multiple non-relevant concepts and preconceptions, muddying the waters and jeopardising the outcome. At outset, the researcher has no idea of what the theory will be, finding relevant literature is not possible. However, once the work has progressed to the point where theory is beginning to emerge, a review of the extant literature is used as a further source of data which is integrated for comparison (Glaser, 1998). There is also a risk that the researcher could become overawed by experts in the area and this could detract from his or her



self-esteem as a creator of theory (Glaser, 1998). Furthermore, Glaser proposes that the researcher could become rhetoricalised which could lead to erosion of theoretical sensitivity.

### ***2.5.2. Constant Comparison***

Constant comparison refers to a practice where incident is compared to incident until a category appears, and then incident is compared to remaining incidents, and the emerging categories. This strategy enables the researcher to see if the data still support the emerging categories, while, at the same time, if they do, allowing the data to support and strengthen the categories, defining both their dimensions and their properties (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Constant comparison therefore permits the establishment of repeated patterns, which in turn begin to suggest an emerging theory, and direct the researcher to tune his or her research to obtain more data so that codes can become saturated (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Through constant comparison, the latent pattern of behaviour emerges; that is, links and inter-relationships with other categories emerge, and when one category is found to have links with the majority of categories, it is classified as a core category. This core category is the emergent grounded theory, which accounts for the possible variations in the data. The rigour of grounded theory methodology is established by the constant comparison method where emergent hypotheses are an integral part of the process, being compared with incidents codes and categories, rendering them of equal importance with the main concern and its continual resolution (Glaser, 1998). Furthermore, by constantly comparing incidents to incidents, incidents to categories and categories to categories, bias is reduced, and the process becomes self-correcting. As the concepts begin to coalesce, becoming increasingly conceptual of what is happening, so the names of many concepts are absorbed into major categories as the generalisation of the study increases, thus establishing two key theoretical requirements – parsimony and scope. Glaser (1994, p.190) states that “*parsimony* of variables and formulation and *scope* in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations” are vital for any emergent grounded theory<sup>7</sup>.

### ***2.5.3. Theoretical Sampling***

Theoretical sampling is defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.45) as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges”. After initial analysis and open coding, data collection is directed by theoretical

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<sup>7</sup> Emphasis added by the author

sampling rather than by predetermination of sample type at the outset, and this is in accordance with classic Grounded Theory. The emergent theory controls the sampling and guides the researcher to the direction to follow, in accordance with emerging theoretical criteria.

The basic question in theoretical sampling (in either substantive or formal theory) is - What group or sub group does one turn to next in data collection and for what theoretical purpose? (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). From this, it can be perceived that sampling in grounded theory is oriented towards theory, and rather than increasing the ability of findings to be represented, its purpose is to refine ideas, and subsequently enable explanation of strong theoretical categories which build up applicability and relevance of the research area (Breckenridge, 2009).

Theoretical sampling seeks to focus, narrow down and concentrate data collection systematically to assist theoretical development, and is therefore not concerned with complete descriptions. It assures sample relevance by the systematic and progressive tailoring of data collection which helps the emerging theory, whereas with a predetermined and preselected category, the researcher might be concerned about capturing enough information (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Having said that, of course, it is obvious that the researcher needs to start somewhere, and without a predetermined sample, this will typically commence in one concentration area and this will be extended to other areas, or sites, to permit data comparison after a certain amount of data collection and analysis has been done.

#### ***2.5.4. Core Category***

The core category is a latent pattern concealed within the data, which gradually emerges as the result of constant coding, comparison, analysis and theoretical sampling and is the essential focus of the study. Grounded theory seeks to understand what is going on from the viewpoint of the participants in the action. It therefore seeks for their principal concern and the ways in which they resolve this concern. The concern becomes the core variable and demonstrates people's behaviour in that area (Glaser, 1998). The core category may be any sort of theoretical code. Its purpose is the integration and saturation of theory. It is vital that the main concern of the participants emerges, since, without this, the researcher may be in possession of much descriptive material, but has nowhere to focus it. When discovered, this concern always leads to a rich substantive theory (Glaser, 1998), of the constant resolution of the problem by the participants.

After explaining the fundamental elements of grounded theory, the next section discusses in detail, the research design applied in this research.

## 2.6. Research Design

To address the following two broad research questions, the research design used in this study is explained in this section and a summary of the research design is presented in Table 2.

- What is/are the main concern(s) of consumers when faced with a choice of Fairtrade products?
- How are consumers processing this concern?

<b>Research Methodology</b>	Grounded theory methodology		
<b>Philosophical Underpinning</b>	Grounded theory as a general research methodology (Glaser, 1998)		
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Constant comparison method and the analysis techniques as prescribed by grounded theory methodology (Glaser 1978, 1998, 2012).		
<b>Sampling and Data Collection</b>	<b><i>Sample Size</i></b>	<b><i>Data Collection</i></b>	<b><i>Justification</i></b>
	70	Interviews supplemented with observations and till receipt collection.	To develop a grounded theory of consumer behaviour in the context of Fairtrade.
	<b><i>Initial Sampling</i></b>		
	12	Initial one to one, open-ended interviews	Initial exploration
	<b><i>Theoretical sampling</i></b>		
	14	One to One in depth interviews, guided by analysis (open and focused coding)	To develop and saturate the categories as guided by the theoretical sampling and coding.
	16	Observations with in-depth interviews	To understand and capture the respondents' actual purchase behaviour, by observing their behaviour whilst discussing what they are doing and why.
28	Interviews with till receipts	Validation of claimed behaviour to understand the difference, if any, between the stated and actual behaviour.	

Table 2: Research Design Adopted by the Current Study

The choice of research design was governed by the need for a holistic approach to understanding consumers' concerns, the ways in which they are processing those concerns and the underlying behavioural nuances. Where conventional research practices involve abiding by predetermined research design, grounded theory research design, and its implied agenda of new theory generation evolves during the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Hence the methods of data collection and research design change as new influences emerge from the analysis (Goulding, 2000). Grounded theory methodology is structured but flexible (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

The data collection and analysis procedures are explicit, and the analysis process is iterative resulting in the emergence of the theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Beginning with an eclectic mix of respondents, selected from various sites in Cardiff, UK, so as to avoid preconception, bias and skewing, the process moved on to theoretical sampling where data were collected, analysed, coded and used to direct further data collection. As guided by the tenets of grounded theory, data analysis and collection was pursued in tandem. The research design applied to the present study is explicated in the next two sub-sections.

### ***2.6.1. Sampling Framework***

The fair trade consumer behaviour literature is dominated by convenience sampling techniques (Cranfield et al., 2010; Basu & Hicks 2008; Arnot et al., 2006; Auger et al., 2003). Furthermore a skew is observed since these studies mostly depend for their information on samples such as academic and administrative staff (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005), students (Doran, 2010), subscribers to an ethical consumers' magazine (Shaw & Clarke, 1999) and fair trade road show events (Chatzidakis et al., 2007). In an attempt to minimise this skew the sampling framework in this study covers various sites and an eclectic mix of respondents. Employing classic grounded theory, the sampling strategy cannot be decided at the beginning, but is shaped as the theory emerges. It is guided by theory and analysis, and despite there being no formal sampling strategy, the researcher needs a point at which to start (Glaser, 1978). The researcher will be aware of some aspects of the area to be researched, and would allow those to direct his or her initial data collection, which, once started, directs itself as the researcher conceptualises what the data mean (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

For this research study, initial methods for recruiting participants included research advertisements (Appendix 4) put up in various sites in the Cardiff, including coffee bars, art centres, local shops, visitor centres, churches, and Cardiff University departments. Consumers were also approached in person in retail premises in two different venues having a broad catchment area - a supermarket (Sainsbury's, Roath, Cardiff) and a specialist Fairtrade shop (FairDo's, Canton, Cardiff). Glaser refers to this as a 'site' for data collection and data collection from various sites is encouraged, he refers to this as 'site spreading', which is determined by the emerging theory (Glaser, 2001, p.181). This helps the researcher to maximise the possibility of obtaining data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Although demographic characteristics are not used for data analysis in grounded theory, they have been presented for the purpose of general information. It can be noted that the age range extended from late teens to early eighties and the split between genders was almost equal (Table

3). Later, theoretical sampling, guided by the emergence of consumer purchase behaviour patterns, was carried out and this included recruiting people from FairDo's which is the only fully Fairtrade shop in Cardiff. Most of the sampling was undertaken in the city of Cardiff (Wales, United Kingdom) because the researcher was based at Cardiff; also time and financial constraints inhibited travelling to other cities for data collection. The data collection methods and their justification are discussed in detail in the following section.

### **2.6.2. Data Collection**

Glaser frequently remarks that *all is data* (Glaser, 1978). By this he means that all information, all data, every iota of knowledge which passes our way is data, hence, all kinds of data are relevant. Perhaps they need to be at least marginally germane, but notwithstanding their origin any data which appear are capable of having reference. This implies that the researcher should try to develop an empathy with the substantive area and its denizens - since all the data express in principle the respondent's view - so as to become more fully immersed, and hence needs to be flexible in approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In grounded theory, the analyst also needs to be aware that the advent of new data may cause his or her perceptions to change as the modifying effect is fed into the process.

Data collected for this research were qualitative in nature. Data collection was carried out in two inter-related stages: the first of which consisted of twelve initial in-depth interviews. After the initial analysis was obtained from coding, a further fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted to understand consumers' concerns and the ways in which they resolve those concerns. Because of an awareness of the phenomena of socially desirable responses (Nancarrow et al., 2005) and the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical consumer behaviour (Carrington et al., 2014), interviewees were asked to retain till receipts to compare the stated with the actual behaviour. Twenty eight respondents volunteered to provide till receipts for their purchases. To further understand the phenomenon and actual behaviour, a further sixteen interviews in combination with observations were conducted in a purchase environment, retail outlet and events, where behaviour could be observed simultaneously with discussion of intention and attitude. The scope of data collected is shown in Table 3.

	<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
1	Interview	Participant's home	Female	20-30	Research student
2	Interview with receipt	Cardiff University Post Graduate Centre	Female	20-30	Research student
3	Interview	Participant's home	Female	40-50	Housewife
4	Interview with receipt	Coffee Shop	Female	20-30	Housewife
5	Interview with receipt and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	40-50	Letting Agent
6	Interview	In a church	Male	50-60	Unemployed
7	Interview	Cardiff University Students' Union Restaurant	Male	30-40	Works at British Council
8	Interview with receipt and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	30-40	Student
9	Interview	Participant's home	Male	30-40	Student
10	Interview with receipt	Participant's home	Male	30-40	Student
11	Interview	Cardiff City Hall	Female	40-50	Artist
12	Interview with receipt	Cardiff University Students' Union	Female	40-50	Artist
13	Interview and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	60-70	Unemployed
14	Interview with receipt	In a church in Cardiff City	Male	60-70	Works at a church
15	Interview with receipt	Cardiff University	Female	40-50	University Lecturer
16	Interview and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	30-40	Student
17	Interview with receipt	Cardiff University Post Graduate Centre	Female	30-40	Research student
18	Interview	Coffee shop- Coffee#1	Male	20-30	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
19	Interview with Observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	40-50	Housewife
20	Interview with Observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	20-30	Student
21	Interview with Observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	30-40	Unemployed
22	Interview with receipt	At work place	Male	30-40	Solicitor
23	Interview	At work place	Male	20-30	Lawyer
24	Interview and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	Less than 20	Student
25	Interview with receipt	Cardiff University Students' Union	Male	Less than 20	Student
26	Interview and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	20-30	Unemployed
27	Interview	Coffee shop- Coffee#1	Female	20-30	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
28	Interview	Art centre- Chapter Cardiff	Male	40-50	Unemployed
29	Interview	Cardiff University Bute Building	Male	20-30	Research student
30	Interview with receipt	Restaurant	Male	20-30	Research student
31	Interview with receipt	Ice cream parlour	Male	20-30	Research student
32	Interview	Art Centre Cardiff	Female	30-40	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
33	Interview	Cardiff University	Male	30-40	Lecturer
34	Interview and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	30-40	Secretary
35	Interview	Art centre- Chapter	Female	20-30	Student
36	Interview	Cardiff University	Female	40-50	Secretary

37	Interview	Coffee shop	Female	30-40	Marketing practitioner
38	Interview	Restaurant	Female	30-40	Lecturer
39	Interview with receipts	Coffee shop	Female	30-40	Lecturer
40	Interview	Participant's home	Male	40-50	Solicitor
41	Interview with receipts	Participant's home		40-50	Unemployed
42	Interview	At work place	Male	40-50	Unemployed
43	Interview	Participant's home	Female	40-50	Music teacher
44	Interview	At work place	Male	30-40	Line manager
45	Interview with receipts	At work place	Male	30-40	Line manager
46	Interview	FairDos Cardiff	Female	30-40	Unemployed
47	Interview	Cardiff University Post Graduate Centre	Female	30-40	Student
48	Interview	Skype	Female	30-40	Research student
49	Interview with receipts	Participant's home	Female	20-30	Student
50	Interview	Participant's home	Female	30-40	Housewife
51	Interview	Participant's work place	Female	40-50	Secretary
52	Interview	Skype interview	Female	30-40	Housewife
53	Interview	Participant's work place	Female	40-50	Secretary
54	Interview with receipts and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	30-40	Unemployed
55	Interview with receipts and observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	20-30	Student
56	Interview with receipts	Cardiff University Post Graduate Centre	Female	20-30	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
57	Interview	Skype	Female	40-50	Lecturer
58	Interview	Restaurant	Male	30-40	Student
59	Interview with receipts	Restaurant	Male	40-50	Businessman
60	Interview with receipt	Participant's home	Male	20-30	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
61	Interview with receipts	Cardiff University Post Graduate Centre	Female	20-30	Research student
62	Interview with observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male	30-40	Unemployed
63	Interview with observation	FairDos Cardiff	Male		Unemployed
64	Interview with observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	20-30	Works as a volunteer at a charity shop
65	Interview with observation	FairDos Cardiff	Female	40-50	Shop employee
66	Interview with receipt	Coffee shop	Female	20-30	Student
67	Interview with receipt	Coffee shop	Female	50-60	Unemployed
68	Interview with receipt	Restaurant	Male	50-60	Self employed
69	Interview with receipt	Coffee shop	Male	40-50	Employed
70	Interview with receipt	Restaurant	Male	50-60	Businessman

Table 3: Sampling Characteristics of the Current Study

### 2.6.2.1. In Depth Interviews

For a researcher using classic grounded theory, the interview is one of the routes for the discovery of data; (Glaser 1978, 1998) however, the interview does have some definite advantages, in that it can reveal a wealth of data, if accessed and analysed properly. The principle reason for employing in-depth interviews in this study is that the psycho-sociological factors

upon which consumer behaviour depends could be better understood from interview data (McCracken, 1988).

This technique further allows the interviewer access into the subjective world of the participant. No other method, therefore, gives access to such rich in-depth data, and permits the interviewer to see the world through the participant's eyes (McCracken, 1988). As Belk (2013) posits, if the issue is something of importance to the respondent, an in-depth interview has the potential for obtaining extensive knowledge. Furthermore, the interview is a flexible tool, which allows the researcher the opportunity to pursue a thread or leave it, to follow one aspect of investigation or many, to return to previous remarks to investigate further and finally to, if required, expand and change the narrative of the interview based upon other influences and inputs (Hair et al., 2006).

Some researchers in fair trade consumer behaviour have employed in-depth interviews in an attempt to understand the apocryphal intention-behaviour gap, also referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap, (Carrington et al., 2014; Chatzidakis et al., 2007). Shaw et al. (2006) pursue their investigation into the impact of Fairtrade on the garment industry using interviews as a form of collecting qualitative data. However, these studies try to force data onto pre-existing theories, which may not be relevant to the respondents. The interview therefore is suited to the purpose of this research – which intended to discover participant's concerns from their own personal accounts. In an in-depth qualitative interview, the interviewee is given the opportunity to talk freely about events, behaviour and beliefs in relation to the substantive area, producing a non-directed interaction (Saunders et al., 2007). Despite it providing significant challenges for the researcher, it is important for the grounded theorist that specific questions are avoided during interviews, since such could easily prejudice the essentially non-pre-conceived nature of the interview. Later, as a function of emergent theory, the questioning can become more directed (Glaser, 1978).

This is not to say that there are no disadvantages to using interviews. Respondents need to be recruited and may need to be rewarded, leading to very real financial and time-related costs. Further, the number of respondents is low, since there are inevitable time constraints (Webb, 2002). Every researcher needs a point at which to start, or metaphorically find *a corner piece*. However, beginning by already knowing too much about the substantive area is detrimental to the discovery of new material (Glaser, 1998). According to Fontana and Frey (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), unstructured interviewing attempts to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any *a priori* categorisation which may limit the field of enquiry.



In this study, the initial exploration of consumer attitudes, opinions and behaviours towards Fairtrade was conducted by means of in-depth preliminary interviews. This is intended to draw out subliminal views, attitudes and behavioural patterns without being specific, and letting the participants talk. The underlying purpose of this course of action is that it is felt necessary to avoid prejudicing the outcome by mentioning the target subject at the beginning. The respondent is informed that research, in which he or she has been invited to participate, is designed to obtain the respondent's attitudes and behaviour towards Fairtrade.

The interview guide was dependent on the respondents' discussion and not any pre-set questions. Concurrent with further interviews, data arrived, were analysed coded and memos written up, relationships began to appear which began to feed into subsequent interviews. As the analysis progressed and more interviews were conducted, interviewees were asked to retain their till receipts over a period of three months, and then to be re-interviewed at a later date along with the receipts. This was done to demonstrate whether or not their stated behaviour, through interviews, reflected their intentions and actual behaviour. This approach was taken to try to reduce the problem of social desirability bias (Nancarrow et al., 2005).

#### **2.6.2.2. Observations and Interviews**

As the analysis progressed and the behavioural patterns (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4) started to emerge, further theoretical sampling together with observation (Table 4) was carried out to obtain more data to saturate the categories. Though Burgess (1982) stresses the importance of talking to people to understand their view point, often there is an established inconsistency in ethical consumption between what people say and what they do (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Chatzidakis et al., 2007; De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007; Bray, 2008; Carrington et al., 2010; Pedregal & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2011), yet simply observing people reveals little and is subjective and non-involving for the observer. It is only when the observed person discusses their behaviour to explain it, that it comes to life and can be interpreted. In a similar vein, Loureiro et al. (2001) stress the need for obtaining live consumer behaviour observations combined with quantitative survey questionnaires. In their study they interviewed consumers directly in grocery stores which ensured both that the people interviewed were the actual decision makers and that their genuine preferences for eco-labelled products could be evoked. However the survey technique imposes pre-set questions which may have no bearing on the participant's view point.

In this present research, in-depth interviews were coupled with observations and were used in tandem so as to both know how the respondents actually behaved whilst simultaneously giving meaning to their behaviour. Furthermore, as guided by theoretical sampling, to understand the Cynical and Sceptical views and attitudes towards Fairtrade, it was decided to attend meetings of Sceptics in the Pub<sup>8</sup>, where people were invited to participate in interviews, some of which were conducted during or after the events, while other interviews were conducted at a later point. To facilitate comprehension of the views and attitudes of consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour, observations and interviews were arranged in FairDo's, a dedicated Fairtrade shop in Cardiff. As a further step towards combining observation with conversation, after their first interviews, respondents were also asked to keep till receipts recording their purchases. This evidential approach was invoked so as to demonstrate discrepancies between described and actual behaviour.

As a result of an invitation to FairDo's customers to be interviewed, sixteen in-depth interviews and observations (Table 4) were recorded at FairDo's. Some interviews were conducted individually in the shop at the time of the consumer's visit, while others were conducted at a later point in time.

S. No	Observations followed by interviews	Gender	Age
1	Pointing at various things Spent 2 minutes in the shop Did not buy anything	A male and a female	20-30 years
2	Having a look around in the shop: jewelry, pouches etc Buying a gift for someone Bought Palestinian virgin olive oil. Looks like they are familiar with this product because they just picked it up without thinking much. Bought a pair of earrings, Divine chocolate bars Spent around 8-10 minutes in the shop	Two females	20-30 years
3	Having a look around: greeting cards, handicrafts, clothes, pouches. Spent 5 minutes in the shop Did not buy anything	Female	30-40 years
4	Works in the shop Buys Fairtrade whenever possible Shops at Asda but said she cannot find many Fairtrade products at Asda so buys from Fairdo's. Always buys Fairtrade bananas	Female	40-50 years
5	Asked for male valets Interested in jewelry Bought a valet and greeting cards Female bought greeting cards and handicrafts Spent 11 minutes in the shop	A male and a female	30-40 years
6	Trying on clothes Do not come in often but when comes to the shop she spends some time in the shop because interesting Fairtrade	Female	30-40 years

<sup>8</sup> Founded by Dr. Scott Campbell in 199, Sceptics in the Pub entails series of events based on discussion surrounding critical thinking.

	things Bought a pair of gloves, greeting cards and dried fruit Spent around 15-20 minutes in the shop		
7	Came and bought cake, chocolate and greeting card Was in hurry	Female	50-60 years
8	Looking around Bought incense Does social Marketing: www.xyz.com	Male, with his child	Male: 50-60 years Child: 10-20 years
9	Having a look around Spent 5 minutes Bought Palestinian virgin olive oil	Female	20-30 years
10	Looking at stuff: clothes, incense Spent 3-5 minutes in the shop Went out without buying anything	Male	30-40 years
11	Looking around: food section, greeting cards Spent 8 minutes in the shop Bought divine chocolate, Fairbreak biscuits, greeting cards	Female	20-30 years
12	Having a look around Spent 8 minutes in the shop Bought mints, friendship band	Female	40-50 years
13	Came in and straightaway picked up the shopping basket which indicates he is in the shop for buying Fairtrade products. Spent 8-10 minutes in the shop Bought Fairtrade canned drinks, water bottle, chocolate, dry fruit, flapjack golden syrup, fruit cup	Male	40-50 years
14	Looking at greeting cards Spent 7 minutes in the shop Bought greeting cards	Female	40-50 years
15	Looking at Jewelry, clothing section Spent 6 minutes in the shop Did not buy anything	Female	40-50 years
16	Went to food section Spent 7 minutes in the shop Bought coffee and Divine chocolate	Female	20-30 years

Table 4: Data from Observations

## 2.7. Data Analysis

Generating a substantive grounded theory begins with initial data collection in the substantive area and data analysis in tandem. The process by which substantive theory is generated in this study is depicted in Figure 3 and explained in detail in the next section. The first step in data analysis is the substantive open coding, which involves initial open coding. At this point, constant comparison, which runs all the way through the process, begins, along with memo writing, which marks the first step towards the development of concepts. This is followed by further data collection and theoretical sampling, guided by the emergent theory, where specific new ideas are sought, and data are subject to focused coding. At this point in the analysis, advanced memos are written up, refining the conceptual categories as they are compared with

other memos and notes. The core category now emerges as the ways in which respondents process their main concern(s). The analysis proceeds to the process of theoretical coding which raises the level from description to conceptualisation, integrating and linking concepts and categories. The core category and the related concepts are linked through theoretical codes to explicate the emergent theory. Before writing up the emergent theory the fundamental part of grounded theory analysis is sorting the conceptual memos, and once sorting is completed the emergent substantive grounded theory is written up.

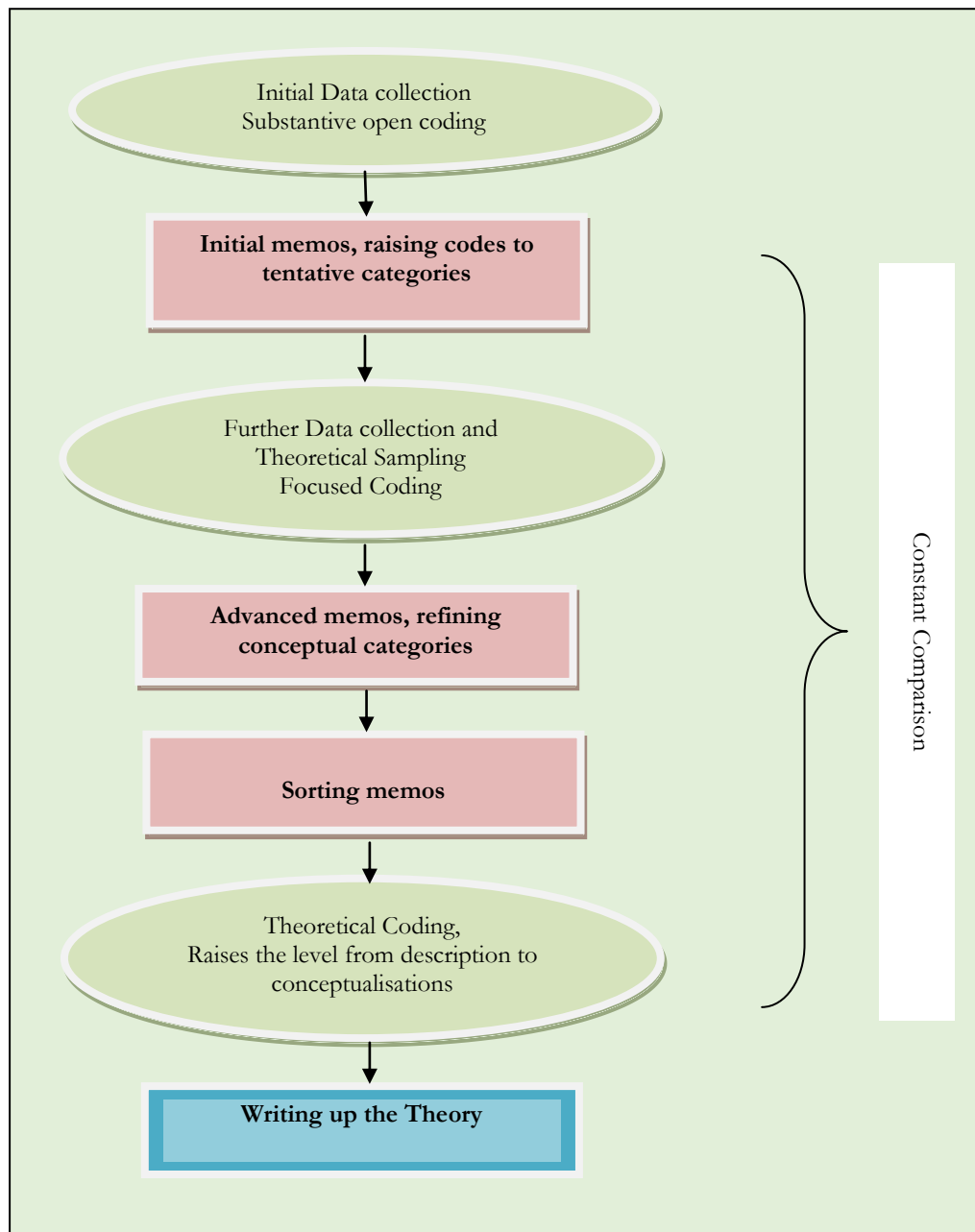


Figure 3: Substantive Theory Generation Process (Source: This Research)

Regarding providing evidence of data collection and data analysis in quantitative studies, the questionnaires and statistical analysis are placed in the appendix, however, with qualitative data

analysis it is not possible to insert a mass of qualitative data in the form of transcripts (Goulding, 2005). For the purpose of evidence, a few excerpts from transcripts are provided in the text and in the Appendix (2 and 3), further memos are also provided within the text to explicate the data analysis process - open coding (see Table 5 and Table 6), memos (see Table 7 and Table 8), interchangeability of indicators (see Table 9) and selective coding (see Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12). Since it is not possible to provide the mass of evidence a picture of the work and the processes is provided by way of sample evidence (Goulding, 2005). For this current study, excerpts from transcripts, example memos and charts exhibiting concepts are provided, as is an illustration of the theory generation process. The next section discusses in detail the procedures involved in the generation of substantive grounded theory.

### ***2.7.1. Coding***

At the heart of grounded theory lies Coding. It is the fundamental process which allows data to be abstracted conceptually and reintegrated as theory. As such, coding manifests itself in two forms: substantive coding (which includes both open and selective coding), and theoretical coding (Holton, 2008). Substantive coding begins with open coding to allow core categories and related concepts to emerge, then continues through theoretical sampling and selective coding to theoretically saturate both the core and any related concepts.

A category is also a code, and an incident could be referred to as an indicator. Incidents, which are drawn from the data, provide the properties and dimensions of a category, and by constant comparison of these, a point is reached at which no new properties or dimensions emerge, and incidents found in one collection of data (for example, a transcribed interview) are no different from incidents found in other data sets. This is described as interchangeability of indicators, and concepts have achieved theoretical saturation, allowing the researcher to explore the emergent fit (Glaser, 1992) of potential theoretical codes which conceptualise the relationships between substantive codes, thereby enabling conceptual integration of both core and related concepts.

Theoretical codes also serve to help the researcher increase the conceptual level when he or she is writing about the relationships between concepts (Glaser & Holton, 2004). By employing a recursive process of constant comparison, theoretical sampling and substantive coding of data, theoretical explanations emerge. This section now offers an explanation of each of the steps involved in grounded theory data analysis, each of which has been adhered to with rigour, in allowing the emergent theory to develop, and presents evidence of a sound understanding of classical grounded theory.

### **2.7.2. Substantive Coding**

Substantive coding is the process which goes from the initial empirical data collection through open coding, conceptualisation and the core category emergence, until similarities between the concepts is achieved which then results in a reduction and recombination of the categories, when the incidents, that is, codes, no longer produce fresh insights (Holton, 2007). This leads to saturation of the categories, the core category emerges, it becomes saturated, and from that, theory gradually emerges, grounded entirely in the empirical data:

#### **2.7.2.1. Open Coding**

Open coding is the first step in the theoretical analysis. It begins with almost word by word coding and comparing incidents. It leads to the researcher verifying and saturating categories and helps to prevent omissions. It also helps to avoid description and irrelevant detail. Open coding leads to the discovery of categories and their properties which have an emergent fit with the substantive study area.

A key factor which the researcher needs to understand is that there is nothing with which to start. By open coding, the researcher experiences stimulation of his or her conceptual ideas. The researcher is able to follow where the data lead, never leading the data, so he or she never becomes too focussed upon one or another particular issue. As Glaser (1978) remarks there are no problems, there is only data. As new categories emerge and begin to blend, the flow of empirical, disjointed data begins to fuse into a core code presaging the emergent theory. Based upon whatever form the data arrive in, the researcher examines them as they are. This examination may be of the whole document, individual sentences and paragraphs or even individual words and phrases (Glaser, 1992).

Because the researcher has no preconceptions, it is up to the data to reveal what the researcher is studying. This strategy enables the researcher to seek the codes that reflect the underlying, latent patterns and issues (Holton, 2007). This close inspection of the data further enables the researcher to code the data in every possible way, which allows an interrogation of the data, posing important questions including What is actually happening in the data?, What is the main concern being faced by the participants?, What are these data a study of? What category does this incident indicate? And most importantly, what accounts for the continuing resolving of the concern? (Glaser, 1998, p.140).

Disjuncture is an important aspect of coding. People tend to be more or less linear, logical and sequential in their responses; yet this logicity actually conceals whatever is underlying. By fracturing the responses, for example, taking field notes and only looking at few word groupings, or even single words non-contextually, (*explication de texte* – means *close reading* in English). The

researcher begins to *understand* what is really happening, and is able to conceptualise what is going on without, in any way, needing to resort to detailed description. The researcher memos his or her thoughts as the data freely emerge, until gradually they begin to come together. The researcher begins to perceive the latent patterns, the shadows, barely discernible behind the curtain of verbiage, sentiment and opinion (Glaser, 1998).

The researcher needs, while distancing him or herself from the data, to possess the sensitivity which allows him or her to perceive intuitively the emergent latent patterns, and to abstractly conceptualise the ideas which they produce. There is no room for opinion or preconception; only the data matter. Following are some of the examples of open coding carried out in the early stage of this research (Table 5 and 6).

Open Coding 1/4/2011	
<p>I: What do you think about Fairtrade?</p> <p>R. I am not really aware of what level of effort is being put into Fairtrade by the Fairtrade organizations I mean I don't know..I don't know if it's just charities or what I guess Oxfam must be supporting Fairtrade.</p> <p>I think it is a good thing I don't what other organizations but can go to the high street you can get a coffee and its Fairtrade coffee I think that is fantastic and I think they sell so much coffee I think it's probably v good practice to have ethical values and that they are willing to embrace Fairtrade not just support it but embrace it that is with the provided it is actually what it appears to say</p>	<p>Not knowing, Lack of awareness and lack of understanding</p> <p>Linking Fairtrade with charities</p> <p>Conditionally supporting,</p> <p>Doubting</p>

Table 5: Example of Open Coding, Excerpt From a Transcript

As memo writing proceeds, there comes a point, because of the mass of data collected and the shades of meaning implicit among them, when much of the data orients to distinct points, so that they achieve a homogeneity, which results in a coded category. While coding field notes, the researcher will begin to see that many incidents, although adjectivally different, are, in essence, the same or very similar, and they could be grouped together towards the evolution of a category, so they then reduce in number.

Open Coding 1/4/2011	
<p>Interviewer: Have you ever thought about the efforts of first world countries to improve the conditions of producers and farmers in third world countries?</p> <p>Respondent : Yes I have thought about it, I think that they are starting to think about it and I don't know how much effort is really being made, I think over the last let's say 10 years it has increased in like sort of more Fairtrade goods but I think that is becoming kind of fashionable which is great that's really cool, let's be fashionable let's be cool and make sure that people can eat okay hmmm yeah so I think overall I think there could be more, more could be done to trying to inform people where the food comes from and people kind of get information.</p>	<p><i>Increasing Awareness</i></p> <p><i>Not Knowing</i></p> <p><i>Increasing Availability</i></p> <p><i>Becoming Fashionable</i></p> <p><i>Increasing Awareness</i></p>

Table 6: Example of Open Coding, Excerpt From a Transcript

A memo of this coded excerpt is provided in the next section to illustrate ways in which memos could be written in grounded theory (Glaser1978, 1998).

### 2.7.3. Memoing

An essential part of the coding process is the writing of memos, which are notes reflecting the data and the conceptual links between categories. This process is continuous and runs in a cyclical coexistence with constant comparison, since it is the data in the memos which are initially subject to constant comparison, thus enabling the researcher to capture his or her formative ideas as they form. The memos also serve as pointers towards further data collection, coding and analysis, and allow the researcher the conceptual freedom to annotate concepts ideas and theories as they occur. Memos are not written as detailed descriptions; however, researchers can raise the data from a descriptive level to theory conceptualisation. While memos may start as brief notes during the early stages of the process, they increase in size as they begin to group ideas together, and later these extended memos also integrate, raising conceptualisation even further. (Glaser, 1978).

In this research study, the memos were written in the form of concepts. More specifically, initial memos were started with a proposition about a relationship between two codes, not necessarily as concrete concepts, rather as ideas which were followed up later. This was followed by identifying more relevant questions and obtaining information needed for theoretical sampling. The following are examples of memos exhibiting the development of the concepts of "increasing awareness" and "quality/value" (Table 7 and 8)



**Memo88 08/08/11 Increasing Awareness**

There has been INCREASING AWARENESS of Fairtrade products, attributed to Fairtrade BECOMING FASHIONABLE. Why is it becoming fashionable? What is cool about Fairtrade? Participant 1 says more could be done to give people more awareness of Fairtrade – how is awareness increased?

Table 7: Sample Memo: Increasing Awareness

**MEMO74 05/09/2011 Quality/ Value**

T2: FT tea described as “*low in taste*”.  
Is F such a broad spectrum that some produce is really poor quality?  
What quality standards are applied?  
T3: if FT attracts a premium that should be for quality as well as for purpose. Sainsbury’s , FT tea is of poor quality - ‘*dust*’  
  
Quality is found to be e subjective phenomenon, and therefore so is value. An object is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it, and while peer pressure can influence a consumer, other factors can do so also. An object such as an FT product can possess an apparently enhanced value by dint of an emotional image perceived by the customer.

Table 8: Sample Memo: Quality/Value

**2.7.4. Interchangeability of Indicators**

As constant comparison continues and saturation of emerging codes occurs, resulting in the interchangeability of indicators, a core category begins to emerge, and the researcher allows this to lead and integrate theory, so that it becomes saturated and dense. An example of the interchangeability of indicators for the emergent behaviour type of Cynicism is depicted in the following Table 9.

**Methods Memo21 10/12/2012 Cynical Behaviour**

T2<sup>9</sup>: “*..because I don’t have any trust or confidence in it there is hardly any belief in it, my values aren’t so strong, I am cynical I don’t have a strong belief in it, my beliefs are affecting my values and my attitude, I have to think twice before I would consider buying a Fairtrade product.*”  
T5: “*My beliefs about buying Fairtrade products apparently are not strong enough to affect my purchase decision.*”  
T17): “*..because I don’t have any trust or confidence in it there is hardly any belief in it, my values aren’t so strong, I am cynical I don’t have a strong belief in it, my beliefs are affecting my values and my attitude, I have to think twice before I would consider buying a Fairtrade product*”  
“*only 10% goes to the farmers.....*”  
Consumer cynicism is adequately illustrated by responses:  
T14: “*..but buying Fairtrade product does not necessarily mean you get the best deal for the consumer and whether that extra one pound does go to the third world farmers*”  
T43: “*I kind of doubt fair trade as a propaganda, you see a happy orange farmer on the packaging whereas he might be living in a miserable condition, you never know, just that his face is on the orange juice*”  
T9: “*...and what if 2 years down the line we come to know that it’s all crap and the money that we’re giving to them is going into the pockets of people it shouldn’t be going to...*”

Table 9: Example Methods Memo for Interchangeability of Indicators

<sup>9</sup> Letter "T" represents the transcript followed by the corresponding transcript numbers.

The interchangeability of indicators can be explained as a situation where there is no noticeable difference existing between them, hence they become mutually interchangeable and related to the same concept. This also serves to delimit the number of indicators, strengthening what is important and reinforcing the emergent theory.

### ***2.7.5. Delimiting by Selective Coding***

Once a potential core category has been identified, the researcher can begin selective coding and ignore extraneous data. Further, as the data begin to fuse conceptually, the research sharpens its focus, and similar data are grouped into relevant categories (Glaser, 1978). Selective coding allows the researcher to focus and direct the research more closely as more categories become saturated. Selective coding is not concerned with description, but instead seeks to focus and delimit data collection systematically as part of theoretical development. The researcher is then enabled to avoid pointless repetitions of similar data, and to thereby target questioning and research towards supporting the emergent theory. This procedure then allows categories and their properties to become saturated and causes a reduction in the number of categories as the emergent theory approaches theoretical completeness (Glaser, 1998). This approach assures relevance, by progressively and systematically tailoring data collection to serve the emergent theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Although this coding approach does not, initially, follow a predetermined path, once the data collection and analysis begin, links and relevancies will begin to emerge, and the process of “site spreading” becomes determined by the emerging theory (Glaser, 2001). Glaser (1978, p.45) acknowledges that starting with a site that the researcher believes will “maximise the possibilities of obtaining data and leads for more data on their question” will help the researcher do so. There is a quite strange problem which the researcher sometimes encounters, which is knowing when to stop. When are the collected data enough? According to Glaser (1978, p. 71), this is “the point of theoretical saturation”, and it occurs when no new properties or dimensions emerge. This process, which Glaser (2001, p.191) refers to as intense property development, enables the theory to be integrated as an abstract conceptual theory.

An example of an excerpt from an interview conducted with a respondent exhibiting Sceptical behaviour towards Fairtrade, with focussed questions as guided by theoretical emergence is presented in Table 10.

<b>Selective Coding 1/5/2012: Sceptical Behaviour</b>	
<p>I: You said that you are sceptical or cynical about fair trade: tell me why.</p> <p>R: Well my first encounter with Fairtrade was some years ago, when I noticed Oxfam was selling some coffee which was marked with a logo, a label, which actually said fair trade or fairly traded coffee. I asked someone what it was about and they said they were supporting reinvesting in farmers, in farms to enable them to do better, to increase their crops and stuff like that.</p> <p>It sounded like a good idea except for one thing and that one thing is that I would not trust Oxfam as far as could throw them. Oxfam had already put three friends of mine out of business because they were getting books given to them by the public and were undercutting the second hand book shops, three of which happened to be in the Albany Road, City Road area. They paid no rent on the premises there, they didn't pay their employees and in fact they were undermining the structure for the neighbourhood, and all the other charity shops tried to do the same thing, but Oxfam were the worst at the time, and I also was aware that Oxfam took something like ninety percent of the money they were given to pay for expenses and salaries of the management and direction of the organisation, which I felt was criminal.</p>	<p>Suspicion</p> <p>Mistrusting</p>

Table 10: Example of Selective Coding Memo

Furthermore, an example of an excerpt from an interview conducted with a respondent exhibiting Cynical behaviour towards Fairtrade, is presented in Table 11.

<b>Selective Coding 11/4/2012: Cynical Behaviour</b>	
<p>I: Could you please explain why you feel pessimistic about Fairtrade?</p> <p>R: I think Fairtrade is a good idea, ummm I don't think it necessarily works as well in practice as in theory. I do think that most societies tend to prioritise themselves over the others so the idea would be to go out and make a buck does tend to pervade, ummm I think this has been borne out by what happened with the north American free trade agreement which was in early 80s or 90s the idea behind it was to make trade easier between Canada states and Mexico but of course what ended up happening was everybody outsourced to Mexico because cheaper and the human right laws are not as strong u don't have the union involved so that it seems to be closer to how free trade tends to work in practice rather than the theory which is great but practically it just doesn't work as well unfortunately.</p>	<p>Cynical</p>

Table 11: Example of Selective Coding Memo

A memo written up after selective coding for Cynical Behaviour type, as depicted in the above excerpt from a transcript is exhibited in the following example (Table 12).

### Selective Coding Memo 3/8/2012: Cynical Behaviour

Taking the first interview, i.e. that interview which is numbered 1, and working through on a paragraph basis, one finds that the respondent considers that Fair Trade is a good idea which does not work as well in theory as in practice. People put themselves first, and **SELF INTEREST** dominates human relations. An example is provided in the form of NAFTA, a free trade organisation predicated upon removing barriers to trade between the contiguous USA, Canada and Mexico, which unfortunately resulted in businesses **CYNICALLY** outsourcing to Mexico because labour is much cheaper, and there is no worker protection. From this, it is perceived that **OPPORTUNISM** is a dominating factor: Fair Trade is considered to be similar.

Subsequently the respondent discusses media disclosed scandals over Company claims regarding Fair Trade, for example, the ways in which percentages of price paid to farmers are misquoted, and the intervention of organised crime, and, indeed, of local government as well in the manipulation of Fair Trade. This generates a high level of suspicion in the respondent with regard to Fair Trade, who considers that inadequate controls leave Fair Trade vulnerable to corruption. A need for **TRANSPARENCY** in the supply chain is evoked.

While being clearly aware of various initiatives in the introduction of Fair Trade to a wider audience, such as the Universities, the respondent remains **SCEPTICAL**, considering such gestures to be Public Relations moves rather than to be motivated by an eleemosynary impulse.

Furthermore, the respondent feels that it will take a very considerable length of time for Fair Trade to be accepted as the normal way of trading. This results in expressions of **CYNICISM**, reflecting upon there probably being a need for coercion to encourage the public and the respondent to buy Fair Trade goods.

Again, in the phrase, 'there will always be someone doing unfair practices' the respondent expresses **CYNICISM** and the need for increased **TRANSPARENCY** to make Fair Trade more fair in practice.

This respondent is **DISENCHANTED** with how Fair Trade products are sold, partly because of price considerations – the feeling that Fair Trade will always cost more than the mainstream products, and also by the sense that Fair Trade will always be regarded as a premium product, thus putting it out of the financial reach of the general public. Frequent expressions linked to **AFFORDABILITY** litter the fifth paragraph, and this is regarded as being the principal limiting factor in Fair Trade acceptance. The quotation "we can't afford to shop in a store which has a philosophy" sums up the respondent's attitude to ethical consumption, although if prices of ethical goods and non-ethical goods were equal, the ethical option would be the one selected 'in case it actually did some good'.

In making suggestions which might improve the penetration and acceptance of Fair Trade, the respondent stresses clearly and frequently the need for honesty, **TRANSPARENCY** and explanation, suggesting that by so doing, this will be an enabling action for people who are wary of paying premium prices. If they can be sure that the operation is honest, then, theoretically, they will be willing to pay a small premium if it clearly goes directly to help the claimed recipient.

This respondent freely admits to being very **CYNICAL** about the whole process, having been "burned" before, but nonetheless, if Fair Trade was clearly open and above board, then it would be embraced more.

The respondent uses charity shops, hoping that it may be of some help, but principally because they are cheaper, indicating some **DISLOCATION** from the intrinsic purposes and objectives of eleemosynary organisations and from equitable trading concerns, and expresses the wish that it would be possible to speak to the original producer of goods sold as Fair Trade to confirm both the provenance of said goods, and price paid to the 'farmer'.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the principal motivating factors for this respondent are:

Cynicism on the part of the respondent

Cynicism on the part of fair trading organisations

Lack of transparency in the dealings with these organisations

Lack of involvement in the concept

Scepticism about any claims put forward by Fair Trade organisations

The opportunism of the supply chain

Affordability of the goods

Disenchantment with the process

A personal dislocation from the general purpose of such organisations.

Table 12: Example of Selective Coding Memo

### ***2.7.6. Sorting and Theoretical Coding***

Theoretical codes conceptualise how substantive codes relate to one another. They take the previously fragmented data and join them to form concepts from which theory is derived, and

which provide the framework for theory generation. They emerge during the coding process, memoing and, in particular, during sorting (discussed in the next section). They are grounded in the substantive codes, and it is this interaction that turns the coding process into “an analytical inductive research methodology” (Glaser, 1998, p.164).

#### **2.7.6.1. Sorting**

The key to the theory development lies in the manual sorting of the memos, which is a creative exercise whereby the memos and data are sorted into interrelated piles, and it is from this sorting that the initial strands of theory emerge. To quote Glaser (1998, p. 187), it “is the culmination of months of conceptual build up”, as the memos are sorted into a theoretical outline prior to the writing up stage. Data and ideas are conceptually sorted as the process moves towards completion of the theory building exercise. During this process, the literature is also integrated into the theory, being sorted in the same way as the memos. This process enables the researcher to determine how each new concept fits with the theory, how it is relevant and how it will help the theory to be written up (Holton, 2007). For the purposes of this current study, the key sorting method employed was to colour code transparent plastic envelopes to keep memos consisting of different concepts as they arose.

#### **2.7.6.2. Theoretical Codes**

Theoretical codes can belong to different coding families. Since this study describes a basic social process (BSP), and contains stages, progressions and transitions, (Glaser 1978), it falls into the **process family**. Reconciling demands of conscience describes the process by which the respondents reconcile their demands of conscience, and consists of four stages: Comfort zoning, Evaluating, Acting and Reflecting, with an experiential feedback loop going from Reflecting into Comfort zoning. The emergent theory also describes the strategies employed by the consumers as coping mechanisms, in particular in the Reflecting stage of the purchasing process, thus it also forms a part of the **strategy family**. These concepts are discussed in more detail in the next two chapters.

### **2.8. Credibility of Grounded Theory Research**

In Glaserian grounded theory the credibility of grounded theory is predicated on four key criteria of fit, relevance, work and modifiability (Glaser, 1998). As a result, if the concepts which emerge are found to represent the pattern being studied, then they have fit, whereas if the emergent concepts explain the main concern of the participants and how they process this (what is going on in the substantive area), and are both relevant to, and fit with the core category, they are said to have relevance.

The emphasis on verification of theory unfortunately discredits the emergence of theory through quantitative or qualitative research. Unlike quantitative and qualitative research methods which are expected to provide verification or risk being labelled “unsophisticated, unsystematic or exploratory and their results sidelined as unsupported”, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 223), grounded theory provides neither the means nor the need for being continually tested while it is being employed; rather, because it remains grounded in the data and allows theory to emerge from there, its legitimacy is in its results (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Certainly, in choosing to employ grounded theory as a research tool, one needs to be aware of the suitability and appropriateness of the tool to the task. If this is demonstrable, then the legitimacy, in part, springs from that. The researcher should also consider that the method should be relevant to the subject area of research, should work, and should be modifiable as a function of incoming data, which could impart the need for reorientation or reassessment. If new data arise which seem to contradict part of the theory then, because the theory is modifiable, it mutates to allow for the new input (Glaser, 1978). To quote Glaser (1998, p.17), “In the final analysis, the criteria that grounded theory “works, is fit and is relevant” and resolves its legitimacy”. The theorist needs to avoid preconception and allow the concepts themselves to emerge from the constant comparison of the data. Methodological thoroughness is essential and the ability of the analyst to tease out the important aspects is a major contributing factor in the provision of a rigorous theory, uninfluenced by any external impositions from quantitative or qualitative origin (Holton, 2008). Hence grounded theory is a methodology in its own right and owes no allegiance to other methodologies although it can incorporate their data (Holton, 2008). The criteria applicable to this study are fit, workability, relevance and modifiability (Glaser, 1978).

These criteria are summarised in Table 13. Chapter 4 will evaluate the emergent theory against the Glaserian evaluation criteria of fit, modifiability, workability and relevance.

	<b>Definition</b>
Fit	Correspondence of the categories and their relationships to the substantive area of research.
Modifiability	Modifiability of the theory accounts for any additional information by comparing findings across people, places and time.
Workability	Workability refers to the practical implications of the emergent theory.
Relevance	Relevance measures the weight of the theory’s contribution as a new or alternative explanation.

Table 13: Evaluation Criteria in Grounded Theory (Source: Glaser 1992)

### **2.8.1. Fit**

‘Fit’ is a term which grounded theorists, in particular Glaser, use to describe the nature of the emergent theory (Glaser, 1978). The theory needs to fit the substantive area of research, that is,

capture what is going on in the area of research. Whereas, in other methods, the data are reshaped and forced to fit extant categories, which are then forced to fit the theory, in grounded theory, the theory cannot help but fit, since the theory is emergent, and grounded fully in the data. There is no need in grounded theory to discard data which does not fit or is felt not to be relevant, since all data feed into the emergence of the theory, with the result that all data are relevant to theory. Since all data are relevant, all data are included, new categories emerging to allow for the interrelationships that emerge. As the theory emerges, category and data may need to be refitted to the constantly changing nature of the theory, but it is this process which gives the theory its immediacy and flexibility (Glaser, 1978).

The analyst's job is to ensure, in the creation of categories and properties that they fit for integrating into theory, and are also relevant and work. Fit, therefore may also be described as validity, as it describes a particular pattern emerging from the data. Fit will also change and modify during the process of constant comparison, thereby improving its validity, which ultimately rests grounded in the data which it reflects. It is this aspect of grounded theory that means the theory can be applied to new data from another field, without the need of recreating a theory. The new data simply modify the existing categories – not the other way around (Glaser, 1998, p.18).

### ***2.8.2. Workability***

Workability in grounded theory refers to the interpretation and prediction of behaviour in the research area (Holton, 2008). It offers a deeper insight into the underlying processes and latent behavioural patterns of the respondents in the substantive area. It enables the researcher to, metaphorically, *get under the skin* of the respondent, thereby understanding the motivations and emotions driving their behaviour. It also includes the probability of predicting future behaviour. If the theory, being conceptual, is workable then data collected from another context should also produce predictable results (Glaser, 1978).

### ***2.8.3. Relevance***

Relevance means the theory will represent the reality of the core concern of participants which has emerged in the substantive area, and will describe the problem and how it is being processed (Glaser, 1998), hence it will always have relevance. It means that the concepts should explain and reflect the concerns of participants and how these concerns are being continually resolved (Holton, 2008). This process begins with open coding in the substantive area, advancing to theoretical coding as the theory starts to emerge. This assembling of the fractured data and working towards a cohesive whole, and the resulting conceptualisation and abstraction of the

consumer's main concern and the core category - the ways participants resolve their main concern, exhibits the relevance of the theory (Glaser, 1998).

#### ***2.8.4. Modifiability***

Modifiability discusses those aspects of theory which allow it to be applied in areas not included in the substantive research area. A grounded theory is infinitely modifiable as a function of the provision of new data, and is a completely dependent variable for this reason. However, grounded theory is neither right nor wrong. If it emerges from rigorous adherence to the grounded theory method, it will be a rich conceptual theory which exhibits fit, relevance, workability and modifiability (Thulesius, 2003).

#### ***2.9. Ethical Considerations***

As socio-economic research has become increasingly important, with the concomitant increase in human interaction, ethical issues have become more relevant. When employing qualitative research, the sample groups tend to be small; there is a risk of participant identification or other ethical violations. Since it is possible that the research touches on sensitive or personal matters, it is important that the participants retain anonymity.

These considerations are not so important in grounded theory, since the respondent is automatically disconnected from the data, by the process of fracturing the data before they can be worked with. The data are conceptualised, abstract of person, time and place, making any link with the participants untraceable (van den Hoonaard, 2002). Nonetheless, the techniques performed to obtain the data employed in this research were done in complete compliance with Cardiff University's rules on ethical considerations, including the preservation of anonymity of participants and their right to withdraw at any time (Appendix 5). An appropriate ethical form was submitted to the Cardiff Business School Ethics Committee and duly approved (Appendix 6).

When respondents were invited to participate in this study, they were briefed about the purpose of the research, the methods of deriving data (interviews and observations), what the research hoped to achieve and the contact details of the researcher and the supervisory team involved in the research. All respondents read and signed the consent form accepting that they were participating in this study, the details of which were stated on the form. Those who were interviewed by telephone or by email also accepted the conditions of ethical consideration. Furthermore, all participants were informed that they were free to withdraw, without giving reasons, at any time during the collaboration.



Anonymity of the participants is preserved by the separation of the data from the respondent, as well as by the anonymisation of the interview transcripts, none of which bear any identification of the participants. Numbers are used instead to refer to the transcripts where necessary in the thesis, for example, T21.

## **2.10. The Research Process: A Critical Reflection**

The purpose of this chapter was to present an overview of the methodology of classic (Glaserian) grounded theory, however this section is intended to serve as evidence of the experiential nature of grounded theory by documenting the research process of learning-by-doing. It also presents a personal reflection of the process of developing the concepts which allowed the indicators empirically vested in the data to be conceptualised into the burgeonings of theory

It also serves as a personal reflection of the research journey of the researcher - the doubts, the fears, the confusion and the frustration – and the sheer joy when the sunlight of understanding broke through the tenebrous clouds of confusion and obfuscation, and revealed the gem-like quality of a classical grounded theory coming to fruition.

At the beginning, I needed to understand how to begin: I was feeling around in the dark and I needed a point of departure. Most papers written begin with basic assumptions which are seldom if ever validated or challenged, yet for this study to proceed it was vital to understand what and where ground zero was and if this was to be a valid assumption of origin, I understood that it could not come from my opinions but needed to emerge from the mouths of the consumers who, instead of being a muffled bell, needed to be able to substantiate who they were and what drove them to behave in differing ways, since this was a study of their behaviour.

To achieve any results, I had needed people to talk to. I advertised (see Appendix 4) for interviewees in cafes, shops, heritage centres, museums, arts centres, the students' union and the university so as to obtain an eclectic mix and avoid basing anything on a survey of unworldly students as my only sample, (despite such a sample having validity contextually).

Did I mention that doing Grounded Theory is fun? Oh it has its patches of confusion (90% of the time), desperation (95% of the time), and thoughts of jumping under a bridge (now and then) – but overall it is fun, particularly when you find that the mists clear and you can begin to see some shape emerging. Confusion pervades the study, but is often wiped away by some eureka moments, such as when it suddenly dawned on me what was actually happening.

Grounded theory demands that I work with an open mind about the phenomenon under research since preconceptions would lead to me formulating questions which had an expected

response. Land lies all around you, but you don't know a) which bit you want to get to, and more importantly, b) how on earth are you going to get there. However, grounded theory provides a sail: it is to let the theory emerge from the data, which then provides the rudder as it guides emergence, so I wrote notes along the journey, which at the time seemed to me to be important. These notes or memos, to a limited extent, provided a record and a trail indicating not only how I progressed but also my own evolution along the journey. Upon reflection, they also showed me how the main concern of the respondents emerged and how theory evolved along the journey.

This section, then, is a practical description of the manner in which the grounded theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience emerged, and is a warts and all reflection on the processes which take place when following a grounded theory methodology as described in this chapter. Therefore, the importance of this section is not only providing evidence of the empirical grounding of the study, but also in providing an insight into how my learning process developed as I developed into an independent researcher and a conceptual thinker.

Inasmuch as the research process and theory development are concerned, the following sections demonstrate the ways in which conceptual theory is abstracted from the empirical indicators which emerge from the data. The ideas of constant comparison are discussed, throughout, and the stages of coding – open, selective and theoretical and sorting, saturation and writing-up of the theory are presented. By way of demonstration, examples of theoretical memos are interspersed throughout this section, illustrating the research process and signifying the importance of evolving theoretical ideas.

### **2.10.1. Getting Conceptual**

Glaser describes grounded theory as being a delayed action phenomenon, as each incremental piece of data progresses the work toward theoretical understanding. Grounded theory needs to transcend description in order that it can explain the latent patterns of behaviour in the substantive area (Holton 2009). The process of conceptualisation is controlled by a rigorous and systematic adherence to the grounded theory method, rather than being ad hoc, or based on a general impression (Glaser 1998). Throughout my research journey, I made notes and wrote memoranda whenever inspiration struck me. I recall being busy doing something else, when realisation would dawn and I would hurriedly start scribbling notes as ideas began fusing together and clarity would emerge out of chaos and confusion. Glaser (1998) remarks that the best way of learning how to do grounded theory is by doing it whilst adhering strictly to and understanding the methodology. It took me around five months and two troubleshooting workshops to get to the conceptual level required by grounded theory, as explained in this section.

Initially, I wrote memos which were descriptive (see illustration 1), saying that, for example, consumer X thought that such and such was true or important or trivial - which told me precisely nothing about what was going on. At that point I had almost no idea about the difference between being conceptual and being descriptive. I was describing what the respondents thought they thought, but was nowhere near understanding what their behaviours were.

MEMO 02/09/2011	AVAILABILITY
<p>Respondent says that there has been increase in the availability of FT products due to the supermarkets selling FT products.  <i>"...comes in tea, coffee, chocolate and bananas" (T2)</i></p>	
<p>The respondent also expresses that there is a need for more products on the shelves  <i>"...wanna be pressing more of the brands..."(T2)</i></p>	
<p>Another respondent suggests that supermarkets should stock more FT, is pleased with the availability of FT coffee (T3).            However, another respondent is not sure if there is enough range of Fairtrade products in the market and questions:  <i>Are there any FT baked beans? (T4)</i></p>	
<p>Therefore, I ask:            How can FT market penetration and hence availability of goods be improved?            What can be done to persuade major outlets stock a greater variety of specifically FT produce?</p>	

Illustration 1: Example of a Descriptive Memo

At this point, I was struggling quite a lot - regarding the conceptualisation of the data - uncertain where to go next, and uncertain if what I was doing was right so I decided that I needed a lot of professional guidance from Grounded theorists. I decided to contact one of the grounded theory experts and asked for guidance. Fortunately, at the same time there was a trouble-shooting workshop in Malmo Sweden, for novice grounded theorists, and I enrolled onto the workshop. I took copies of my interview transcripts and memos, and asked for help. Courtesy of Hans Thulesius and Judith Holton, I discovered that all my memos were descriptive, not conceptual, so, disappointingly, had to be done again. They provided me with vital help and advice on 'getting conceptual' as they called it. They recommended Glaser's books on *Theoretical Sampling*, getting conceptual and *Doing Grounded Theory*, and these books have been my standby ever since. Although I did understand their point, but at such an early stage, when I had only just started coding the transcripts, (see illustration 2) and writing memos (see illustration 1) it was very difficult for me to 'get conceptual' instantly. However, the trouble shooting workshop in Malmo was one of the best four days of my Ph.D research journey, because everyone was encouraging and helpful towards each other.

<p>A: As we talk about Fairtrade what do you think about it?</p> <p>R: In general I think Fairtrade is a good idea, I dont think it necessarily works as well in practice as in theory. I do think that most societies tend to prioritize themselves over the others so the idea would be to go out and make a buck does tend to prevail. I think this has been born out by what happened with the north America free trade agreement which was in early 80s or 90s the idea behind it was to make trade easier between Canada states and Mexico but of course what ended up happening was everybody outsourced to Mexico because cheaper and the human right laws are not as strong you dont have the union involved so that seems to be closer to how free trade tends to work in practice rather than the theory which is great but practically it just doesn't work as well unfortunately.</p>	<p>Good, overall approval of the concept of Fairtrade, but some reservations. An implied 'but..'</p> <p>Conflict in Practice v. theory of the concept of Fairtrade.</p> <p>Assumes that Fairtrade and free trade are analogous facilitating trade for trade's sake</p> <p>cost : exploitation</p> <p>Exploitation, practice versus theory.</p> <p>Self-interest comes first.</p>
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Illustration 2: Example of early descriptive attempts at coding

After returning home from Malmo, I went back to the transcripts and memos, and tried to be less descriptive. I started to compare transcripts, as well as incidents within each transcript, in an effort to develop conceptual categories. Constant comparison of incident to incident, category to category, and categories to incidents is crucial to deriving categories and their properties through all the stages of coding in grounded theory (Holton 2009). This constant comparison raises the conceptual level of the theory whilst maintaining continuing fit with the data from which it was abstracted (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser talks about *explication de texte* (Glaser, 1998), which in English is called close reading. This means that rather than simply reading a phrase, it needs to be analysed to find out what the proponent is actually saying. I began, again, returning to the transcripts which, of course, were the source of all my data and I began reading and coding them again.

Open coding of eight interviews produced thirty three codes which were reduced as conceptualisation increased, and when I realised that much of my coding was simply descriptive. Holton (2007) suggests that initial attempts do tend to be descriptive but that this is eliminated by the theorist asking the question 'what concept does this incident indicate?' which raises the conceptual level.

One way in which I did this was by truncating sentences by narrowing margins on the transcripts so that each line consisted of, say three or four words, and a corresponding label, rather than a full description of the responses. This decontextualises the incidents in the transcripts to the extent that a single word springs out which is a signifier of how the consumer is thinking. I highlighted the incidents (in the transcripts) of what respondents are doing (see illustration 3)

<p>R: oh, okay well I would say that I don't always automatically buy Fairtrade because it depend on how flush I am feeling that week, if I am feeling that I have got the money and I have a feeling that I am</p>	<p>Occasional purchase</p> <p>Affordability</p>
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<p>well disposed then I will buy Fairtrade and usually it depends on...I usually shop at Lidl and it comes in tea coffee chocolate or bananas I buy a lot of bananas I get Fairtrade bananas have to say... I mean we ..my Church has a Fairtrade policy,</p> <p>A: ok where?</p> <p>R: Highfield Church. They buy Fairtrade coffee n tea but where I actually work and I work for the Church we found that when we served this tea to the old people it's not strong enough for them and it doesn't have enough flavour so we don't use it for them. On a personal level I think it is really, really important that it's given more publicity and it's pushed a lot more because I hate the idea of the big corporations and the big companies shoving the little man out not paying the little man what is due we need to show compassion on a world wide scale</p>	<p>Disposition Awareness of products</p> <p>Charitable involvement</p> <p>Taste, quality</p> <p>Positive- important Information</p> <p>Morality</p>
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Illustration 3: Example of the Attempts at Conceptual Coding

Time passed: the work was tedious and repetitious. Following the tenets of grounded theory, I began conducting more interviews, as a way of theoretical sampling and these seemed to elicit increasingly relevant information. I produced more coding and more memos and increased my level of conceptual memos, avoiding description better than previously, but knowing that I was still being descriptive and had not reached the conceptual level I needed. Interview transcripts were read and re-read, incidents were compared and re-compared and each time I asked myself the following questions:

- What concept does this incident indicate?
- What property of what category does this incident indicate?
- What is the participant's main concern and how is this being resolved?

The mass of memos built up, and the more there were, the more uncertain and confused I was becoming.

Retrospectively examining the mass of detail which I was trying to handle, I remember that I tried using qualitative softwares such as MAXQDA and NVivo, but found that they were only good for arranging material in some sort of order, and distanced me from the incidents, concepts, categories and codes, as well as from the data. I found this to be very frustrating, since no amount of dragging and dropping did anything other than provide me with descriptive lists which completely separated me from the data and prevented constant comparison.

I felt that I had lost all touch and decided to code manually. This experience is not unusual in grounded theory research since it is basically intuitive and inductive, allowing themes to form, and allowing the researcher to become deeply involved with her data. Illustration # 4 shows an

example of coding and linking concepts and codes by hand, on paper. I could never achieve this constant comparison of incident to incident, incident to concepts, concepts to concepts and concepts with core category, by doing it in a computer software such as Nvivo or MAXQDA.

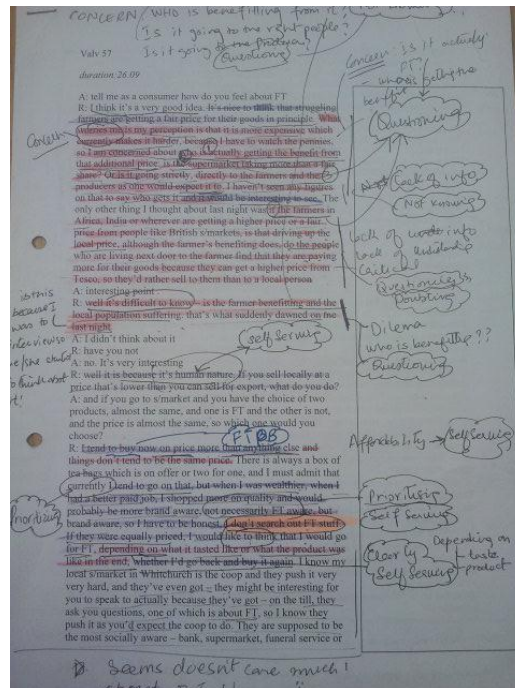


Illustration 4: Hand Coded Transcript

Therefore, I resorted to writing memos on cards and analysing the transcripts on paper.

However I realised that I was still being descriptive, and despite calling these categories or concepts, they weren't yet, and needed to be reconceived so that they could be elevated to a true conceptual level. I understood that the codes were emerging – many codes, which needed collapsing, so I prepared a large diagram which had two aspects to it. On the left side I wrote positive attitudes towards Fairtrade - such as optimism, willing suspension of disbelief, supporting and committed, and on the right, I wrote negative attitudes such as doubting, scepticism, cynicism, questioning etc. These were then given attributes (concepts) which were all focused on the centre where I had an empty space for the core category.

### 2.10.2. Core Category

I was struggling to find my core category which could account for all the variations in the data and had a grab, during this period I had my first Eureka moment. Fortunately I was not in my bath at the time so did not emerge, *sans towel*, into the street. The Eureka moment was that I suddenly realised that what the consumers were doing was trying to reconcile their doubts and

their uncertainties. I was very excited and called up my friends and my grounded theory mentors to share my core concept and get further guidance. I remember when I explained ‘Reconciling’ as my core to Odis Simmons and Judith Holton, they agreed with me and we discussed further theoretical sampling for the core category.

Meanwhile, there was another troubleshooting conference coming up in February 2012 at Wrexham. This workshop was just before the Fairtrade International Symposium in Liverpool in April 2012, where I was to present a paper. I applied for the Wrexham troubleshooting seminar, was accepted and received considerable help, particularly from Andy Lowe, a member of the Grounded Theory Institute, and this became my turning point. By then I had analysed around 20 transcripts and I realised that my main category could be that of Reconciling Conflicts. I had taken a copy of a summary on Reconciling Conflict (see illustration 5) to the conference and presented it. I was told – again – that I was being too descriptive, that I was not conceptual, that I was not conceptualising the main concern of the respondents. I received detailed feedback from Andy Lowe on my work so far, and I was advised to do some more interviews specifically on Reconciling.

Method Memo Date	<b>Reconciling Conflict: Core Category?</b>
	<p>Consumers of Fairtrade products face a different and additional – though not enhanced - range of choices and pressures to those confronting the decision making processes of mainstream purchasers. Respondents were, not unnaturally, concerned with the AFFORDABILITY of the intended Fairtrade purchase, - which rated highly on the scale of factors influencing the decision making - whilst at the same time being conscious of a possible trade-off in quality - and, in the context of food or drinks, taste. This in turn was tempered by uncertainty as to, for example, the provenance of the product and the veracity or even verifiability of the claims being made concerning ethical aspects of the product’s origins. These considerations created differing stimuli, with some consumers being happy to pay more for the product because they had trust or faith in the concept, perceived that the motivations behind the fair trade movement were sound or justifiable, and optimistically hoped that by investing a small amount of additional money, some - if not all of it, would reach the struggling producer. This, in turn, could make the consumer feel better about him- or herself, thereby REINFORCING the decision to buy Fairtrade products in the future. Some respondents considered that they would feel happier if the process was not so obscure, and that greater transparency in the process would eliminate some of the potential problems which could be generated by a perceived lack of policing and control. They felt the need for reassurance, in part because the product was unknown or unfamiliar – but in part also because of the extravagant claims made about the help which would be given to impoverished producers. Almost all participants believed that fair trade – if it worked – was meritorious and had the power to do good, but some of the participants, to one extent or another, had niggling doubts and queries about one part or another of the <i>process</i>, and this uncertainty produced the CONFLICTS which the consumer experienced when purchase decision making. Within certain respondents, these CONFLICTS would be RECONCILED in a manner which produced an attitude which was negative or hostile towards Fairtrade, whilst in others the resulting attitude would be positive and trusting.</p> <p>However, this does not mean to say that the decision- making process was immutable once particular conflicts had been RECONCILED. In reality, the process is continuous and ongoing in each and every situation wherein a consumer is confronted with choice within the context of Fairtrade. While it may be true to say that a consumer is always confronted with the need to make a decision when effecting a purchase, the conflicts which need RECONCILING are generally price versus taste/quality and habit/inertia versus novelty, to which may be linked the qualities which might coerce a consumer to effect a purchase. In arriving at a purchase decision the consumer consciously or unconsciously assimilates all these influences and subconsciously RECONCILES the CONFLICT in a way which best suits his, or as it were, her personal interests when faced with the choice of fair trade products. In addition to the emotional CONFLICT experienced by the consumer, there are other considerations which have a distinct effect upon the decision to buy the goods, and these are factors which are in the hands of the vendors. Problems such as poor display, inaccessibility, poor range of product, lack of advertising or publicity, and lack of availability detract from the potential of the product to sell, while at the same time, the nature, colour and quality of</p>

the packaging and the way in which it advertises the product have a strong influence. The answer to the question – what is really going on here? – is not straightforward, but rather, are a complex farrago of intertwining, opposing and supporting arguments, attitudes and opinions which can only be reconciled by a deep and rich understanding of the data, and this is achieved by employing classic grounded theory methodologies. This in turn has produced the theory of Reconciling Conflict as a means of studying the phenomenon.

#### Illustration 5: Memo of Summary of Reconciling Conflict

Regarding conceptualisation and theoretical sensitivity, during the trouble shooting seminar we did an exercise with Andy Lowe on how to get conceptual, and suddenly everything changed and became far more conceptual. This was my second Eureka! moment when I finally realised how to do it, how to raise my level from being descriptive to getting conceptual.

However, sometimes, I found the work boring, particularly when I did not seem to be making any progress. Even though I knew that grounded theory did not provide an instant Damascene revelatory solution to the problems, however, I understood that it is only by systematic application of coding and constant comparison that concepts would emerge and saturate, (Glaser 1992, p152). However, tedium never endured and was always followed by moments of excitement as new concepts emerged and I became enthusiastic again.

After receiving feedback from Andy Lowe in Wrexham, I started looking for a core variable as I coded my data, comparing incident to incident and generating many codes, searching for one, perhaps two which would be core – the main concern of the respondents. What could evoke process and change?

I now revisited the transcripts – yes, again, - and began selective coding, delimiting theory by theoretical sampling and linking codes to the core category of Reconciling. By focusing on the core category I was able to elevate the reduced concepts to high level concepts. At the time, I sent emails to Alvita Nathaniel and Odis Simmons both of whom are members in good standing of the Grounded Theory Institute, (GTI), to obtain their opinion of my progress. Their comments were that I had now reached the conceptual level required for the core category. Now different typologies of consumer (see illustration 6) were beginning to emerge, and the ways they addressed and processed their concerns also began to show.

#### **Memo: Email to my grounded theory mentors**

I have encountered a couple of problems while analysing my data, which are leaving me slightly confused, while I am studying the concerns, attitudes and behaviour of consumers towards Fair Trade (FT), different consumers exhibit different concerns and attitudes, and therefore, cannot be classified as a homogeneous group, so at the moment I am working on the typology/classification of consumers into groups based on their attitude and behaviour within the substantive area of FT, I have identified the consumer groups as follows: 1. Indifferent, 2. Cynic, 3. Sceptic, 4. Non-committed and 5. Believer.



Now I am confused regarding the first group: the "Indifferent" consumers, who clearly do not have any concern or interest in FT, however they have heard about FT and are aware of the concept, their response is "I do not care if I buy FT or not and I can't think of any problem regarding fair trade...", I am really confused here, because as per my understanding grounded theory seeks to understand participants' main concern, whereas in this case, with the "indifferent" consumers, they are aware but not bothered about buying or not buying FT, they are not concerned about FT.

Then, on the other hand, with the rest of the groups/classes (cynic, sceptic, non-committed and believer) of consumers, in the substantive area of FT, their main concern also varies accordingly, such as:

1. For the "cynic" the main concern is that: it is the exploitation of the producer and the consumer, by the big companies, their response is "it is a marketing ploy.."
2. For the "sceptic" and the "believer" the main concern is: if the money goes back to the producer? However, the degree of doubt varies among these two groups, "sceptics" being highly doubting, and need solid proof and evidence in order to be convinced to buy FT products. Whereas, the "believer" is willing to suspend his/her disbelief in order to support FT by buying the FT produce.
3. For the "non-committed," who may or may not buy FT, their concerns are mostly predicated upon factors such as: affordability, convenience, quality, brand etc. These people are in some sort of an ethical dilemma, where they want to support FT but due to the above reasons they do not buy FT products, and therefore are termed as the "non-committed."

Now the problem is that, I am finding it difficult to conceptualise the main concern of all my participants. Furthermore, since I am dealing with a very disparate group of consumers (I have a very diverse group of consumers) who are not conjoined by a common interest. It is difficult to find a central thread!

#### Illustration 6: Email to Grounded Theory Mentors

Furthermore, as I began trying to conceptualise the main concern of the respondents it began to emerge from the data, conceptualised as being their Demands of Conscience. So I addressed the cause of the conflicts and the name changed smoothly from Reconciling Conflict into Reconciling Demands of Conscience. I had now identified the main concern for my respondents and was able to show how they were processing this concern.

However, before finalising my core category, I wanted to discuss as to whether or not the respondents were simply palliating any feelings of guilt or discomfort which they experienced, and I discussed this with members of the GTI. From this, it was decided that the consumers were not simply smoothing any guilt away by neutralising it, nor were they simply easing it by some palliative means, but, rather, they were facing it, coming to terms with it and, acknowledging their own failings, Reconciling the discomfort they experienced by ignoring Demands of Conscience. Theoretical sampling and selective coding for the main concern and core category then continued over the ensuing months. These focussed, and selective interviews (theoretical sampling) took place to saturate the core category.

The benefits of having delivered myself into the hands of researchers who were more experienced were paying off. Glaser (1978, p. 34) emphasised the importance of collaborative learning in seminars –‘eventually such collaboration becomes an internal dialogue and the participant is trained to go it alone.’ Learning together at the seminars in the company of other PhD students who were pursuing a grounded theory approach in a variety of different disciplines opened my eyes, and the commentaries and criticisms of their work also reflected the flaws I began to perceive with mine.

Now theory was beginning to emerge, as a Basic Social Psychological Process conceptualised from the data, and with it came structure which allowed conceptualisation of the stages in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, and these stages were Forming, Ambivalence, Acting and Reconciling (Illustration 7).

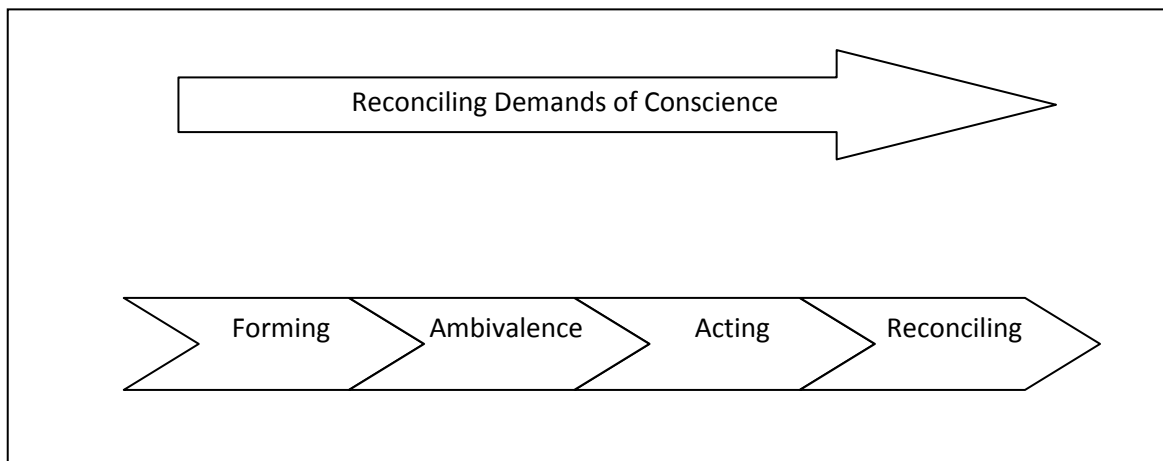


Illustration 7: Initial Diagram of the Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

I elected to call the first stage in the process the consumer’s *Forming* since it describes the way in which he or she is formed mentally. The *Forming* arises from not only past experiences and the influences of such as family, friends, peers, social groups etc., but also experientially from the day to day experiences to which the consumer is exposed, which include experience of a product, exposure to advertising, recommendations, brand trust, labelling and pleas to the consumer’s conscience. These create the consumer’s *Comfort Zone* which consists of attitudes, values, beliefs and intentions as well as the purchase habits which the consumer does not wish to disturb. Anything which causes a disturbance creates dissonance and faces rejection. If it is not rejected, it is treated as an acceptable influence on behaviour which then absorbs it and changes to accommodate it.

The next concept was that of *Ambivalence* which sees the consumer as torn between opposing demands, - perhaps of desire versus duty - and as part of the process which needs reconciling by

decision making. From *Ambivalence* the concept of *Acting* follows, wherein the consumer effects a purchase, and the final stage is conceptualised as *Reconciling* where the consumer comes to terms with his or her decision. Other concepts began to emerge as the work progressed, and I was able to conceptualise behavioural types and the different ways in which they processed the main concern.

Over the next few months, as I continued to theoretically sample and selectively code for my core category, a process began to emerge which I discussed with Odis Simmons via Skype.

However there were times when I was not satisfied with the term Reconciling. But I was encouraged greatly regarding the concept of Reconciling, and my motivation reignited as people with backgrounds in nursing, psychology, education and even accounting could see the applicability of my concepts to their own fields, as I had discussed with Odis Simmons.

I realised that I could also relate to other researchers' concepts and was surprised by the generalisability of abstract concepts from other disciplines and realised that mine would also have this applicability. Following the discussions, I also continued to theoretically sample for Reconciling, both in new data and by returning to earlier data. The following two memos (Illustration 8 and 9) provide examples of the point at which I realised the centrality and fit of "Reconciling" and how it resolves the main concern:

<p>Memo Reconciling links to Demands of Conscience</p>
<p>Reconciling demands of conscience in the context of Fairtrade product purchase is a newly discovered Basic Social Process whereby consumers who are faced with the different appeals of Fairtrade products over mainstream, are able to ameliorate any feelings of discomfort which they may experience from failing to follow a sense of obligation towards to the producers who are at the heart of the Fairtrade movement. It consists of various strategies which, depending on the subjective situation, can be employed to achieve this.</p> <p>How consumers are resolving their main concern? There seem to be several ways in which consumers are resolving their main concern. They either seem to use excuses to blame someone or something else and exonerate themselves that way, or they evoke plausible justifications for their actions. This seems to be an attempt at reconciling cognitive dissonance – doing what they want and not doing what they know they should.</p> <p><b>Behavioural Typologies</b></p> <p>Six behavioural typologies are considered, Apathetic, Cynical to Apathetic, Sceptical to Cynical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed behaviour. These are illustrated below, demonstrating the reconciling processes for each.</p> <p><b>Indifferent</b></p> <p><b>Nature of Behaviour:</b> characterised by indifference, the consumers only buy what appeals to them, are not constrained by any moral or ethical considerations, and are confident and settled in their purchase behaviour. Will buy Fairtrade but for other reasons than it being Fairtrade.</p> <p><b>Reconciling process:</b> none. Reconciling is not needed: the consumers are pre-reconciled by their lack of interest in Fairtrade, its ethos and its purpose.</p>

### *Cynical behaviour*

**Nature of Behaviour:** disillusioned. The consumers have neither faith nor trust in human nature and in particular in big business. Fairtrade is considered to be a deliberate ploy to defraud them of even more money. Will buy if it has a benefit for the consumer.

**Reconciling process:** the consumers are aware that they did not buy Fairtrade out of lack of trust, so they can shift the responsibility onto transnational corporations in general and supermarkets in particular. Companies cannot be trusted and they all are liars. By passing the blame on to profit-driven faceless industry, consumers have reconciled their discomfort by justifying their behaviour.

### *Sceptical Behaviour*

**Nature of Behaviour:** distrust of businesses. Occasional investment in Fairtrade, but only if they see a benefit for themselves.

**Reconciling process:** the consumers feel ambivalence and discomfort at their decisions, and need to settle these feelings. They do this by adopting blaming strategies such as lack of product availability or price, thus justifying their failure and reconciling their discomfort.

### *Questioning but Supporting Behaviour*

**Nature of Behaviour:** irregular shopping patterns, sometimes buying Fairtrade, sometimes not. Believing in the ethos of Fairtrade, but unable to commit to regular consumption.

**Reconciling Process:** compromise: blaming other causes, promising to buy Fairtrade next time, self exoneration because it was not their fault.

### *Supporting but Vacillating Behaviour*

**Nature of Behaviour:** support for 'good causes' generally, sometimes hypocritical. Other 'ethical' products will also be bought, thereby depriving Fairtrade of the sale. Not fully convinced about Fairtrade, so dithers.

**Reconciling Process:** accepting responsibility and being determined to do better next time, meanwhile exonerating self by finding some other cause to blame failure on. Willing to substitute non ethical products if there is no ethical option available.

### *Supporting and Committed Behaviour*

**Nature of the Behaviour:** committed to buying Fairtrade. Will reluctantly substitute other ethically produced products for Fairtrade if there is no Fairtrade product available. Otherwise will either buy elsewhere or go without.

**Reconciling Process:** if there is no choice but to buy a non ethical product, the consumers will ensure that they buy Fairtrade next time, and will be unable to reconcile their discomfort until they do so. They feel angry when they cannot shop ethically.

Illustration 8: Memo for the Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

My core category emerged to have better fit, and certainly had more 'grab'. I continued to selectively code for Reconciling, saturating its properties and related categories, as exhibited in the Memo below:

### Memo Reconciling Property

Easing conscience: Why easing conscience? Is it soothing? Palliating perhaps? Palliating is smoothing over the lumps, but easing suggests coming to terms with what one has done and accommodating it – until the next time. Therefore palliating doesn't encompass what is actually happening. Remember a palliative does nothing: it just creates a false impression and the problems always remain.

Illustration 9: An Initial Memo for Reconciling Strategies

### 2.10.3. Saturation and Sorting

Saturation is a way of saying that while there may be new data appearing, they are not providing any new information. It is a bit tricky for a newcomer to grasp, since theoretically it seems straightforward, but I was uncomfortable with actually recognising it in real life. Indeed, the processes of grounded theory are such that they can *only* be learned by doing them. Hence I had to strive for saturation until I reached the point where I almost instinctively felt that I understood (Illustration 10). While there are many ways in which categories can be related, the theoretical code which best integrates the theory only emerges after selectively coding for the core category and sorting the conceptual memos, and eventually the theory emerges.

In November 2012, I realised that I had reached the full extent of my data and it was time to sort my conceptual memos:

Method Memo 12/10/2012	<b>Sorting</b>
It have a feeling that I have reached a point where additional data is giving me nothing new, I think this is the point of saturation. No point in collecting and analysing more data, this is more than enough....I cannot wait to sort my memos and link the concepts together and see how it all fits together into a core category.	

Illustration 10: Methods Memo

Sorting continued until categories were becoming filled and this was followed by theoretical coding to integrate the emerging concepts to achieve a conceptual level.

At times I cut the memos, each one from the typescript, with a pair of scissors, separating out different indicators. These would then be placed in transparent document folders, each of which had a different coloured label on it to facilitate locating what I needed. Sorting however remained, as did frequent recourse to the transcripts. Sorting is such an important part of this process, that I feel it needs to be discussed here. In sorting, I was never looking for anything specific. I was sorting memos into linked or associated groups and establishing links with other groups. From these grew more memos. Some were simply a short note, others were long schedules of links with other memos. I began with about 150, but by the time I was approaching conceptualising the core category, I had several hundred more. I had begun with 6" x 4" card index boxes and lots of index cards in pink, blue, yellow, green and white. However I found that cards were not very spacious. I did try sellotaping several cards sequentially, but that was not very effective either. Soon I had to resort to typing memos as they became too long to be simply on one card

The advantage of the typed memos lay in my ability to input more information: the disadvantage lay in them not being conducive to being spread out of the floor as I moved memos from one place to the next as links became apparent. So I printed the memos for the purpose of sorting. Colour coding became vital as I gradually began collating the scattered memos into a smaller number of groups. My initial sorting went quickly but achieved not a great deal: my second attempt was much slower as I tried to make sure that I was not forcing links where there were none because of my haste (Glaser 1978). I began to look more carefully for interrelationships between categories and properties, in what I had typed up. For a while, because of interrelationships, duplication became a nightmare, but this thinned out and eased with time.

#### 2.10.4. Sorting and Theoretical Coding

Not infrequently, the same memo would need to be duplicated because it seemed to fit into different slots, but eventually I was able to reduce the number of memos as I integrated them. However, many remained unintegrated and I worried about their relevance and what I had missed. This disappeared as I started writing them up - since as Glaser (1978, p.132) advises, ‘writing can have the consequence of integrating the outline or reintegrating that which has fallen apart.’ It is a good way out of a block of integration.

I began by writing the following summary of my core category, which through sorting and theoretical coding, I had identified as a theoretical code of Basic Social Psychological Process:

Memo: Theoretical Code: Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

The theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the Basic Social Psychological Process (BSPP), which consists of four stages: the stage of Comfort Zoning, the stage of Evaluating, the stage of Acting and the stage of Reflecting. The stage of Comfort Zoning is composed of *Forming* and *General Purchase Pattern*, the Stage of Evaluation, includes *Ambivalence*, *Weighing Up* and *Situational Prioritising*, the Stage of Acting, which includes *Buying*, *Not Buying*, *Going Without* and *Ethical Substituting*, and the Stage of Reflecting, which involves *Reinforcing* and *Reconciling*. The stage of Comfort Zoning describes the desire of the consumer to be somewhere where they feel comfortable, both mentally and physically, and affects their *Forming*. It conceptualises consumers’ purchase behaviour as to be predicated upon a lifetime of formative influences, and consists of the attitudes, values and beliefs which play a part in the consumer’s purchase decision making. The concept of *Forming* also implies that consumers’ attitudes values and beliefs may change as a result of subsequent events or experiences. From this, the consumers may be perceived as constructs deriving from their *Forming* and these constructs create *General Purchase Patterns*. This *Forming* and their *General Purchase Pattern* keep consumers in their Comfort Zone. The *Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning* could be caused because of consumers’ emerging awareness of the concept of Fairtrade and mainstreaming of Fairtrade products through channels like supermarkets, high street cafés and restaurants, as well as the institutional uptake of Fairtrade by Government organisations, universities and schools. This interaction with, and exposure to Fairtrade leads to the consumers feeling *Ambivalent* as they come into potential conflict with their moral arrow which suggests helping the producers in the developing countries get fair wages for their labour, when self-catering may demand that the consumers put themselves first in their purchase decisions So as to alleviate this state of ambivalence and reach a decision, the consumers enter the Stage of Evaluating where they begin *Weighing Up* the attributes of the potential purchase, and by *Situationally Prioritising*, they contrast and select one factor over another as a function of the immediacy and importance of their situation. Substantially, Evaluating which includes price and affordability also

comprises of the moral proposition and the story behind the product.

This having been done, the consumer enters the *Stage of Acting* in which he or she acts upon his or her decision and effects a purchase. From the present study it is found that in the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making process, at this point, the consumer may buy a Fairtrade product and hence invests in the ethos of Fairtrade, or does not buy a Fairtrade product and hence fails to invest in the ethos of Fairtrade. However, consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour were also found to employ *Ethical Substituting*, which entails buying an ethical substitute if a Fairtrade product is unavailable or *Going Without* the product and coming back later to buy an ethical or Fairtrade product. After taking a purchase decision, the consumer then enters the last stage of Reflecting. When consumers, who chose not to buy Fairtrade, felt that by not investing in the ethos, they had denied their moral arrow, - had acted against the Demands of Conscience - they experienced the need to *Reconcile* their decision making, while when they bought the Fairtrade product, they felt the need to *Reinforce* their decision. At the point when consumers felt the need to Reconcile and settle themselves psychologically they employed Reconciling Strategies. These strategies allow them to confirm their decision and therefore either *Reinforce* their choices or *Reconcile* them by deciding to do better next time. As the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is an iterative one, after the stage of Reconciling, the purchase experience reverberates in the form of feedback into the stage of Comfort Zoning, and may affect *Forming*.

#### Illustration 11: Memo for Theoretical Codes

At this point I understood that my theory, rather than depending on one theoretical code could be better integrated by a mix of theoretical codes so I started sorting again, being sensitive to the possible emergence of other theoretical codes, which would enhance my ability to see multiple possibilities of integration (Glaser 1978). I also re-read *Doing Grounded Theory* (Glaser 1998) – several times – and did the same with *Theoretical Coding* (Glaser, 2005) and this improved my sensitivity to theoretical codes, and I also began reading and re-reading other researchers' grounded theories.

Sorting memos showed that there were in fact two theoretical codes operating – the basic Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and the Strategies of Reconciling, which differed as to the consumers' behavioural typology (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Vacillating but Supporting and Supporting and Committed):

#### **Memo** Reconciling Strategies

Reconciling strategies depend on the consumers' behavioural type, and fundamentally are intended to excuse or justify the behaviour which has caused the consumer to fail to fulfil the obligation which the existence of Fairtrade products imposes on them.

#### **Blaming**

Blaming is the most extensively used of the excusing strategies where the consumer seeks to be exonerated from an awkward decision. It involves finding someone or something else to blame for the consumer's actions so as to shift responsibility onto it or them.

There are found to be three categories of blaming, Personal Taste, which is based on personal desires: Big Business Interference, which is based upon perceptions of external influences and Not Knowing (about Fairtrade) which is predicated on ignorance.

#### **Hedging**

Hedging involves creating mental space so as to avoid any opprobrium deriving from the consumer's actions. If the outlet had had this, or had done that, then the consumer would have happily bought Fairtrade, but they didn't, so that's all right. Hedging also can involve putting off or removing the need to make a decision.

***Justifying***

The justifying strategies employed by this group may be summed up by the saying that they have a deep mistrust of business in general and Fairtrade in particular. This enables them to reconcile their failure to invest in Fairtrade because no good will come of it

Illustration 12: Sample Memo for Reconciling Strategies

While writing this memo I was aware of my confusion but did not know how to rid myself of it, but as Glaser points out (1978, p. 34) 'wrong tracks lead to right ways' and I realised that I was forcing. However I then allowed the data to correct my forcing and allow, through further sorting and coding, integration to emerge. Although several theoretical codes may emerge and seem relevant, I had to select the one which had the best fit overall and was the most effective in describing the relationship between the core category and any additional categories. Indeed, Glaser suggests that a grounded theory can be as complex as the researcher's theoretical sensitivity will allow. Thus the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the process by which consumers resolve their main concern of Demands of Conscience as described in the following memo (Illustration 13).

Method Memo Theoretical Integration

I have suspected for while that what I really need is a mix of theoretical codes, not just one, to model the integration of my core category and its related properties and I now believe I have found them since I have the process Theoretical Code of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, mixed with the Strategies Theoretical Code of Reconciling Strategies.

My participants' main concern is Demands of Conscience., and this mediates their behaviour in their decision making. Clearly the eleemosynary aspect of Fairtrade pulls some consumers while other feel uncomfortable with the begging bowl image yet feel they need to help the farmers. As a result, if they fail, they find the need to employ *strategies* which will ease any discomfort which they may be feeling. Therefore while reconciling is the process, it is dependent upon the strategies of excusing or justification which the consumers employ.

Illustration 13: Sample Memo for Theoretical Integration

I found theoretical coding to be exciting, but very confusing – confusion occurs a lot in the initial stages of grounded theory – and theoretical codes emerge as a function of learning (Glaser & Holton, 2005) and finding those which fit means staying open, and increasing my sensitivity. Deciding in the end to commit oneself to a particular theoretical code is worrying, however Glaser & Holton (2005) suggest that - “their organisation of a theory is not wrong so much as variable, for an abstract level can have alternatives; whereas the grounding comes out in the work, fit and relevance of substantive codes” (p.12).

The ultimate objective of grounded theory is to develop a set of integrated hypotheses which propose propositions and not facts, which are open to modification and which can easily be



corrected, modified, adjusted or changed (Glaser & Holton, 2005). Although I remained concerned about finding the 'right' codes, I needed to remind myself that the researcher's first grounded theory is as much about learning how to do it as it is about the resultant work, and that no grounded theory is ever complete and closed since it should always be open to modification, and theoretical codes can always be changed as a function of new data. (Glaser & Holton 2005).

#### **2.10.5. Writing-Up the Theory**

When I first began writing, my writing was descriptive, feeling it vital to put all my thoughts on paper, I was confident that the process of writing would identify problems with integration. As I developed a more conceptual understanding of the main concern of my respondents and how they were resolving it, my memo writing changed and became more systematic, explaining categories and links, and dimensions, properties and sub-categories, and I was more confident in my writing up because I was able to identify a better mix of theoretical codes; the Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and the Reconciling Strategies. This did not prevent me from repeat attacks of confusion, - however as Glaser (1978) suggests, by writing it all down, confusion begins to disappear and concepts and theory begin to emerge. I returned frequently to my memos and equally frequently to my transcripts, as I sought for better and better integration, and the more I wrote, the more clearly theory began to emerge as the iterative process of sorting, memoing and writing clarified and focussed the relevant categories and codes.

My personal experience from this grounded theory research study taught me that that I should not expect instant results, but should be patient, remain sensitive to the possibilities of new codes and new categories emerging – and how I should never, never despair. If I follow the rules and procedures of grounded theory methodology rigorously, then the core category, the main concern, and indeed the Theory itself will emerge in time. It just needs persistence and the confidence that grounded theory cannot fail to produce if the methodology is followed properly.

#### **2.11. Conclusion**

In order to understand the nuances of consumer behaviour, it is imperative to study the main concern of consumers and the ways in which they resolve that concern, in the context of Fairtrade. This chapter explicated the grounded methodology as the suitable route to accomplish this aim. The reasons for the choosing grounded theory methodology were presented - (a) grounded theory eschews preconceptions, (b) its inductive- deductive nature is most suitable for an under-researched field, (c) it is most suitable for understanding consumers' emotions associated with the purchase of ethical products such as Fairtrade, and (d) the flexible and modifiable nature of the methodology as the new data come in enables it to encompass any data

without any need for revision. To clarify the misconceptions regarding grounded theory, the differences between the original, classic or Glaserian grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and (Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998) - and the alternative versions proposed by Strauss & Corbin and Charmaz have been discussed, and philosophical rhetorical wrestle is contended, emphasising its general methodological stance. This study adopts Glaserian grounded theory. The fundamentals of grounded theory including timing of the literature review, constant comparison, theoretical sampling and core category are also presented in this chapter followed by the discussion of the research design for the present study comprising of sampling and data collection procedures. The method employed for data analysis and the fundamental steps in conducting grounded theory research are examined, including the explanation regarding the role of judging the credibility of the emergent theory, and ethical considerations are explained. The chapter also presented a critical reflection of the researcher's journey and experiences during this study.

The following two chapters explain the major contribution of this study; Chapter Three will explicate the five emergent Fairtrade consumer behaviour groups and the concept of Behavioural Mutability, while Chapter Four will expound the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Fairtrade Consumer Behaviour Groups and Behavioural Mutability

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explicated the methodology applied to the present study. This chapter is the first of the two chapters which present the main contribution of this thesis which is the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.<sup>10</sup> This chapter presents the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability which entails the dynamic nature of consumer behaviour, and the behavioural modifiers: evaluational, experiential and evidential. As emerged from the data, five Fairtrade consumer behavioural types of Supporting and Committed, Supporting but Vacillating, Questioning but Supporting, Sceptical, and Cynical and their properties are explicated in this chapter.

Chapter 4 then presents the participants' main concern of Demands of Conscience which emerged from the research, and explicates the emergent grounded theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience by which the consumers process their main concern. The stages involved in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, their respective properties and the Reconciling Strategies are then expounded.

The concepts, which these two chapters present, have all emerged as the result of strict adherence to the tenets of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2005). Every concept presented in this theory is illustrated by one or more conceptual indicators in the form of direct quotations which are intended to represent the data from which the concepts emerged. Additional conceptual indicators which may be found in transcripts and memos are referenced by way of footnotes<sup>11</sup>, although these are neither exhaustive nor intended as a means of quantifying concepts. They are provided as evidential material of the process by which this theory has emerged.

The chapter begins by explaining the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability and the conditions which were found to cause behavioural change in consumers' purchase behaviour in

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<sup>10</sup> Nomenclature of the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and the emergent concepts, for example, "Behavioural Mutability," "Cynical," "Supporting but Vacillating" are capitalized throughout.

<sup>11</sup> Memos used to develop concepts are represented by specific codes. Memos are denoted by the letter 'M' followed by its number, e.g. M11. Quotations from interviews are labelled with the letter 'T' followed by the number of transcript, e.g. 'T03'

the context of Fairtrade. The five Fairtrade consumer behaviour groups of Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed are expounded.

### 3.2 Consumer Behavioural Mutability

Fairtrade products are competing with mainstream products on two levels, as a similar product and as one carrying a moral obligation<sup>12</sup>, suggesting that if a Fairtrade product loses out to mainstream on price, quality or taste, the fact of it being Fairtrade may counterbalance that difference. Therefore, as with any purchase process, there was found to be scope for change in purchase behaviour<sup>13</sup> as different factors impinge upon the consumer's purchase decision. However, in the present study's context of Fairtrade purchase decisions; these are augmented by the moral choices implicit in buying Fairtrade products.

From the data it became apparent that consumers are not fixed in their opinions, attitude and behaviour. Rather their purchase behaviour remains fluid and mutable<sup>14</sup> as external influences impinge upon them. Therefore, there are sometimes shades of behaviours seen in the transcripts where a respondent reflected on how his or her purchase behaviour regarding Fairtrade changed in the event that something perceived as significant occurred.

*'The more I heard, the more strongly I got into it.'*<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the analysis of the responses in this study indicates that it is apparent that consumers do not fit into procrustean typologies. Although there appeared to be overarching behavioural types rather than consumer types, there is found to be a continuum of behaviours<sup>16</sup>, ranging from cynicism to fully supporting behaviour (see figure 4). For example, while it is possible to say that a given consumer was seen to be predominantly questioning<sup>17</sup> the workability of the Fairtrade process, it quickly becomes apparent that he or she also manifested behaviour which shades into other behaviour such as supporting<sup>18</sup> the ethos of Fairtrade despite questioning its workability.

In so doing, at a given point of time, only the dominant behaviour is definable, since the various other behaviours, which are peripheral to it, tend to be ephemeral, and hence may possess immediacy but lose overall relevance. Because these peripheral behaviours modify the core behaviour of the respondent, the interviewees studied, for the most part, exhibited a propensity

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<sup>12</sup> M12

<sup>13</sup> M71

<sup>14</sup> M71

<sup>15</sup> T131

<sup>16</sup> M90

<sup>17</sup> M7

<sup>18</sup> M6

for change which was effectively dependent upon what information was available to them at that time, the resources at hand, and, above all, the circumstances, physical and psychological, which encompassed them at that particular time of purchase<sup>19</sup>. However the degree of change which took place was dependent upon the individual character of the respondent<sup>20</sup>.

The following section examines the conditions that emerged from the data and which changed consumers' Fairtrade purchase behaviour, since these influences were found to have the capacity to strengthen or weaken investment in Fairtrade - and to take cognizance of the differing views put forward by the respondents. These may all be categorised as reasons for which a consumer's perception and reaction towards Fairtrade<sup>21</sup> might change. This also strengthens the argument which this research proposes, that a developed fixed consumer typology is a fallacy. Instead, the data revealed that at any point during the Fairtrade purchase decision making process, consumers could change their behaviour pattern<sup>22</sup>.

### **3.3 Conditions Affecting Behavioural Change**

Influences on behavioural change are found to be varying in their degree of affect upon the consumers, depending on the nature of the influence and how the consumer reacts to the situation or the causative agency. In the short term, the consumer's motivation was found to stem from reasons such as impulsive evaluational causation, whereas in the longer term, behavioural change was found to have its origins in more powerful influences on the consumer's perceptions of product such as experientia, evaluational and evidential. These behavioural modifiers are explained as follows.

#### ***3.3.1. Experiential Causation***

Several respondents indicated personal experiences which changed their behaviour. For example, the experience of a respondent's visit to Kenya during which she observed at first hand the primitive conditions under which the local people lived is found to have moved her from a state of complacency into a state of actively contributing to the welfare of the third world by conscientiously seeking out Fairtrade goods.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> M 71

<sup>20</sup> M90

<sup>21</sup> M 41

<sup>22</sup> M92

<sup>23</sup> T7

*‘I went to Kenya a couple of years ago and I was horrified how people live there and, I could not believe people were walking around with no shoes, they live in appalling conditions compared to us’<sup>24</sup>*

In another example, visiting Ecuador is found to have changed a respondent’s attitude and behaviour as his experience of the unfair banana trade and the exploitation and corruption there made him feel guilty<sup>25</sup> if he bought bananas which were not Fairtrade.

*‘I had an experience going to South America in Ecuador and I heard a story about how they changed presidents so many times because of corruption in banana trade’<sup>26</sup>*

Although some experiences are found to have changed respondent behaviour in favour of Fairtrade, another respondent’s experience of living in Argentina for some time changed his perception and subsequent purchase behaviour to distrusting<sup>27</sup> Fairtrade<sup>28</sup> when he realised that Fairtrade Argentine wine was traded by affluent viniculturalists, not poor smallholders.

Product purchase experiential influences are also found to be able to reinforce or undermine investment in Fairtrade. These experiences need not be as dramatic as visiting the country where the Fairtrade products are grown. Any adverse experience of a Fairtrade product was also found to influence the consumer, and to have a negative effect upon perception of Fairtrade and commitment to buy Fairtrade produce.

### **3.3.2. Informational Causation**

Information was found to have the capacity to modify consumer’s behaviour,<sup>29</sup> for example, having watched a Greenpeace television documentary about exploitation involved in the production process of Nestlé’s Kit Kat was found to have had a traumatising effect on one of the respondents,<sup>30</sup> resulting in her Boycotting Nestlé products completely for herself and her family<sup>31</sup>.

From a positive view of Fairtrade, exposure to information about Fairtrade by working for Oxfam was found to have had a strong positive effect on the behaviour of a respondent<sup>32</sup>, for example one of the respondents’ said:

*‘I tried to have it [Fairtrade] as part of my everyday life’<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>24</sup> T3

<sup>25</sup> M85

<sup>26</sup> T5

<sup>27</sup> M 44

<sup>28</sup> M 30

<sup>29</sup> M 47

<sup>30</sup> M 43

<sup>31</sup> M 59

<sup>32</sup> M 30

For some respondents information<sup>34</sup> is found to have the capacity to increase the credibility<sup>35</sup> of Fairtrade and one of the respondents suggested that:

*'Credibility sums it up best... It's the evidence that Fairtrade is able to provide...to overcome scepticism'<sup>36</sup>*

Lack of information on the other hand is found to have an adverse effect on respondent behaviour, leaving them prone to react to any negative rumour.<sup>37</sup> Some consumers are also found to regard Fairtrade as simply a brand<sup>38</sup> because they are unaware of what Fairtrade does, its purpose and meaning.<sup>39</sup> Increasing their awareness by exposing them to the realities of exploited marginalised producers in the third world while simultaneously explaining how Fairtrade works to stop this exploitation was found to frequently bring about a change in the behaviour of respondents who were otherwise lacking in any real interest in the whole Fairtrade hypothesis.<sup>40</sup> However, this was not found to work for all respondents, since some of them are found to be too entrenched in a bitter rejection<sup>41</sup> of the world of commerce, perceiving it to be totally exploitative of the consumer and hence equally exploitative of the producer.<sup>42</sup>

### ***3.3.3. Evidential Causation***

Evidence that Fairtrade works and that the producers get paid<sup>43</sup> was found for some respondents to be a major modifier of behaviour,<sup>44</sup> while lack of evidence was found in some cases to deter investment.<sup>45</sup> This is found to be particularly noticeable among some consumers who are found to have a cynical or sceptical outlook on Fairtrade.<sup>46</sup> For one of the respondents exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour, the existence of Fairtrade fairs and road shows was found to have a strongly persuasive capacity to influence consumers to accommodate Fairtrade products into their shopping behaviour, while the annual Fairtrade Fortnight was found to increase awareness of Fairtrade very positively, bringing the evidence of what Fairtrade does and the benefits it brings, to the attention of the public at large and thereby bringing about changes in their behaviour which are positive towards Fairtrade.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> T140

<sup>34</sup> M 57

<sup>35</sup> M 61

<sup>36</sup> T147

<sup>37</sup> M 6

<sup>38</sup> M 46

<sup>39</sup> M 41

<sup>40</sup> M 8

<sup>41</sup> M 28

<sup>42</sup> M 45

<sup>43</sup> M 68

<sup>44</sup> M 5

<sup>45</sup> M 31

<sup>46</sup> M 29

<sup>47</sup> M 32

### **3.3.4. Evaluational Causation**

It was found that this modifier affects behaviour for a short term compared to the long term modifiers, as discussed in the above section. Evaluating the worth of a Fairtrade product was found to modify behaviour whether for or against Fairtrade. Worth was found to include price,<sup>48</sup> quality<sup>49</sup>, value<sup>50</sup> and affordability<sup>51</sup>. Re-aligning any one of these was found to cause change in behaviour as the consumer reassessed the worth of the product. One of the respondents who wished to invest in Fairtrade could be found to avoid doing so if one of the components of worth is misaligned.

*I would positively buy the Fairtrade products because you are doing a positive thing. If they were the same price, I would go for the Fairtrade product<sup>52</sup>*

This respondent evaluated Fairtrade as being a positive causation of behaviour but affordability was found to be a negatively causative factor. Given the price of Fairtrade and mainstream products are almost the same, some respondents are found to attach a greater value to a Fairtrade product.

Having explained the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability and its causation the next section explicates the five emergent consumer behaviour groups in the context of Fairtrade purchase.

### **3.4. Fairtrade Consumer Behaviour Groups**

Deriving from the data, consumers' contextual behaviours may be described as occupying a position on a continuum which ranges from indifference towards Fairtrade to committed and supporting (see figure 4).

Indifferent or disinterested<sup>53</sup> behaviour stems from complete apathy<sup>54</sup> towards the aims and objectives of Fairtrade, so this behaviour, although briefly discussed, is considered beyond the remit of this study since it does not impinge upon Fairtrade consumption in any way. The ethos

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<sup>48</sup> M 4

<sup>49</sup> M 11

<sup>50</sup> M 20

<sup>51</sup> M 4

<sup>52</sup> T62

<sup>53</sup> M 8

<sup>54</sup> M 27



has no meaning for the consumer and the product is simply a brand. There is no involvement, no engagement. Fairtrade is sidelined<sup>55</sup> and treated as inconsequential.

As shown in the behavioural type continuum (Figure 4), one end of the continuum is occupied by behaviour which is best described as Cynical<sup>56</sup> towards Fairtrade. It encompasses a behaviour which shows a lack of faith in human nature<sup>57</sup> and a tendency to believe ill of people, corporations, and political parties. There was found to be an innate suspicion that every organism will exploit every opportunity which may be presented to it to advance the interest of the self<sup>58</sup>. Less intransigent is the Sceptical behaviour, implying doubts regarding the motives of the Fairtrade organisation. Solid proof<sup>59</sup> is required to overcome the doubts. Whereas the Cynical behaviour shows disillusionment with Fairtrade, the Sceptical behaviour leaves room for doubt in self as well as Fairtrade.

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<sup>55</sup> M 93

<sup>56</sup> M 28

<sup>57</sup> M 28

<sup>58</sup> M 29

<sup>59</sup> M 5

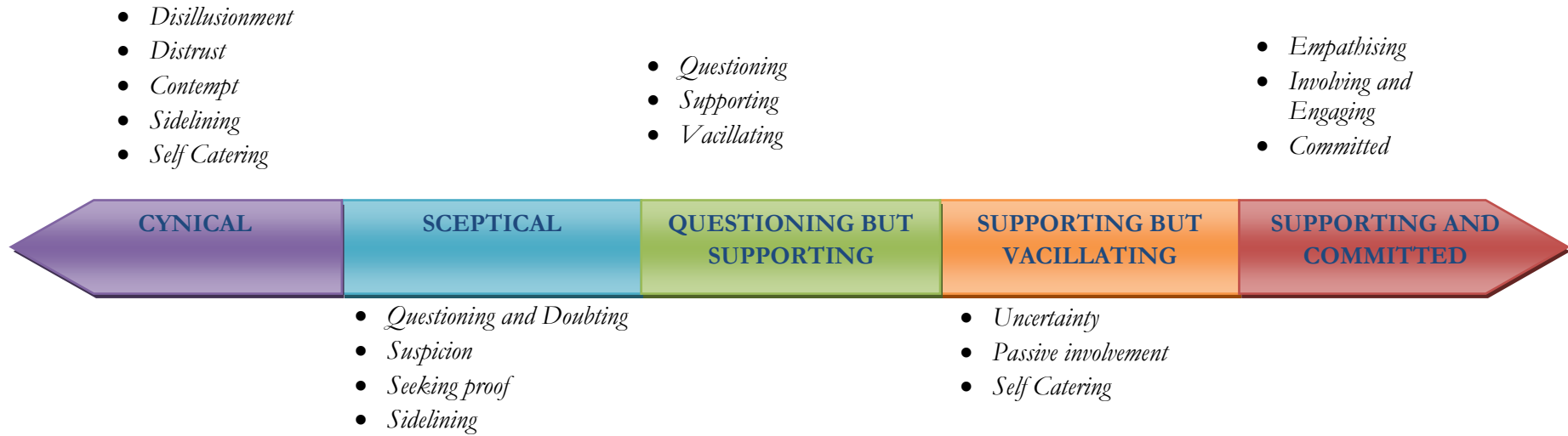


Figure 4: Consumer Behavioural Continuum in the Context of Fairtrade (Source: This Research)

From a more positive viewpoint than the Sceptical behaviour type, is the Questioning but Supporting behaviour, involves supporting the aims of Fairtrade, but still vacillating about investing. While prone to questioning different aspects of the process, occasional investment in Fairtrade was probable. However, there was found to be a strong level of doubt and a profound need for reassurance.

The nature of Supporting and Vacillating behaviour was found to be complex, since it consists of belief in the ethos of Fairtrade, yet at the same time allowing personal interest to obtrude.<sup>60</sup> If ever any behaviour could be described as mental hand wringing – this is that behaviour.

The behaviour on the other extreme end of the continuum is the Supporting to Committed behaviour, which brooks no doubts - Fairtrade is the right way to go and does what is necessary.<sup>61</sup> This behaviour entails complete involvement and engagement. Support is steadfast against the machinations of corporate capitalism. This behaviour sees the consumer attending functions and fairs, and visibly and vocally supporting everything which is fair<sup>62</sup>.

Before explicating the behaviour types in detail, the behavioural groups, their respective properties and the definitions for those properties are summarised in Table 14.

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<sup>60</sup> M 16

<sup>61</sup> M 54

<sup>62</sup> M 98

Behaviour type	Properties	Definition
Indifferent	Apathy	Completely lacking in interest. The matter is of absolutely no importance whatsoever.
	Not investing	May accidentally pick up a product, but it's just another label.
Cynical	Disillusioned	Broken dreams and broken promises: it's every man for himself.
	Distrust	Corporate claims are seen as misleading.
	Contempt	The whole thing is a charade to fool the gullible.
	Side-lining	Products are dismissed as irrelevant.
	Self-catering	The consumer buys what he or she wants and couldn't care less about Fairtrade.
Sceptical	Questioning and doubting	The system is not transparent so the respondent is very dubious about the whole thing
	Suspicion	Being concealed can cover up many unwelcome facts
	Seeking proof	If Fairtrade is fair, why is it opaque? It needs to show clearly what it does
	Side lining	The consumer buys what he or she wants. The products are dismissed as unimportant
Questioning but supporting	Optimism	Fairtrade is important and good: if it works, so the consumer hopes that it might
	Supporting	Talks about Fairtrade, tries to buy it, and believes it is a good thing
	Vacillating in investment	Will buy Fairtrade intermittently.
Supporting but Vacillating	Uncertainty	Filled with doubt but wanting to believe.
	Passive involvement	Talks about Fairtrade and buys it wherever possible but has no other involvement.
	Self-catering	Buying Fairtrade is self-serving because the consumer wants to buy Fairtrade as opposed to mainstream.
Supporting and Committed	Empathising	Sympathising with the lot of the producer: being emotionally involved.
	Involving and engaging	Advocating Fairtrade, attending shows, fairs, Fairtrade Fortnight
	Committed	Only buying Fairtrade: going without: ethical substitution

Table 14: The behavioural groups, their respective properties and the incidents for those properties

### 3.4.1. Cynical Behaviour

The emergent behaviour group of Cynical behaviour is based upon a feeling that the Fairtrade concept with its ethos of helping the marginalised farmers, producers and workers in the Third World emerging nations, should be the right thing to do, but the venality of the world gets in the way<sup>63</sup>. This behaviour is further characterised by believing that people are motivated purely by self-interest, and is distrustful of human sincerity or integrity.<sup>64</sup> Cynical behaviour is perceived to entail concern only for one's own interest<sup>65</sup>.

For example one respondent said:

<sup>63</sup> M 43

<sup>64</sup> M 44

<sup>65</sup> M 16

*If you scratch the surface of a cynic, you will always find a disappointed idealist*<sup>66</sup>

From the responses it is found that this behaviour derives from the person's Forming (see Chapter Four) over the years which has produced a pessimistic view of the world in which the good which men do is seldom noticed, while the bad, the corrupt, and the evil is never forgotten, but becomes indelibly imprinted.

Properties of this behavioural group are: disillusionment, distrust, contempt, sidelining and self catering. It was found that there was a feeling of disillusionment which occurs contextually as the result of having trusted a company, a charity or a similar organisation and then being let down or cheated<sup>67</sup> either on a personal level or realising that the organisation which was trusted was simply deceiving everybody.<sup>68</sup>

*I don't necessarily believe them, I am being burned so many times and that's the major problem and that is the problem which you are going to find with any company providing Fairtrade. So many people who said that 'you know we are doing x amount of Fairtrade', haven't been....there will always be unfair practices'*<sup>69</sup>

As a result, it shows distrust<sup>70</sup> in Fairtrade deriving from a feeling of betrayal and this is allowed to colour judgement to the extent that there is disappointment<sup>71</sup> in the concept of the Fairtrade organisation and process from the start, coupled with the feeling that it will not work.

The respondent's lack of faith<sup>72</sup> in human nature and an even deeper lack of faith in the motives of multinational and trans-global corporations, perceives Fairtrade as a model which is extremely vulnerable to outside, vested interests,<sup>73</sup> something which is open to abuse and attack and therefore, even though the ethos is desirable, the vehicle is perceived as unsuitable. Fairtrade therefore is seen as flawed from the outset,<sup>74</sup> there is a conviction that people will exploit every opportunity if given the chance, and there is no way for the consumer to validate the claims of Fairtrade<sup>75</sup>.

Big businesses are also perceived to be jumping on the band wagon<sup>76</sup> of Fairtrade because consumers will buy Fairtrade under the misapprehension that it will do some good, hence if a

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<sup>66</sup> T1

<sup>67</sup> M 42

<sup>68</sup> M 43

<sup>69</sup> T5

<sup>70</sup> M 44

<sup>71</sup> M 42

<sup>72</sup> M 34

<sup>73</sup> M 62

<sup>74</sup> M 63

<sup>75</sup> M 60

<sup>76</sup> M 79

company which has a ‘dark reputation’ adopts Fairtrade, this is seen as an attempt at whitewashing that reputation. For example one of the respondents said:

*Well Nestle for example saying gosh we have been misguiding in the past we have got to do something to clear up our image...what’s the latest...fair trade...yeah cool fair trade let’s get it on the cereal boxes<sup>77</sup>*

This behaviour is also marked by a strong degree of pessimism, the feeling that things are unlikely to improve in the short term. There was also found profound distrust of everything corporate, all advertising – anything which is intended to persuade them to spend money<sup>78</sup>. It is manifested as an innate suspicion of both individual and corporate motives. Big business was pessimistically perceived to be exploitative of Fairtrade.<sup>79</sup> It is also seen as exploitative of consumers. Where it becomes involved with Fairtrade, it is seen to be becoming involved solely for its own purposes – profit, public relations, or as a means of covering up some wrongdoing, for example one respondent said-

*My main concern is that all companies who say they are Fairtrade are not actually, because they are exploiting the people they are supposed to be helping and they have their eyes on profit rather than being fair<sup>80</sup>*

Corporate venality was always seen as being truly heartless, exploiting the charitable cachet of Fairtrade to increase profit, and at the same time operating an unclear, unverifiable and non-transparent system. For example one respondent stated:

*There are a lot of problems about.... money being siphoned off by corrupt world governments or going into a bureaucratic black hole<sup>81</sup>*

Some of the participants were found to suggest that responsibility for information about Fairtrade, proof that it works and evidence that the producers are significantly better off, needs to be independent and irrefutable, so that is the responsibility of the Fairtrade organisations and not the consumers.

There is found to be contempt among the consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour. The route from the producer of Fairtrade consumables to the consumer is seen as too long to be policed properly<sup>82</sup>. One of the respondents considered that it would be nice, although completely impractical, to be able to telephone the farmer in, say, Uganda and ask him if he is better off under Fairtrade intervention. This would enable trust and faith to occur. But since this is not

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<sup>77</sup> T5

<sup>78</sup> M 44

<sup>79</sup> M 28

<sup>80</sup> T98

<sup>81</sup> T147

<sup>82</sup> M 62

possible, then the system is not to be trusted and will not be,<sup>83</sup> and anyway, the belief is that the farmer, worker or producer could be lying or perhaps being coerced, or may not even be a real farmer.

This was further justified by there being no proof of Fairtrade's validity. Extreme levels of proof<sup>84</sup> are sought, but then rejected as being unbelievable and being intended to fool the gullible, the blame<sup>85</sup> therefore lying with the Fairtrade movement not with the consumer.

Respondents were found to see venality as embedded in world cultures and while they would hope that someday, Fairtrade would be no longer necessary<sup>86</sup> they do not expect this to happen during this generation. Because of this viewpoint, purchasing decisions are made from self-interest,<sup>87</sup> based upon that which is perceived to be of better quality, flavour, price, or is more convenient.<sup>88</sup> The ramifications of Fairtrade as an attempt to provide fair wages and better living conditions to the producers of the developing countries were ignored and dismissed.<sup>89</sup> This was justified by the perception that Fairtrade is always far too expensive<sup>90</sup> so that budgetary constraints apply. This did not apply however if the product was desirable, in which case the normal shopping pattern of avoiding Fairtrade produce ceased, and the item was purchased without thought, and out of self-interest, one of the respondents said:

*I buy Fairtrade coffee not because it's Fairtrade, but because I like the taste'*<sup>91</sup>

This behaviour is, however, not truly negative, since there is the underlying wish that things would be better, and that Fairtrade could work.<sup>92</sup> This is tempered by the vouchsafed belief that it never will because there is too much power and money in the hands of the transnational corporations.<sup>93</sup>

The reasons discussed above result in an unwillingness to engage with the Fairtrade process, and behaviour which, while not truly disinterested, is disconnected from it, since these respondents exhibiting Cynical behaviour felt that only a fool would be willing to believe that society and business are honest<sup>94</sup>. This disillusionment was not simply with Fairtrade, but springs from a

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<sup>83</sup> M 45

<sup>84</sup> M 5

<sup>85</sup> M 24

<sup>86</sup> M 53

<sup>87</sup> M 16

<sup>88</sup> M 14

<sup>89</sup> M 45

<sup>90</sup> M 4

<sup>91</sup> T6

<sup>92</sup> M 65

<sup>93</sup> M 26

<sup>94</sup> M 29

severely jaundiced view of the world, of society and of people. As a result, this behaviour is very hard to overcome, since change is strongly resisted, based upon experiences which say that if the barriers are lowered, then pain and disappointment will inevitably ensue again.<sup>95</sup>

### ***3.4.2. Sceptical Behaviour***

This behavioural type is predicated upon excessive questioning, and doubting,<sup>96</sup> ostensibly wishing to understand why Fairtrade should be considered important and why the consumer should be bothered to take an interest. This behaviour entails support for the concept of Fairtrade - but only once it has been more fully explained - claiming to believe that something needs to be done to prevent the exploitation of marginalised third world producers and farmers, however, approaching the matter from the standpoint that it is something which is new and which has not been mooted in the past, so is unproven and possibly untrustworthy.

Meanwhile, empathy with the plight of the third world producer was expressed and the posture of ignoring them was justified only by concerns about opacity in the Fairtrade process.<sup>97</sup>

Properties of this behavioural group are: questioning and doubting, suspicion, seeking ultimate proof, and sidelining<sup>98</sup>. Fairtrade was considered as just a posture – and lack of action or involvement<sup>99</sup> is blamed on the pervading sceptical view specifically about Fairtrade itself, Fairtrade certification, and the organisations which move the goods from producer to consumer – particularly the multinational chains which sell directly to the consumer.

*'I would doubt the sincerity of multinationals in their intentions towards poor workers in third world countries'*<sup>100</sup>

A further aspect of this behaviour is the vouchsafed commitment to ethical values, but this does not translate across into any reaction to, or interaction with, Fairtrade, since there is no belief in Fairtrade to be anything other than just another label, and of no real significance.

*'My psychology generally speaking is sceptical about most things that I regard as any sort of marketing or advertising.... if someone tries to sell me anything at all I'm going to be very sceptical ...about the truth of the claims being made'*<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> M 42, M 43

<sup>96</sup> M 7

<sup>97</sup> M 60

<sup>98</sup> M 33

<sup>99</sup> M 66

<sup>100</sup> T146

<sup>101</sup> T147



Consumers were also found to be suspicious of the Fairtrade claims. One of the respondents was found not to have trust in the logo<sup>102</sup> since it could mean anything and there is no proof and no further information.

*I am not sure I am going to buy the product just because of Fairtrade logo because I do not trust it*<sup>103</sup>

But further justification for not buying<sup>104</sup> - or in any way becoming involved - was predicated upon the belief that supermarkets are inevitably taking their cut, as will be the middle man and all the other intermediaries down the supply line to the point where the marginalised third world producer will receive very little, if any, benefit at all.<sup>105</sup>

The upshot of this behaviour type was vacillating and indecision leading away from any positive purchase intention towards Fairtrade goods. Where there may be a latent will to compromise and invest in the ethos of Fairtrade, this was mediated by feelings of indecision, in turn mediated by scepticism<sup>106</sup>. Hence, there was found to be no will to invest in Fairtrade and little potential for change.<sup>107</sup>

The local organisers and cooperatives, the packers, the importers, in the United Kingdom, the logistics of transport and distribution to the retail outlets, all the middle men who are in some way involved with the supply chain, were seen as skimming something off the top of that money which is supposed to go to the producer, farmer or worker. Therefore if the premium which is added to the price of the produce in the United Kingdom is small, then it is perceived that there was virtually nothing to share out – or steal – and if the premium is sufficiently high as to leave something for the exploited peasant workers, then the price of the product was seen as being exploitative of the consumer, too high, and almost certainly a barrier to general uptake of Fairtrade produce.

One of the respondents exhibiting Sceptical behaviour was found to seek proof that the claims of Fairtrade are valid.

*You don't know if they are the right people or the money when the goods are sold is going back to the development of the country. They never give any evidence of it*<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> M 84

<sup>103</sup> T9

<sup>104</sup> M 23

<sup>105</sup> M 68

<sup>106</sup> M 28

<sup>107</sup> M 39

<sup>108</sup> T7

There is a constant demand for proof that the process works, that it is adequately policed<sup>109</sup> and that the opportunities for leeching off the producers by middle men or corrupt politicians are minimised, if not totally eradicated.

Consumers exhibiting Sceptical behaviour, like the Cynical behavioural types, are also characterised by specifically and deliberately not investing. However this ‘not investing’ should not be construed as indifference since it is not. It is a deliberate decision to avoid spending money on something which could easily turn out to be a scam. However, since the consumer was clearly aware of Fairtrade, the door remains open if proof comes along –

*When you give to charity, you give because ... we all know there are administration costs., and when I give I prefer that the [money] goes to the one that needs it, not for some bigwig... for his wages. ... a lot more could be done .. they never give any evidence<sup>110</sup>*

In this behaviour type purchasing is always self-catering<sup>111</sup> and was found to be guided by such aspects as price compared with quality, taste, and value for money when considering consumables, whereas for such matters as clothing<sup>112</sup> the normal bases of choice and selection are invoked, and Fairtrade is considered inconsequential.<sup>113</sup> Justification of this behaviour was achieved by blaming<sup>114</sup> external influences such as the lack of information, or provision of adequate advertising, which inhibit awareness, thereby shifting responsibility<sup>115</sup> away from self and onto an external force, one of the respondents said:

*You don't know if they are the right people or the money when the goods are sold are going back to the development of the country..... because they never give any evidence of it<sup>116</sup>*

Furthermore, Fairtrade goods, if even considered for purchase, were regarded as being inconvenient because they are comparatively unknown, have the cachet of having eleemosynary links, have limited availability - and would need to be sought out, compared and contrasted with routine purchases for price, quality and taste. This process is inconvenient, and convenience is important since it eases the purchase procedures. This is also evidence of self-catering behaviour.

For some respondents on the alleged occasions when Fairtrade merchandise had been purchased, - usually by chance rather than by design, - it was retrospectively perceived to have

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<sup>109</sup> M 99

<sup>110</sup> T7

<sup>111</sup> M 16

<sup>112</sup> M 107

<sup>113</sup> M 8

<sup>114</sup> M 24

<sup>115</sup> M 17

<sup>116</sup> T8

been of poor quality, possibly weak or lacking in taste, particularly with respect to tea<sup>117</sup> - but this is quite possibly an argument employed for the purpose of side-lining the Fairtrade option, or hedging around the issue, since this can be employed as a justification for not buying.

*If I see Fairtrade goods and they are the cheapest in the range that makes me wonder. I would happily pay a little bit more for something I believe [is not] poorer quality*<sup>118</sup>

The likelihood of this is increased when the complaint of lack of availability<sup>119</sup> of Fairtrade produce is suggested, since the respondent was not actively seeking Fairtrade at the time. Hence availability would not have been a matter for concern.

*I already know what I want to buy: it is the same things that I normally buy.. and... I don't believe that much because there is nothing which makes me believe in [it]*<sup>120</sup>

Sceptical behaviour could therefore be characterised as doubting, hypocritical, suspicious<sup>121</sup> and unlikely to change despite the suggestions that more information is needed. There is not enough interest exhibited towards Fairtrade in this behaviour to allow additional information to make any difference, and ingrained habitual shopping patterns will continue unabated unless and until a moment of revelation arises, at which point the behaviour changes dramatically. For example one respondent said:

*I began to think about it more after talking to you, and realised that this was a good way to go forward, so now I look for Fairtrade - and usually find that it is not available.*<sup>122</sup>

The respondent who was previously hostile to the tenets of Fairtrade, as explained on his second interview.

### ***3.4.3 Questioning but Supporting Behaviour***

Consumers exhibiting this behaviour were found to question Fairtrade, at the same time as wanting to support it. Questions are not raised as a means of justifying lack of involvement or inability to engage with Fairtrade, but are asked to gain knowledge<sup>123</sup> so as to enhance support and increase belief

The properties of this behavioural type are: questioning, supporting but vacillating in investment.

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<sup>117</sup> M 70

<sup>118</sup> T3

<sup>119</sup> M 1

<sup>120</sup> T9

<sup>121</sup> M 67

<sup>122</sup> T15

<sup>123</sup> M 15

*I think it is a positive thing... it is giving people money for work they have done, not ripping people off*<sup>124</sup>

Despite this there is still scepticism<sup>125</sup> about Fairtrade, and aspects of it such as transparency,<sup>126</sup> and the money going back to the producer are questioned.<sup>127</sup>

*Yeah, sometimes I am suspicious – in practice, how much can the farmers get?*<sup>128</sup>

There is a desire to believe, yet if the situation arises that enables Fairtrade to be disregarded and side-lined when it is convenient,<sup>129</sup> it will be. As a result, a conflicted situation is perceived where the self-catering desire is mediated by the desire to comply with dictates of conscience to follow the ethical route and invest in the ethos of Fairtrade.

From positive questioning, doubt arose, wondering if Fairtrade is genuinely fair, and wishing for greater transparency<sup>130</sup> to help support and bolster the hope.<sup>131</sup> It is also characterised by uncertainty,<sup>132</sup> since there was both scepticism about the involvement of transnational global conglomerates in Fairtrade present, as well as doubting whether or not supermarkets are helping Fairtrade or exploiting it,<sup>133</sup> For example one of the respondents said:

*'Supermarkets have too big a slice of the market and that's not fair: even though I hold that view, I don't always hold it in mind for consideration when I'm buying products'*<sup>134</sup>

Fairtrade was perceived to be the antithesis of any model which puts profit and shareholders first, while exploiting the vulnerable to increase those profits. However, due to the dominant character of support for Fairtrade, the doubting and questioning aspects of this behavioural pattern are tempered by the willingness to suspend doubt<sup>135</sup> over any possible flaws in the Fairtrade process in the hope that Fairtrade does do what it says, and delivers a better deal to the marginalised framers, workers and producers in the third world. A respondent stated:

*'Well it should be normal that whoever they may be, the people should be paid a fair price for their work or produce or whatever it is they are selling. That principle seems to be fair'*<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> T30

<sup>125</sup> M 29

<sup>126</sup> M 60

<sup>127</sup> M 68

<sup>128</sup> T16

<sup>129</sup> M 16

<sup>130</sup> M 60

<sup>131</sup> M 65

<sup>132</sup> M 6

<sup>133</sup> M 26

<sup>134</sup> T36

<sup>135</sup> M 52

<sup>136</sup> T12

There was found to be a tendency towards giving the benefit of the doubt, by willingness to suspend any disbelief<sup>137</sup> and this is employed as a way of overcoming negative feelings towards Fairtrade engendered by rumour, bad press and doubts, and as a means of empathising<sup>138</sup> with the marginalised third world producer.

*I'd say, by and large, the positives outweigh the negatives in terms of the impact they may make on people's lives and their autonomy'*<sup>139</sup>

This behaviour entails support and understanding for the workers who produce the Fairtrade goods and an understanding of the exploitation which they experience.<sup>140</sup> There was an optimism<sup>141</sup> that by engaging with Fairtrade, things will improve, and that by investing in the process, some good will be done, the smallholder will receive support, health and education system will receive investment and the local infrastructure will be improved.<sup>142</sup>

*I think [Fairtrade] is a good idea and it's getting bigger, and at some point will be normal to have everything Fairtrade'*<sup>143</sup>

As part of the purchasing process, there was a constant attempt at reconciling all the conflicting values and justifying<sup>144</sup> failure to buy. Buying if Fairtrade products are the same price<sup>145</sup> was inevitably seen as the right thing to do, responsibility for failing to buy was shifted onto the supermarket if the price was seen to be too high.<sup>146</sup>

The consumers exhibiting an optimistic scepticism considered the involvement of big business in Fairtrade as a positive thing, since mainstreaming<sup>147</sup> will put the products before a much larger audience, but by the same token, supermarkets, driven by the capitalist ethic of the need to make a profit for the shareholders are seen as anathema to the fundamental ethos of Fairtrade.<sup>148</sup> How, it is asked, can supermarkets be trusted to ensure that the premium added to the price of commodities is paid to the farmer? The phrase 'rip-off' is sometimes used to describe supermarket ethics.

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<sup>137</sup> M 72

<sup>138</sup> M 73

<sup>139</sup> T14

<sup>140</sup> M 41

<sup>141</sup> M 53

<sup>142</sup> M 65

<sup>143</sup> T139

<sup>144</sup> M 23

<sup>145</sup> M 38

<sup>146</sup> M 39

<sup>147</sup> M 74

<sup>148</sup> M 28

*I am slightly suspicious about that.... I would like to know the actual crux of the agreements with these big companies*<sup>149</sup>

This behaviour also involves a desire to help: this was also indicated by investment in other ethical causes such as farmer's markets where the concept is to support the local farmer against the exploitative supermarkets, and this translated into nurturing at a distance,<sup>150</sup> which describes the empathy felt by the consumer for the embattled farmer, where he or she, the third world producer, is seen to be vulnerable to similar exploitation of driving his or her prices lower and lower to enhance supermarket profits,<sup>151</sup> and therefore is in need of support. However, because of the distance which separates the consumer from the producer, there was a distinct disconnect

*Because you are not seeing necessarily the direct effect, you begin questioning*<sup>152</sup>

and this lack of knowledge<sup>153</sup> and of information mediates the potential for enthusiastic support. The only evidence available was not verifiable and is inadequate. Hence although the theory of Fairtrade is stoutly supported, the practice<sup>154</sup> however was considered to be open to criticism, in part because of the perceived opacity of the process.<sup>155</sup> But as one of the respondents stated-

*It's about being fair to people you don't necessarily know: [not knowing them] doesn't matter at all*<sup>156</sup>

However it was also found that the consumers exhibiting an optimistic scepticism were vacillating in their purchase of Fairtrade products. Investing in Fairtrade created a feeling of being righteous and of having done good, - a warm feeling<sup>157</sup> - so the desire to feel good provides an impetus for buying Fairtrade merchandise.

*I feel confident, happy that .... I know where it comes from, I know hopefully a bit of the impact that buying it will make, and also I tend to feel like I'll savour it a bit more as well*<sup>158</sup>

However, there were found to be other forces militating against this desire such as price, taste and quality and these were used as tools to ease the conscience and to justify<sup>159</sup> failing to purchase

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<sup>149</sup> T30

<sup>150</sup> M 75

<sup>151</sup> M 28

<sup>152</sup> T148

<sup>153</sup> M 6

<sup>154</sup> M 64

<sup>155</sup> M 60

<sup>156</sup> T47

<sup>157</sup> M 21

<sup>158</sup> T51

<sup>159</sup> M 23

*I think price would be the only reason why I wouldn't buy Fairtrade. or if I knew it to be poor quality ...if it was a really bad product. Even if it was Fairtrade, I would not want to spend some money on something which was not what I wanted it to be*<sup>160</sup>

Companies which were seen to be exploitative and to have a negative effect upon the producers might be boycotted,<sup>161</sup> while those which are perceived as positive towards the producer might be supported.

### **3.4.4 Supporting but Vacillating Behaviour**

Consumers exhibiting Supporting but Vacillating behaviour were found to be supportive of the idea of Fairtrade, however vacillating in their purchase of Fairtrade products. This behaviour type does not entail doubt or any sort of questioning as manifested in the Questioning but Supporting behaviour group. The primary reasons which inhibit the consumers from investing in the ethos of Fairtrade were found to be those of convenience, price, quality and availability.

When compared with the other emergent behaviours in the context of Fairtrade, this was found to be the behaviour most likely to change positively<sup>162</sup> because of external influences. Supporting to Vacillating behaviour is predicated upon supporting the idea of Fairtrade and its ethos of fairness,<sup>163</sup> whilst condemning exploitation of marginalised workers and producers in third-world countries. The properties of this behaviour type are: uncertainty, passive involvement, and self catering.

It involves investing in Fairtrade principles in ways such as empathising<sup>164</sup> with the workers and producers of developing countries,<sup>165</sup> taking an interest in Fairtrade and becoming to some extent engaged by attending Fairtrade fairs, road shows, events or exhibitions whether in-store or elsewhere, such as the annual Fairtrade Fortnight.<sup>166</sup> This particular aspect of the behaviour exhibited by consumers manifested investment in Fairtrade, but also serves the purpose of reinforcing belief and also acts as an example to other consumers, demonstrating faith and conviction in the Fairtrade process. And, by example, encouraging others to imitate and also become more involved, thus was found to be an agent for changing<sup>167</sup> other behaviours as well. The properties of this behavioural group are: ambivalence, passive involvement, and self-catering - willingness to buy.

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<sup>160</sup> T44

<sup>161</sup> M 59

<sup>162</sup> M 36

<sup>163</sup> M41

<sup>164</sup> M 73

<sup>165</sup> M 54

<sup>166</sup> M 76

<sup>167</sup> M 39

This behaviour group was found to be the most complex of all the behaviours that emerged from this study. If it were to be summed in one or two words it could be described as positive ambivalence. It contains almost all of the properties of the other behaviours, but none of them to a very strong degree: hence it encompasses what might be described as the middle ground, but it is a very confused middle ground, and not specifically characterised by any single property.

*In an ideal world I would like to think I could buy everything which was Fairtrade or ethically sound, ... but in the real world...it is governed by budget and how much money you have got*<sup>168</sup>

The confused ambivalence<sup>169</sup> which characterises this behaviour tended to be positive towards Fairtrade overall, but every argument for Fairtrade had an equal and opposite argument against it. If on the one hand supermarkets were seen as beneficial to the cause of Fairtrade, on the other hand they were seen as exploitative. If paying a higher price so as to provide money for the producer is good, it is also seen as exploiting the consumer. Big companies can help Fairtrade by investing in it and converting to Fairtrade for their supplies.

*Big supermarkets should stock and make them available to the people... I would like to buy Fairtrade cotton goods and that sort of thing*<sup>170</sup>

Supporting but Vacillating behaviour isn't buoyed by a solid conviction for investing in the ethos of Fairtrade, but more by hoping and having faith than supporting. For example one of the respondents said:

*In theory, I think it would be a pretty good idea. In practice it is different*<sup>171</sup>

Fairtrade might be the right thing to do. Hence this behaviour entails both supporting Fairtrade while still hoping that it is reputable and that it works – but not being sure. One of the respondents said:

*But I do have some doubts: I wouldn't say I trust them completely*<sup>172</sup>

Every purchase decision which involves Fairtrade tended to be some form or another of a compromise.<sup>173</sup> Every decision causes conflict and every decision needed to be thought about and the ramifications considered before it was made, yet every decision then needed reconciling. If Fairtrade goods were not bought, the concomitant feelings of guilt<sup>174</sup> and responsibility for

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<sup>168</sup> T34

<sup>169</sup> M 77

<sup>170</sup> T3

<sup>171</sup> T39

<sup>172</sup> T7

<sup>173</sup> M 77

<sup>174</sup> M 55



abandoning the exploited producer needed to be assuaged, whereas if Fairtrade goods were bought and there is a premium attached to the purchase price, then the increase in spending over budget needed to be reconciled.

Passive involvement from the viewpoint of the respondents involved means being vocally supportive but not overextending themselves by doing anything but buy the products. This contrasts with the Supporting and Committed consumer who becomes involved in peripheral Fairtrade schemes and promotions. In essence this describes the ordinary pro Fairtrade consumer.

Yet this behaviour is also characterised by optimism and a willingness to invest<sup>175</sup>, coupled sometimes with annoyance at the lack of variety and availability of produce and the constraints this imposes, while moralising over the lack of commitment of other people or organisations to Fairtrade. This annoyance at the limited penetration of Fairtrade merchandise will sometimes be manifested by deliberately quitting the premises<sup>176</sup> or by asking specifically for Fairtrade produce – behaviour more commonly associated with the supporting to committed behavioural group.

*If I don't have a Fairtrade choice I will go into another shop to find it if I am buying a box of tea bags, but if it's just for a cup of tea, I'll just buy the tea*<sup>177</sup>

This purchase behaviour was found to be more changeable than most, and is mediated by influences such as the subjective conditions of price, taste, quality and convenience, with the result that the purchase pattern for Fairtrade goods is vacillating, irregular and unpredictable, and not infrequently resolves into impulse buying<sup>178</sup> simply because there is something desirable there, so any budgetary restraints are sidelined temporarily.

Supporting Fairtrade by investing in it, is found to be strengthened by having faith<sup>179</sup> in the process - and sometimes by altruism<sup>180</sup> - but it is also subject to mood<sup>181</sup> and feelings of good will towards the producers, and this could sometimes help overcome the hurdles of price, taste quality and convenience, despite situational prioritising<sup>182</sup> controlling the behaviour on occasion, causing vacillation over such concerns as budgetary limitations. So there is a constant vacillation taking place during the purchase decision making process, where one impulse, which is to buy Fairtrade, is often counterbalanced by another, which is to avoid it.

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<sup>175</sup> M 56

<sup>176</sup> M 78

<sup>177</sup> T24

<sup>178</sup> M 35

<sup>179</sup> M 103

<sup>180</sup> M 105

<sup>181</sup> M 48

<sup>182</sup> M 71

### 3.4.5 Supporting and Committed Behaviour

The consumer showing supporting and committed behaviour is characterised by a determination to support Fairtrade no matter what, this consumer's lifestyle is ruled by commitment to Fairtrade.

*'Well I am obviously passionately supportive of Fairtrade: it's just become what I do with my life'*<sup>183</sup>

Properties of this behavioural group are: empathising, involving and engaging, and committed. From the data and the compiled responses of the consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour type, their belief was found to be predicated fundamentally upon a level of understanding of the realities of the lives of marginalised third world producers,<sup>184</sup> of the exploitation which they have suffered and are still suffering, and the lack of available infrastructure – schools and education, hospitals and healthcare.

*'The world has moved on and there are better ways that people can have their own autonomy and more say over how they run their business without being dominated by what the UK wants'*<sup>185</sup>

It links to an awareness of child slave labour, child poverty, the starvation and the suffering being inflicted upon the developing countries so that the 'developed' world, that is, primarily, the Northern nations, can have cheap food and cheap luxuries. It is also fundamentally opposed to the predominant capitalist trading model driven by Northern transnational corporations, which sees profit as the only motivator and shareholders as the recipients of this benefice. For example one of the respondents stated:

*'It is just capitalism I think is the whole problem behind it. If the companies decided not to make that much money, then FT would be a perfectly reasonable thing to do'*<sup>186</sup>

Consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour preferred instead that all the benefits go to those whose labour has grown, produced or created the goods which are offered to the wealthy – by comparison - consumer in the developed countries. Consumers also tended to be involved in various other causes, such as overall fairness, enfranchisement of women, and children's education. One respondent said-

*'Fairtrade initiatives also increase the education of the participants that allowed them to educate their children especially as well as the independence of women and girls'*<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> T13

<sup>184</sup> M 41

<sup>185</sup> T14

<sup>186</sup> T19

<sup>187</sup> T16

In some manifestations of this behaviour, there is seen to be a religious forming, predicated upon the tenets of love for the poor, and a strict moral obligation to do all that is possible to help the poor, the oppressed and the weak<sup>188</sup>.

Some respondents were found to apply this equally to, for example, northern manufacturers such as Cadbury, who claim that they are ethical because they have one product which they claim has some Fairtrade ingredients in it. This company liked to be seen to be Fairtrade, then in order that this behaviour can interact with them and become involved, engaging with their ethos, then, it is suggested by some respondents, they need to become totally Fairtrade across the board<sup>189</sup>. All those ingredients which could be Fairtrade should be. There can be no excuse for avoiding Fairtrade in most of their products.

Optimism for the future was found to be a characteristic of the Supporting and Committed behaviour, coupled with a very positive attitude towards the work and ethos of Fairtrade. There is also a strongly held trust and belief<sup>190</sup> in Fairtrade product and the logo is trusted as a sign of fairness towards the producers.

Although respondents were aware of the various stories purporting to illustrate failings in the Fairtrade process, their behaviour showed a pronounced empathy<sup>191</sup> for the marginalised producers to the extent that these stories are ignored or refuted. And where there is no possibility of refutation, willing suspension of disbelief allows them to be treated as calumnies and simply sidelined or dismissed.

*I have made my mind that I am gonna buy Fairtrade. Whether or not I have any doubts about it won't stop me buying it because you can only hope that you are doing the right thing'*<sup>192</sup>

The Supporting and Committed behavioural type, entails active engagement with the concept of Fairtrade. Engaging with the Fairtrade ethos was demonstrated by a determination to spread the word to other consumers and to become involved<sup>193</sup> with publicity events such as fairs and exhibitions – for example, the annual Fairtrade Fortnight – so as to heighten public awareness and support. One respondent said:

*I noticed that the cooperative shop is having a Fair Trade Fortnight soon'*<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> M 76

<sup>189</sup> M 108

<sup>190</sup> M 13

<sup>191</sup> M 73

<sup>192</sup> T3

<sup>193</sup> M 76

<sup>194</sup> T53

While this behaviour could be considered to be moralising or proselytising, contextually it is completely genuine and predicated upon a deeply held belief in the need to help, and of the efficacy of the Fairtrade process. For example:

*I do much more with groups, with community groups: more the sort of thing to make people think.... we make small banners... that we use in public and try and engage people'*<sup>195</sup>

The consumers showing this behaviour support Fairtrade by not only buying Fairtrade goods, but also being involved in Fairtrade fairs and promotions, seeking out Fairtrade shops and generally promoting Fairtrade when they can. Committed supporters, were found to be aware of the rationale behind the Fairtrade movement, and have become involved at a personal level with the ethos.

*I got more and more involved in time, and promoted it... I am obviously passionately supportive of Fairtrade'*<sup>196</sup>

From the interviews, it is apparent that the respondents portrayed their behaviour as simply trying to do the right thing. They tended to be strongly opposed to the capitalist model of profit for institutions and shareholders and would very much prefer to see the money go to the farmers and producers.<sup>197</sup> Moreover, they were inclined to support similar types of movement or organisation, and are politically aware.

They were also found to boycott<sup>198</sup> businesses which they perceived to be oppressive or exploitative, such as the Nestlé, and will vote with their pockets, deliberately leaving shops which do not stock Fairtrade.

*I now boycott more stores: I try and boycott Tesco, and avoiding Nestle is an obvious one'*<sup>199</sup>

However, for the most part they support the increasing involvement of supermarkets, seeing this as a way of bringing Fairtrade goods to a wider audience, as one respondent said:

*I don't trust supermarkets because they represent pure capitalism, but they have given Fairtrade great exposure'*<sup>200</sup>

Some respondents manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour remarked that money has power. It may be only a little which each consumer gives, but taken in the aggregate, these small contributions have the power to change the world for the marginalised producers.

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<sup>195</sup> T21

<sup>196</sup> T13

<sup>197</sup> M 68

<sup>198</sup> M 59

<sup>199</sup> T46

<sup>200</sup> T51

*I do know that money has power so I do spend a lot of time researching how to spend it because I know that maybe it's a drop in the ocean but it does make a difference*<sup>201</sup>

Linked to this involvement in and engaging with Fairtrade, the support for the aims of Fairtrade and of the producers of the developing countries in whom Fairtrade invests was demonstrated in many ways, not least by consistently buying Fairtrade produce and buying it preferentially over other produce.

*[if there is no Fairtrade option] ...I just won't buy anything if they don't have a Fairtrade option and if I can't afford it then I will leave it. Fairtrade informs my other purchases as well, so ... I try and buy local.... because I see that as an extension of Fairtrade'*<sup>202</sup>

Price was not found to be a constraint for a Fairtrade product, since the value outweighed the price. Where there is hesitation or uncertainty, this normally arises only when there is no Fairtrade option available for purchase. Lack of availability<sup>203</sup> was commented on as cause for concern, but was not used to justify not buying Fairtrade merchandise. Instead, lack of availability was found to be an expression of frustration at not being able to purchase the necessary consumables from a Fairtrade source<sup>204</sup>.

An interesting characteristic of the purchase pattern exhibited by this behaviour type is that of ethical substitution<sup>205</sup> - if there was no Fairtrade option available at the time of purchase, then something which is comparable, but from another ethical source, would be used as a substitute, thereby preserving the drive for ethical consumption, for example one respondent stated:

*If I can't find Fairtrade I will try to find an ethical equivalent before giving up*<sup>206</sup>

In sum, as emerged from the data, and as can be seen from the above explanation, there appear to be five overarching behavioural types- Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed. However, there is a scope for consumers to move between these behaviours, and on occasion it would not take much to move a consumer from one behaviour to another on the spectrum (figure 4).

Some demonstrable certainty that the money is remitted to the producer would change a lot of minds, whereas one sceptical respondent suggested that-

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<sup>201</sup> T43

<sup>202</sup> T64

<sup>203</sup> M 1

<sup>204</sup> M 15

<sup>205</sup> M 2

<sup>206</sup> T51

*I would be influenced by people I regarded as credible and of status, and if they were supporting Fairtrade issues and regarding a particular Fairtrade product that would be of significance to me*<sup>207</sup>

Contrariwise, negative information was also able to have an effect, however, for the most part it would need to be very serious, if not dramatic.

*It wouldn't stop me buying unless there was a real outcry, showing that it was all a scam*<sup>208</sup>

And almost every respondent interviewed had an 'if... then' scenario which would either permit or constrain behavioural change.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated that unlike mainstream purchase decisions, decisions made about buying Fairtrade products are far more complex, and the intricately woven tapestry of choice and counter choice, moral imperatives and convenience, provides a rich vein for investigation. While it can be said that no two consumers are alike, the disparities between their different behaviours is increased considerably in its variety and depth when confronted with the impetus to do good. The fact that the contribution demanded is normally picayune in no way eases the problem, and the need for Reconciling Demands of Conscience is not dependent so much upon how much is requested, but upon the demand itself, and the ramifications of that demand. The next chapter will examine these behavioural groups through the lens of the different stages in the emergent process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

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<sup>207</sup> T6

<sup>208</sup> T3

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Reconciling Demands of Conscience

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the emergent five behaviour types of: Supporting and Committed, Supporting but Vacillating, Questioning but Supporting, Sceptical, and Cynical on a continuum of behaviours, and the concept of consumers' Behavioural Mutability which is seen in consumers' purchase patterns. This chapter begins by presenting the main concern of consumers- demands of conscience when faced with the choice of purchasing Fairtrade products, followed by an overview of the core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience through which consumers are able to process their main concern. The process of Reconciling is comprised of four stages which are: Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting and Reflecting.

The chapter begins by presenting the main concern of consumers in the substantive area of Fairtrade, followed by presenting an overview of the emergent theory. The process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, its stages and their respective properties are expounded in relation to the emergent five behaviour types. The chapter then presents the evaluation criteria for the emergent theory in this research and concludes by summarising the emergent theory.

#### 4.2 Main Concern: Demands of Conscience<sup>209</sup>

In grounded theory, the researcher approaches the research setting with minimal or no preconceptions about the substantive area under research and directly engages with the data, allowing the main concern of the participants to emerge (Glaser, 1998). In examining consumers' behaviour in the context of Fairtrade purchase, there was found to be an added component of emotional involvement, since Fairtrade is fraught with overtones of helping marginalised producers, which changes the dynamics of the process. The main concern of consumers which emerged from this research is the Demands of Conscience resulting from the appeals which Fairtrade makes to their conscience. However, depending on the behaviour type exhibited by the consumers, they experienced varying degrees of Demands of Conscience. One of the respondents felt intuitively that they have a duty to *do something to help the marginalised producers*<sup>210</sup> while despite recognising their duty to help, many respondents felt relatively helpless since the

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<sup>209</sup> M11

<sup>210</sup> M2, T3

problem was so physically distant<sup>211</sup> from them, nor could they trust the international conglomerates. With the exception of a small group of respondents who expressed total indifference towards Fairtrade, respondents experienced varying degrees of mental discomfort and guilty conscience when they failed to buy a Fairtrade product. Some felt that they had failed to support the marginalised third world producers by not purchasing, that this was in some way a betrayal of the weak, and therefore indirectly supporting, to a degree, the exploitation of the marginalised producers in the global South<sup>212</sup>. Others, by making a positive decision to buy Fairtrade goods, felt that they were helping to reduce this exploitation. Consumers in the present study experienced demands of their conscience, caused by the appeals made by Fairtrade, found that they needed to resolve this concern, and the ways in which they achieved this resolution is conceptualised as the core category of the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

The next section gives an overview of the emergent theory, followed by a detailed explanation of the properties and the stages of the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

### 4.3 Theoretical Overview of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

“The goal of grounded theory is to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved. ....The generation of theory occurs around a core category ... which accounts for most of the variation in a pattern of behaviour.” (Glaser, 1978. P. 24).

From the analysis of data by employing the constant comparison method, it was found that for consumers to feel internally satisfied with their purchase decision regarding Fairtrade products, they may have to reconcile their actions with their conscience, particularly if they took the decision not to buy Fairtrade. The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience conceptualises the ways in which consumers iteratively process the demands of their conscience. The theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the Basic Social Psychological Process (BSPP), which consists of four stages: the stage of Comfort<sup>213</sup> Zoning, the stage of Evaluating, the stage of Acting and the stage of Reflecting (Figure 5). The stage of Comfort Zoning is composed of *Forming*<sup>214</sup> and *General Purchase Pattern*<sup>215</sup>, the Stage of Evaluation<sup>216</sup>, includes

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<sup>211</sup> M45

<sup>212</sup> M56

<sup>213</sup> M61

<sup>214</sup> M15



*Ambivalence*<sup>217</sup>, *Weighing Up*<sup>218</sup> and *Situational Prioritising*<sup>219</sup>, the Stage of Acting<sup>220</sup>, which includes *Buying, Not Buying, Going Without and Ethical Substituting*, and the Stage of Reflecting<sup>221</sup>, which involves *Reinforcing*<sup>222</sup> and *Reconciling*<sup>223</sup>. The stage of Comfort Zoning describes the desire of the consumer to be somewhere where they feel comfortable, both mentally and physically, and affects their *Forming*. It conceptualises consumers' purchase behaviour as to be predicated upon a lifetime of formative influences, and consists of the attitudes, values and beliefs which play a part in the consumer's purchase decision making. The concept of *Forming* also implies that consumers' attitudes values and beliefs may change as a result of subsequent events or experiences.

From this, the consumers may be perceived as constructs deriving from their *Forming* and these constructs create *General Purchase Patterns*. This *Forming* and their *General Purchase Pattern* keep consumers in their Comfort Zone. The *Conditions*<sup>224</sup> *Affecting* Comfort Zoning could be caused because of consumers' emerging awareness of the concept of Fairtrade and mainstreaming of Fairtrade products through channels like supermarkets, high street cafés and restaurants, as well as the institutional uptake of Fairtrade by Government organisations, universities and schools. This interaction with, and exposure to Fairtrade leads to the consumers feeling *Ambivalent* as they come into potential conflict with their moral arrow<sup>225</sup> which suggests helping the producers in the developing countries get fair wages for their labour, when self-catering may demand that the consumers put themselves first in their purchase decisions.

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<sup>215</sup> M16

<sup>216</sup> M62

<sup>217</sup> M20

<sup>218</sup> M21

<sup>219</sup> M22

<sup>220</sup> M63

<sup>221</sup> M64

<sup>222</sup> M67

<sup>223</sup> M68

<sup>224</sup> M17

<sup>225</sup> M12

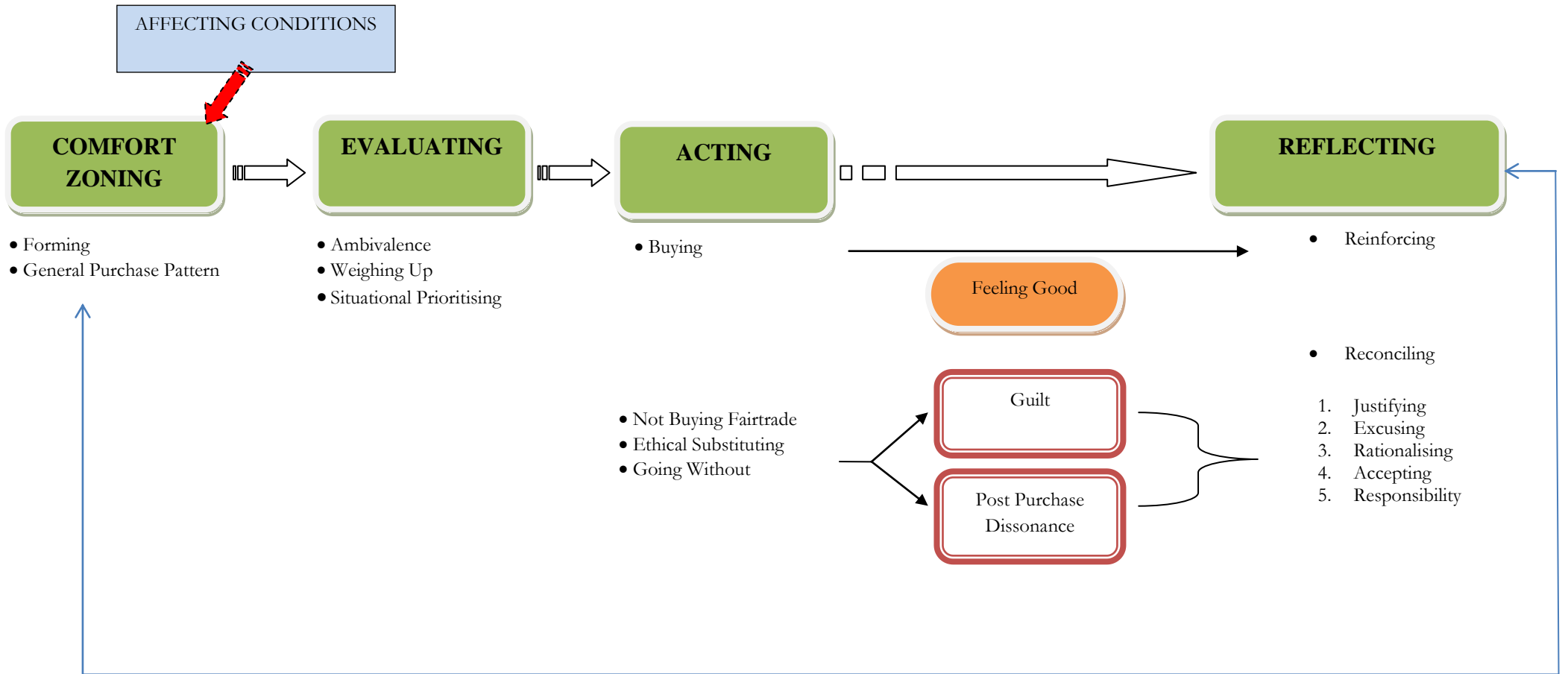


Figure 5: Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience (Source: This Research)

So as to alleviate this state of ambivalence and reach a decision, the consumers enter the Stage of Evaluating where they begin *Weighing Up* the attributes of the potential purchase, and by *Situationally Prioritising*, they contrast and select one factor over another as a function of the immediacy and importance of their situation<sup>226</sup>. Substantially, Evaluating which includes price and affordability also comprises of the moral proposition and the story behind the product.

This having been done, the consumer enters the Stage of Acting in which he or she acts upon his or her decision and effects a purchase. From the present study it is found that in the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making process, at this point, the consumer may buy a Fairtrade product and hence invests in the ethos of Fairtrade, or does not buy a Fairtrade product and hence fails to invest in the ethos of Fairtrade<sup>227</sup>. However, consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed<sup>228</sup> behaviour were also found to employ *Ethical Substituting*,<sup>229</sup> which entails buying an ethical substitute if a Fairtrade product is unavailable or *Going Without*<sup>230</sup> the product and coming back later to buy an ethical or Fairtrade product. After taking a purchase decision, the consumer then enters the last stage of Reflecting<sup>231</sup>. When consumers, who chose not to buy Fairtrade, felt that by not investing in the ethos, they had denied their moral arrow, - had acted against the Demands of Conscience - they experienced the need to *Reconcile*<sup>232</sup> their decision making, while when they bought the Fairtrade product, they felt the need to *Reinforce*<sup>233</sup> their decision. At the point when consumers felt the need to *Reconcile* and settle themselves psychologically they employed Reconciling Strategies<sup>234</sup>. These strategies allow them to confirm their decision and therefore either *Reinforce* their choices or *Reconcile* them by deciding to do better next time. As the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is an iterative one, after the stage of Reflecting, the purchase experience reverberates in the form of feedback<sup>235</sup> into the stage of Comfort Zoning, and may affect *Forming*.

#### 4.4 Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

The core category in a grounded theory study accounts for most of the variations in the data, regarding the main concern of the respondent, and explicates the ways in which the respondents process their main concern (Glaser & Holton, 2004). The core category in this study is the Basic Social Psychological Process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which explicates how consumers resolved their main concern of demands of conscience. The sub-core categories of this process are those of Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting, and Reflecting. Table 15 provides

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<sup>226</sup> M13

<sup>227</sup> M66

<sup>228</sup> M5

<sup>229</sup> M51

<sup>230</sup> M44

<sup>231</sup> M64

<sup>232</sup> M68

<sup>233</sup> M67

<sup>234</sup> M70

<sup>235</sup> M10

an overview of the substantive and theoretical codes involved, thus providing a summary of the emergent theory.

<b>Reconciling Demands of Conscience</b>	Core category which is the process by which consumers process their demands of conscience when faced with the choice of Fairtrade products.		
	<b>Comfort Zoning</b>	Sub core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which involves the consumer trying to remain psychologically comfortable and at ease with self.	
		Forming	Property
		General Purchase Pattern	Property
		<i>Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning.</i>	Conditions which have the capacity to change the consumer's stance vis-à-vis any particular purchase. These include experience of a product – good and bad – experiences of the country of origin, exposure to information and respect for informed opinion.
	<b>Evaluating</b>	Sub core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which involves consideration of any relevant factors and product attributes so as to achieve a satisfactory purchase.	
		Ambivalence	Property
		Weighing Up	Property
		Situational Prioritising	Property
	<b>Acting</b>	Sub core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which entails not only the dynamic of effecting a purchase, but also the possible alternative outcomes such as ethical substituting or going without a purchase.	
		Buying/Not buying	Property
		Ethical Substituting	Property
		Going Without	Property
	<b>Reflecting</b>	Sub core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which entails a reconsideration of the results of purchasing. Subjectively sound decisions are reinforced, while subjectively unsound decisions are examined and accounted for by justifying, excusing or otherwise self-exonerating strategies so as to reconcile any guilt which may concern the consumer.	
Reinforcing		Property	
Reconciling		Property	
<p><b>Theoretical codes:</b></p> <p>The emergent theory is developed applying a mix of process and strategy families of theoretical codes, whereby Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the Basic Social Psychological Process by which consumers process their main concern of demands of conscience. The other theoretical code is the strategy family, whereby, consumers were found to employ Reconciling Strategies to assuage any feeling of guilt, if they failed to invest in the ethos of Fairtrade. Relatively minor theoretical codes implicit in the emergent theory include amplifiers such as Affecting Conditions, which precipitate Ambivalence and Evaluating, and the Conditions precipitating Reconciling - Guilty Conscience and Dissonance.</p>			

Table 15: Substantive and Theoretical Codes in the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

Taking into consideration the behavioural nuances, it was deemed important to examine all the stages in the process of Reconciling through the lens of the five behavioural types of: Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting but Committed.

#### 4.4.1. Stage of Comfort Zoning

The first stage in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is Comfort Zoning, which consists of consumers' *Forming* and *General Purchase Pattern* as depicted in Figure 6. It comprises of the patterns of behaviour which represent the tendency of the consumer to stay with what they know – to adhere as nearly as possible to what is tried and tested, known and comfortable in purchase behaviour. For example one of the respondents stated that when she goes to a supermarket she is blinkered<sup>236</sup> and tends to follow the same shopping pattern every time. Comfort Zoning then also entails habitual shopping and provides a background to the consumers' attitudes, opinions and behaviour towards investing in Fairtrade.

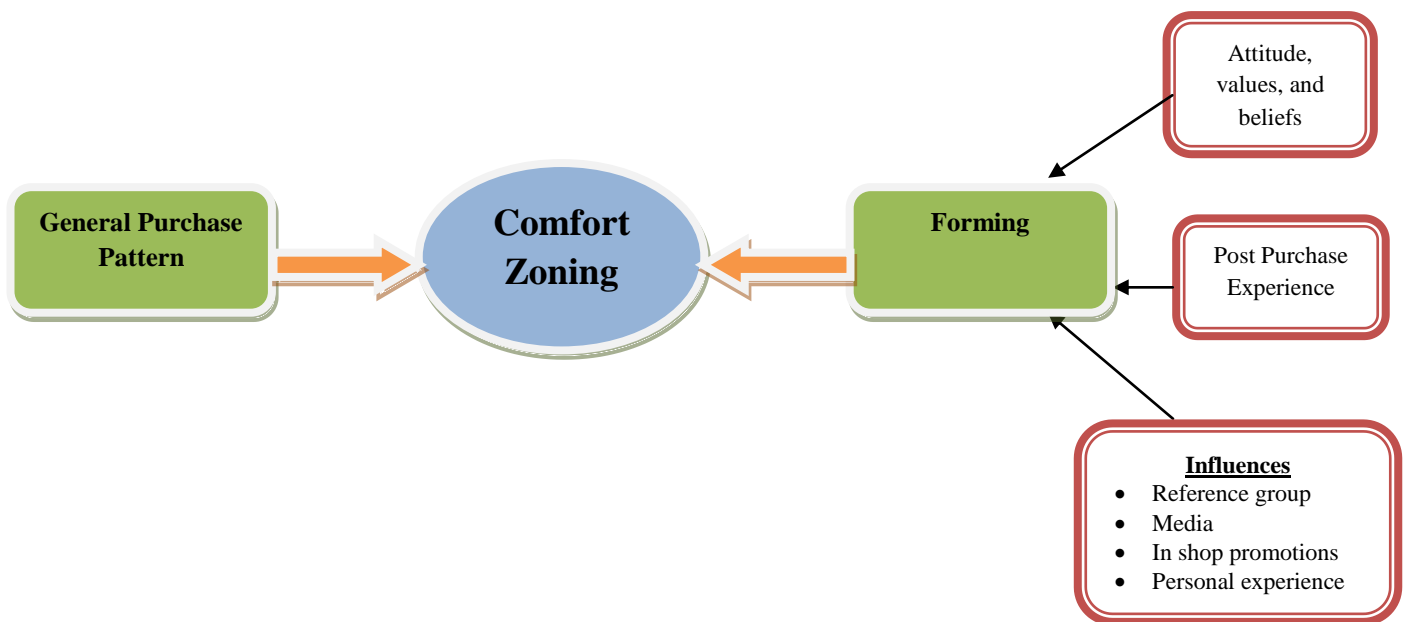


Figure 6: Stage of Comfort Zoning (Source: This Research)

Comfort Zoning in the context of Fairtrade is found to either deters the consumer from investing in Fairtrade because it is new, untried and untested, or, at the very least, initially causes the consumer to exercise caution. For consumers manifesting Supporting to Committed behaviour towards the Fairtrade's ethical proposition, failing to support Fairtrade would move

<sup>236</sup> M16, T34

them out of their Comfort Zone to a place where they felt very uncomfortable about their failure to comply with the demands of their conscience, and this led them to the point wherein they needed to Reconcile the Demands of their Conscience so that they could feel at peace with themselves. As one respondent remarked, she would feel guilty if she bought produce which was non Fairtrade<sup>237</sup>.

The consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour were found to have very strong opinion about a brand they like and are comfortable buying from that brand as long as it is desirable<sup>238</sup>. Similarly with consumers exhibiting Vacillating but Supporting, Questioning but Supporting or Sceptical behaviour, as long as they are aware of what Fairtrade really means and stands for, if they then fail to buy Fairtrade, their actions move them from their Comfort Zone<sup>239</sup>, and propel them into a state of discomfort because of failure to follow their moral arrow.

#### 4.4.1.1. Forming

“If all future situations were identical with past ones, then error would be at a minimum.... but the future is uncertain, is to some extent judged, labelled and known after it happens. This means that human action necessarily must be rather tentative and exploratory. Unless a path of action has been well traversed, its terminal point is largely indeterminate. Both ends and means may be reformulated in transit because unexpected results occur. Commitment, even to a major way of life or destiny, is subject to revision in process.... [Humans], from whose acts temporal categories cannot be separated, make constant mistakes in judging past, present and future; their lives are marked by comedies and tragedies of error.” (Strauss, 1959 p. 36).

The emergent concept of *Forming* is a property of Comfort Zoning, which explicates the ways in which the mindset of the consumer is formed from childhood onwards. From the responses in the present study, consumers’ *Forming* was found to be developed through their background and upbringing, family, the influences of schools, friends, personal experience and religion<sup>240</sup>. *Forming* entails the creation of an intrinsic concept of self with which the individual is assumed to be comfortable. According to the behavioural types, for the Supporting and Committed behaviour type, *Forming* entails supporting the concept of Fairtrade and showing support and commitment by investing time, effort and money in the ethos of Fairtrade. For example one female respondent exhibiting supportive behaviour towards Fairtrade stated that buying

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<sup>237</sup> T3

<sup>238</sup> M9

<sup>239</sup> M61

<sup>240</sup> M14

Fairtrade products and supporting the movement were an essential part of her everyday life -

*Fairtrade is something which I try and have as part of my everyday life'*<sup>241</sup>

- and provided that there is a Fairtrade option for a given product, that that option is bought rather than any product manufactured by exploiting the marginalised producers<sup>242</sup>.

Consumers exhibiting Supporting but Vacillating<sup>243</sup> behaviour were found to support Fairtrade, however, indecisiveness and uncertainty existed in their minds. They did not appear to know if they really wanted Fairtrade or not. One respondent described his behaviour towards Fairtrade, as being supportive of the idea of Fairtrade; however he or she would not always buy Fairtrade products<sup>244</sup>.

Forming for the consumers exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour entails support for Fairtrade, mediated however by the constant search for certainty,<sup>245</sup> this led to consumers buying what is sure and what is known, such as well-known brands. For example one female respondent said she always buys Lush products because she has a sensitive skin and she trusts their products, also Lush being an ethical company is a bonus for her, but is not the primary factor in purchasing the product.<sup>246</sup> Another respondent said-

*There's a bit of a conundrum about what to buy, but I think Fairtrade is normally better'*<sup>247</sup>

Consumers therefore, exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour, although supporting Fairtrade in theory were found to be confused between buying Fairtrade and buying their usual brands. Comfort zoning for such consumers was found to be a place where they could avoid areas of doubt and uncertainty, and would stick to the familiar in their shopping pattern<sup>248</sup>.

On the other hand consumers exhibiting Sceptical<sup>249</sup> behaviour were found to obtain comfort in their shopping behaviour by rejecting Fairtrade, since it cannot be easily proven<sup>250</sup>. One respondent's narrative indicated his scepticism-

*I'm going to be aware that a lot of false claims are made in advertising<sup>251</sup>, so when I'm presented with any marketing proposition... and Fairtrade is a proposition, then from the*

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<sup>241</sup> M5, T140

<sup>242</sup> M16

<sup>243</sup> M6

<sup>244</sup> M18, T12

<sup>245</sup> M23

<sup>246</sup> T1

<sup>247</sup> M7, T145

<sup>248</sup> M 10

<sup>249</sup> M8

<sup>250</sup> M24

<sup>251</sup> M 32

*believability point of view, I'm going to be sceptical about it [but] that scepticism can be challenged by objective evidence making the Fairtrade claims more credible'*<sup>252</sup>

Thus this consumer is aware of the potential for the system to mislead the consumer, hence is sceptical about any claims, yet is willing to change if his doubts can be assuaged.

*Forming* for consumers showing Cynical behaviour is found to entail refusing to trust any corporate promises and to distrust entirely what big business tries to present<sup>253</sup>. By the same token, Fairtrade is considered to be nothing but a marketing ploy, or a Public Relations (PR) exercise by the multinationals<sup>254</sup>. One female respondent said that by putting the Fairtrade logo on their products, these multinationals are:

“Jumping on the bandwagon”<sup>255</sup>

From the above explanation, it is clear that consumers showed behaviours pertaining to a specific behavioural group. However, as the name suggests, *Forming* was found to change under influences such as personal experience, information, and peer pressure<sup>256</sup>. *Forming* was found to influence the consumer's perception yet be subject to changes, therefore *Forming* was found to be mutable<sup>257</sup> yet informs the consumer's purchase decision making. *Forming* was found to be a precursor to any purchase procedure yet is itself informed by previous purchase procedures. As emerged from the data, influences such as experience, media and information, were found to be responsible for changes in a consumer's *Forming* over time. These influences have been discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

#### **4.4.1.2. General Purchase Pattern**

The emergent stage of Comfort Zoning was found to also include consumers having a fairly fixed purchase pattern which entails staying with tried and tested products and avoiding trying something new<sup>258</sup>. From the responses it was found that many shoppers purchase out of habit<sup>259</sup>, regularly buying the same things and following the same routine. For some consumers it was only when something new caught their eye that their shopping pattern might be disrupted, while other consumers seek for value for money, for example one of the male respondents, said that he would always go for the products which give him value for money-

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<sup>252</sup> T1-5

<sup>253</sup> M26

<sup>254</sup> M26

<sup>255</sup> M27, T50

<sup>256</sup> M41

<sup>257</sup> M71

<sup>258</sup> M16

<sup>259</sup> M72



*'Generally when I go out, I'm always careful with cost, there's always cost and quality, I know that I am not getting very bad price but I'm also getting the decent quality and I am saving money. I go with that idea in my mind for shopping, I go for the reduced two for one offers'*<sup>260</sup>

Some of the respondents indeed described themselves as being 'blinkerred'<sup>261</sup> to some extent while shopping.

According to the five emergent behavioural groups, the general purchase pattern of consumers manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour entailed seeking out Fairtrade goods wherever possible and avoiding non Fairtrade goods<sup>262</sup>. This behaviour was found to be instinctive since the consumers supporting Fairtrade were aware of the ramifications of the Fairtrade ethos and its moral proposition.<sup>263</sup>

The consumers exhibiting Vacillating but Supporting behaviour towards Fairtrade did not show any fixed purchase pattern. This was found to be caused by influences such as price,<sup>264</sup> quality,<sup>265</sup> availability<sup>266</sup> and desirability.<sup>267</sup> Fairtrade products are frequently sidelined,<sup>268</sup> and put out of mind, since if they are metaphorically not there, they cannot be bought, and hence there is no blame. For example, one of the respondents who at least in theory supported Fairtrade, said-

*'But I did buy the cheaper ones. I stopped and I thought about it, I just stopped and had a think, but I finally bought the cheaper – but I did feel bad about it., so I was aware of it and felt bad about it and felt I should have opted for Fairtrade.'*<sup>269</sup>

The general purchase pattern of consumers exhibiting Supporting but Vacillating behaviour was found to be that of being supportive of Fairtrade in theory but indecisive towards buying Fairtrade products, the major reason being the doubts about the workability of Fairtrade. For example one of the respondents said that if more information is provided about the process of Fairtrade then she could consider buying Fairtrade products as she supports the idea<sup>270</sup> in principle.

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<sup>260</sup> T6

<sup>261</sup> T39

<sup>262</sup> M16

<sup>263</sup> M73

<sup>264</sup> M1

<sup>265</sup> M74

<sup>266</sup> M83

<sup>267</sup> M100

<sup>268</sup> M101

<sup>269</sup> M121

<sup>270</sup> T31

The consumers exhibiting Sceptical and Cynical behaviour were found to stick to the familiar in their shopping pattern.<sup>271</sup> However, data shows that if they bought a Fairtrade product by chance, and found it desirable then they would repurchase since they were satisfied with it. However the fact of it being a Fairtrade product was not considered significant<sup>272</sup>.

This behaviour entails generally a ‘me-first,’<sup>273</sup> approach to shopping. This does not suggest that the consumer never invested in Fairtrade, on the contrary if Fairtrade suited the consumers’ interests, needs and desires, then the product was bought - one female respondent for example, said –

*I don't tend to get something because it is Fairtrade, it is more the case that some of the goods I buy are Fairtrade as well ... it does not necessarily impact on me.*<sup>274</sup>

To conclude the stage of Comfort Zoning, as long as the consumers remained true to the tenets of their Forming, they would remain inside their Comfort Zone. Straying from this caused discomfort and the consumer would try to return to the zone of comfort. However in the context of the present study there were found to be Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning<sup>275</sup> (see below) which interrupted the consumers in the stage of Comfort Zoning. These conditions created conflicts and ambivalence in the minds of consumers if they were at variance with the demands of their conscience, forcing them into the stage of Evaluating. These affecting conditions are explicated below.

#### **4.4.1.3 Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning**

From the interviews it was found that there are various conditions which have the capacity to change any decision which would have otherwise been predicated upon the consumer’s Forming or General Purchase Pattern. Although Comfort Zoning, to a degree, directs basic behaviour in the consumers, Affecting Conditions<sup>276</sup> in the form of awareness of the concept of Fairtrade and Mainstreaming of Fairtrade<sup>277</sup> can intrude into the purchase process and affect the consumers’ normal purchase patterns. For some consumers these conditions were found to be short-lived, and had a degree of immediacy<sup>278</sup> about them such that their impact was only temporary, thus modifying the consumer’s behaviour at the time, but leaving no lasting impression. An example

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<sup>271</sup> M 10

<sup>272</sup> T7

<sup>273</sup> M102

<sup>274</sup> T1

<sup>275</sup> M17

<sup>276</sup> M17

<sup>277</sup> M 71

<sup>278</sup> M 35

of this might be the presence of a mainstream product which was priced<sup>279</sup> significantly lower than a comparable Fairtrade option. Alternatively conditions can be enduring and produce a long term effect. These conditions are discussed below.

As explained in Chapter Three in the context of Behavioural Mutability, the *Awareness* of the concept of Fairtrade is explicated as an external factor influencing consumers in their comfort zones. The existence and the ethos of Fairtrade is an invitation to the consumer to become involved with the concept of Fairtrade.<sup>280</sup> The existence of the Fairtrade concept therefore induced different emotions to those of routine purchasing, forcing consumers out of their comfort zones. By offering an alternative motivation for buying a commodity, Fairtrade was found to have, to some extent, a disrupting effect upon the consumers' *General Purchase Pattern* when they first encountered it, creating feelings of ambivalence<sup>281</sup>, since it required the consumer to consider other reasons for buying a product than the demands of the normal weekly shopping trip: reasons such as being able to help the marginalised producers who were significantly worse off than the consumer.<sup>282</sup> For example one respondent said-

*I think over the last let's say 10 years it has increased in like sort of more Fairtrade goods but I think that is becoming kind of fashionable which is great that's really cool, let's be fashionable let's be cool and make sure that people can eat okay hmmm yeah so I think overall I think there could be more, more could be done*<sup>283</sup>

However, simply being aware of Fairtrade's existence has a relatively small impact compared with being more fully aware of the purpose and the ethos behind Fairtrade. This increased depth of awareness had a powerful affect on the consumer's decision making, intensifying their sense of moral obligation<sup>284</sup>. However, this ambivalence is predicated upon the strength of the consumers' *Forming* and *General Purchase Pattern*, and the conflict between those patterns and moral obligation.<sup>285</sup> General awareness of Fairtrade – that it exists, what it is for, what it does - has been increasing steadily over several years.<sup>286</sup> For example, the institutional adoption of Fairtrade by a large part of the Public sector has been instrumental in not only raising awareness of Fairtrade, but also providing the opportunity for consumers to experience it for themselves. Awareness has also been heightened by civic adoption of Fairtrade, with various towns declaring

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<sup>279</sup> M 4

<sup>281</sup> M20

<sup>282</sup> M 75

<sup>283</sup> T5

<sup>284</sup> M12

<sup>285</sup> M 98

<sup>286</sup> M 49

themselves for Fairtrade, and Wales becoming the first Fairtrade Nation. All of this was found to have affected consumers' comfort zones. This increase in Awareness leads into the second condition of *Mainstreaming* of Fairtrade. The comparative invisibility of Fairtrade as expressed by one of the respondents is that fair trade shops are usually not very attractive -

*'That little dark Fairtrade shop in another part of the city'*<sup>287</sup>

The concern expressed by the respondent has been changed dramatically via the mainstreaming of Fairtrade by the major supermarket chains over the last decade<sup>288</sup>. Supermarkets now both stock and advertise Fairtrade products alongside the traditional mainstream ranges. This exposure to choice for consumers suggests that it has become difficult for some consumers to justify not buying Fairtrade products, therefore contributing further to the consumers' ambivalence,<sup>289</sup> and was an onslaught on the consumers' conscience. Furthermore, Fairtrade is competing on an increasingly level playing field, and this also created ambivalence since parity of price, quality and availability are emerging, removing some excuses<sup>290</sup> for not buying Fairtrade.

However some consumers, especially those exhibiting Sceptical and Cynical behaviour, expressed discomfort and doubts about the mainstreaming of Fairtrade products coupled with uncertain views of what is or is not Fairtrade,<sup>291</sup> and the degree to which Fairtrade has penetrated into the supermarkets. For example, one respondent claimed that -

*'it was almost impossible not to buy Fairtrade coffee, since that was virtually all that Sainsbury's stocked'*<sup>292</sup>

Some consumers, especially those supporting the ethos of Fairtrade felt that selling Fairtrade via the mainstream channels would increase exposure and hence sales.

However, these affecting conditions were often brought into conflict with those of habit, desires, preferences and budgetary constraints, inducing a sense of ambivalence in the consumer, which would frequently lead to a need to re-assess the available options, and hence moved the consumers into the stage of Evaluating.

#### **4.4.2. Stage of Evaluating**

The second stage of Evaluating<sup>293</sup> in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience entails consumers *Weighing Up* the possible choices in the context of Fairtrade purchase. The properties

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<sup>287</sup> T57

<sup>289</sup> M 77

<sup>290</sup> M105

<sup>291</sup> M 41

<sup>292</sup> T21

of the stage of Evaluating are those of *Ambivalence*, *Weighing Up* and *Situational Prioritising* (Figure 7). According to the responses it was found that the consumers are invited to add an extra, optional, component to their purchase check list and that is the availability of an ethical component in the form of a product being Fairtrade, rather than mainstream, with the entire attendant attributes of fairness<sup>294</sup>. This additional factor of Fairtrade is found to create *Ambivalence* and the routine of the normal purchase pattern of consumers is found to be disturbed, however the intrinsic value<sup>295</sup> of a product being Fairtrade is found to differ depending upon how the consumer perceives it.<sup>296</sup> The stage of Evaluating therefore entails attributing value to a putative purchase prior to buying or not buying a Fairtrade product, explicated as follows:

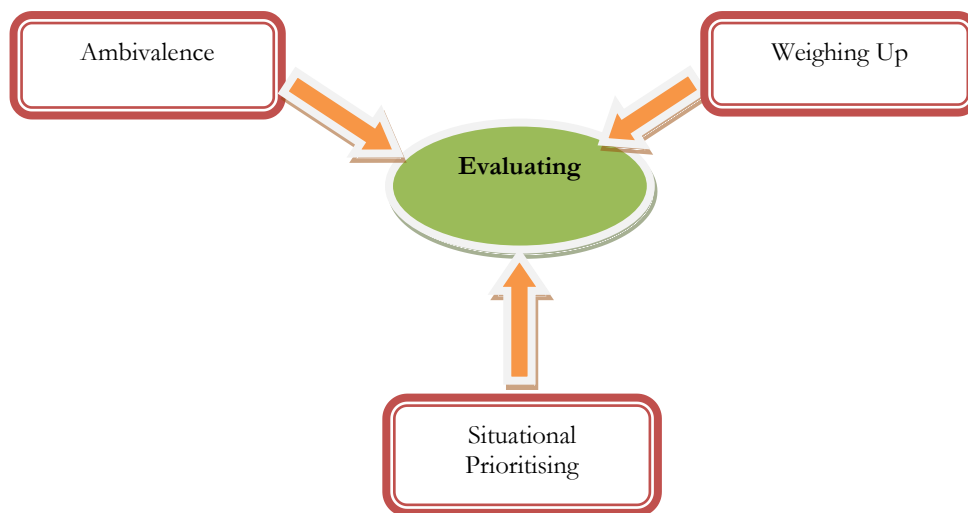


Figure 7: The Stage of Evaluating (Source: This Research)

#### 4.4.2.1 Ambivalence<sup>297</sup>

As discussed above, Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning, exist which caused ambivalence in consumers' minds during the purchase process. *Ambivalence*, etymologically, is a composite word, deriving from the Latin, *ambo* meaning both and *valens* meaning value (White, 1926). Ambivalence suggests that both conflicting potential decisions in a dichotomous state have equal

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<sup>293</sup> M23  
<sup>294</sup> M 95  
<sup>295</sup> M 20  
<sup>296</sup> M 41  
<sup>297</sup> M20

value, as do both opinions and their outcomes– to subscribe or not to subscribe to Fairtrade. The decision to employ the term ‘*ambivalent*’ to describe the mental state of the consumers at this stage of their purchase process was made since it encapsulates the ambiguity and equivocation which the consumers are experiencing when making up their minds to follow their moral arrow<sup>298</sup> or to follow their self-interest<sup>299</sup>.

Awareness<sup>300</sup> of the existence of Fairtrade created ambivalence since it opened up a new demand on the consumers, one which they need to think about when shopping. Mainstreaming<sup>301</sup> of Fairtrade was also found to have created ambivalence because supermarkets are viewed by some consumers as being highly capitalistic, profit driven and often quite expensive, the association of Fairtrade with supermarkets therefore seems counterintuitive, the ethos of the one being antithetical to aims of the other. The ambiguity of this unlikely alliance causes ambivalence in consumers’ minds.

However, while the degree of awareness and the mainstreaming of Fairtrade affects the consumers’ ambivalence towards it, this is further modulated by consumers’ behavioural types as discussed above. Therefore ambivalence is examined contextually through the lens of these behaviour types.

Ambivalence in the Cynical behaviour group entails considering Fairtrade but mistrusting the involvement of Fairtrade with transnational corporations whose only mission is the enhancement of profit by the diminution of cost.<sup>302</sup> Ambivalence arose primarily because the concept of Fairtrade was perceived to help the otherwise exploitable producers, but considered to be flawed by the involvement of corporate interest and therefore could not be trusted.

For the consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour, the entire concept of Fairtrade was perceived to be open to abuse and misuse by vested interests, particularly political and criminal, as well as to the machinations of venal middle men involved in a process which requires but does not receive good control and policing<sup>303</sup>. However, because of this predisposed, jaundiced view of the world, any ambivalence experienced by these consumers was marginal.

For the consumers exhibiting Sceptical behaviour, ambivalence was experienced for various reasons; firstly, the involvement of supermarkets and multinationals was viewed with

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<sup>298</sup> M12

<sup>299</sup> M106

<sup>300</sup> M103

<sup>301</sup> M 74

<sup>302</sup> M26

<sup>303</sup> M107

suspicion<sup>304</sup>. This involvement was seen as challenging the potential for Fairtrade to work properly, although it was considered to give Fairtrade the oxygen of exposure and display, it was only done from a for-profit basis. This therefore generated doubts about the credibility of Fairtrade, and therefore created the feeling of ambivalence. Secondly, *Ambivalence* was further caused by the presence of a price premium, since according to consumers showing Sceptical behaviour, there was no verification that the premium was remitted to the producer.<sup>305</sup> There are found to be several sources of ambivalence for consumers exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour, since they were aware of the ethical proposition of Fairtrade,<sup>306</sup> and were keen to support it. Matters which gave them cause for equivocation were particularly concerned with Fairtrade permitting the involvement of corporations such as Starbucks, Nestlé, Kraft and Cadbury's. For example one respondent said-

*'Companies like Nestlé which have frankly poor historical records in this area when they start peddling FT products, it does kind of dilute the effect of FT, because it makes you think, okay is that really FT'*<sup>307</sup>

These were seen as distinctly non-ethical organisations which had just adopted the Fairtrade logo as a means of portraying a good image whilst having little or no intention to try to ameliorate the living conditions of the marginalised producers<sup>308</sup>. This then generated doubts about the credibility of Fairtrade, and hence increased the feelings of ambivalence. Furthermore, these feelings of *Ambivalence* were found to be made worse by the involvement of supermarkets in the distribution of Fairtrade products, because buying from a supermarket was not considered consonant with the consumer's moral arrow<sup>309</sup>. This behaviour was found to involve a will to believe but demanded proof to help enable that belief, although the demand for proof was not as strong as exhibited by the Sceptical behaviour type. Further, ambivalence exhibited by the consumers exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour had a tendency to follow their moral arrow and consider the Fairtrade option but only in conjunction with other attractive options available.

As the name suggests the Supporting but Vacillating behaviour type involved wavering between choices, there is no fixed belief or pattern, and anything could cause *Ambivalence*. Although this behaviour type entails supporting Fairtrade, ambivalence in the purchase decision was caused by more mundane influences than the ethical cargo which Fairtrade carries. Matters such as price,

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<sup>304</sup> M 67

<sup>305</sup> M108

<sup>306</sup> M7

<sup>307</sup> T3

<sup>308</sup> M109

<sup>309</sup> M12

taste and availability weighed more heavily in the balance of decision.<sup>310</sup> If there was price parity between Fairtrade and mainstream products, this caused ambivalence, since the consumers understood Fairtrade’s ethical proposition. The consumer manifesting Supporting but Vacillating behaviour became caught in a loop of indecision, struggling to decide which course of action to adopt. They were unable to consolidate their decisions and therefore, experienced *Ambivalence* each and every time the purchase situation occurred, which would be on every occasion when there was the choice between a Fairtrade and a mainstream product, when the vacillation began again.<sup>311</sup> At the opposite end of the purchasing behaviour spectrum (Figure 4) to the Cynical behaviour, the consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour had an attitude which was very positive towards Fairtrade, and hence ambivalence was evoked only when there was any negative publicity about Fairtrade,<sup>312</sup> otherwise, these consumers were convinced by the entire ethos of Fairtrade and exhibited little ambivalence. The consumers’ intention was to choose Fairtrade products to the exclusion, where possible, of any other alternative, so therefore if there was no Fairtrade option available, and the purchase needed to be made, the consumers would be forced into an equivocal situation. Table 16 summarises the feeling of ambivalence experienced by consumers according to the five behaviour types.

Behaviour Types	Degree of Ambivalence
Cynical	The degree of ambivalence which this behaviour exhibits is very low, since most claims to propriety made in connection with Fairtrade are dismissed as flummery.
Sceptical	Sceptical behaviour exhibits a small degree of ambivalence about Fairtrade, since while the normal posture is one of doubting most things, changes in information can generate ambivalence when they threaten the consumers’ certainty, and tentative proof that Fairtrade works will induce considerable ambivalence.
Questioning but Supporting	Although this behaviour is manifested in buying whatever the consumer wants, the consumer still supports the idea of Fairtrade. This produces a degree of ambivalence, but because the consumer has no specific loyalties, the ambivalence can be quickly overcome, although not necessarily without some regrets later.
Supporting but Vacillating	Ambivalence in this behaviour group entails choosing between the best purchase option available and the uncertainty surrounding investing in the ethos of Fairtrade.
Supporting and Committed	No ambivalence about Fairtrade. Fairtrade is the only preferred purchase choice which can be made.

Table 16: Ambivalence as exhibited by the Behavioural Types (Source: This Research)

Once the consumers had passed the state of ambivalence and wrestled with the uncertainties which that brought, the process of *Weighing Up* the options began. This process is explicated below.

<sup>310</sup> M110

<sup>311</sup> M111

<sup>312</sup> M20



#### 4.4.2.2. Weighing Up

*Weighing Up* was found to take place when the consumer is faced with multiple choices in the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making. This was not a straight forward process, because the intrinsic worth of the product being Fairtrade needed to be taken into consideration also<sup>313</sup>. During *Weighing Up*, the consumers were in a state where the contest was simply between Fairtrade and mainstream. The consumers compare the similarities, while contrasting the differences between the competing products. Provided that the consumers were aware of the onus which Fairtrade bears - that of helping marginalised producers, - and its symbolic demand for fairness, then the choice should logically be to buy the Fairtrade product. Many other factors were seen to come into play during the purchase decision, and value tradeoffs became needed. These, however, were not just the basic tradeoffs such as taste, price, quality, which occur in general potential purchase assessment, but were tradeoffs which needed to consider the ethical implications of the purchase also, such as whether the presumed moral obligation to the producer<sup>314</sup> is worth perhaps paying a few pennies more for.

During *Weighing Up*, the consumers balance the different attributes of the product, knowing where their duty lies but wishing to select for other reasons. The factors which were found to be weighed up by the consumers in the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making are: intrinsic worth of Fairtrade,<sup>315</sup> quality and value, affordability, product availability, availability and credibility of information.

The ethical cargo which the Fairtrade products carry added intrinsic worth to the product, an attribute which disturbs the normal purchase processes, since the consumers needed to evaluate intention and moral probity in connection with the purchase, while simultaneously balancing all the normal prerequisites of the intended purchase. As expressed by the respondents, this created an unwanted ambivalence in the consumer's mind. However, the intrinsic value<sup>316</sup> of a particular product being Fairtrade, differed upon how the consumer perceived it.

From the responses, it was found that quality is a subjective phenomenon, and therefore so was value of the product.<sup>317</sup> An object is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it. Fairtrade products can possess an apparently enhanced value by dint of an emotional image perceived by the customer. However, when in competition with mainstream, Fairtrade goods need to offer

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<sup>313</sup> M 20

<sup>314</sup> M 98

<sup>315</sup> M 101

<sup>316</sup> M 101

<sup>317</sup> M 101

value for money,<sup>318</sup> taste, quality, durability, or other prerequisites of that type of product. The quality of Fairtrade products is not always seen as best for price. For example one of the respondents expressing her views about Fairtrade coffee sold by Starbucks-

*'Starbucks Fairtrade coffee tastes disgusting and I will not buy it even if it is Fairtrade coffee'*<sup>319</sup>

Also, Fairtrade's somewhat limited original product portfolio did not produce customer satisfaction in the past.<sup>320</sup> Many of the respondents were of the view that Fairtrade products do not give adequate recompense for price premium.<sup>321</sup> Some respondents would be willing to pay the premium if the product was good enough. One of the respondents exhibiting Vacillating but Supporting behaviour said that:

*'Fair trade products are not necessarily better; normally Fairtrade products are more expensive but if there is an increase in the quality I am willing to pay extra'*<sup>322</sup>

From the above it is clear that quality does play a significant part in consumers' purchase decision making. However, quality is found to be a subjective term in relation to the significance of Fairtrade, which leads into the question of affordability, which was again found to be a subjective judgement because for some consumers it was a deterrent from buying Fairtrade, whilst for others the price premium was justified.

For the consumers, affordability<sup>323</sup> of Fairtrade products did not just refer to price,<sup>324</sup> rather, it was found to be in a balance in which desirability, quality and value for money played a part. Some of the respondents would not buy anything if they did not see a material benefit for themselves - which may simply be in saving money. For example one of the male respondents remarked -

*'When I see Colombian coffee and a fair trade coffee that's like a pound more and I ask myself why I should buy it'*<sup>325</sup>

A respondent exhibiting Cynical behaviour suggested that there has to be a reward, and altruism<sup>326</sup> is often an insufficient reward.

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<sup>318</sup> M70

<sup>319</sup> T5

<sup>320</sup> Fair Trade Foundation timeline, 2009

<sup>321</sup> M 70

<sup>322</sup> T2

<sup>323</sup> M71

<sup>324</sup> M 4

<sup>325</sup> T51

<sup>326</sup> M 105

*well I do care about people in Africa who produce coffee and chocolate and bananas...I believe that they should be getting their fair money for their work but I can't afford to be paying that extra at least in my situation*<sup>327</sup>

Provided that the product was affordable, and offered value for money, the question of availability – in shop, in the right size, flavour, colour etc., arose as part of *Weighing Up* the available options.

As emerged from the data, the concept of availability was found to have deeper connotations than simply that of lack of product on a shelf. For example, if there was a continued lack of availability, the consumer exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour would buy an ethical substitute.<sup>328</sup> Although Fairtrade products are now available in supermarkets generally as well as in many public sector departments and academic institutions throughout the UK<sup>329</sup>, some respondents argue that is not enough. One female respondent showed concern about the limited availability of the Fairtrade products-

*'my main concern for not buying Fairtrade it's just that it's not readily available to buy and you can't get enough Fairtrade products.'*<sup>330</sup>

From the respondents' view point it was found that the penetration of Fairtrade into the world of apparel is far from deep, and the range of garments is limited. One female respondent exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour said-

*'Because I am very small, I often can't find Fairtrade clothing in my size.... so I have to go for non-Fairtrade clothing sometimes.'*<sup>331</sup>

It was found that during *Weighing Up* that if the product was available and affordable, leaving the consumer to make the final choice, the most salient factor influencing the decision was the provision of information to help the consumer to decide.

It has been remarked above that the provision of information has the power to change a consumer's perception of Fairtrade, and this is no more apparent than in the stage of Evaluating.<sup>332</sup> Credibility<sup>333</sup> of information is found to be of importance especially with the Sceptical behaviour type. One respondent, for example, said that if a reliable source recommended Fairtrade then he would invest in it –

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<sup>327</sup> T7

<sup>328</sup> M51

<sup>330</sup> T18

<sup>331</sup> T31

<sup>332</sup> M 57

<sup>333</sup> M 61

*I would be influenced by people I regarded as credible and of status, And if they were supporting Fairtrade issues and regarding a particular Fairtrade product then that would be of interest to me*<sup>334</sup>

For some consumers the availability and credibility of information was found to be paramount, however for others especially those exhibiting Cynical or Supporting but Vacillating behaviour, information was not found to be of significance in their purchase decision.

Apart from the influences discussed above, the process of *Weighing Up* also changed depending upon the behavioural type; hence it is now considered through the lens of each of the behaviours which have emerged from this research. *Weighing Up*, in the Cynical behaviour type entails considering Fairtrade as a marketing ploy<sup>335</sup> to extract money from the consumer, hence *Weighing Up* choices take little or no heed of a product being marked as Fairtrade since that is presumed to be simply false-flagging the product to trap the unwary. Evaluating was found primarily to be based on value for money,<sup>336</sup> since even price is seen to be comparative, and can increase or diminish in importance depending upon other attributes which the consumer attaches to the product. It also includes such considerations as quality, taste, accessibility, availability and personal desirability.<sup>337</sup> As one of the female respondents said-

*My shopping basket is not dictated by Fairtrade concerns and considerations, but by what I like.*<sup>338</sup>

For consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour, *Weighing Up* is based on personal considerations such as value for money and if a Fairtrade product was cheap enough and served the purpose it would be bought, but not because it was Fairtrade.

*Weighing Up* in Sceptical behaviour type was found to be prejudiced by doubt<sup>339</sup> and self-interest, and hence evaluation was based substantially on the concept of what suits the consumer best.<sup>340</sup> The weight which Fairtrade bore in their evaluating process was therefore relatively small unless there were some aspects of Fairtrade which made the Fairtrade product temporarily desirable. One of the respondents exhibiting Sceptical behaviour said that he might consider Fairtrade on the grounds that there was a small chance that Fairtrade did some good, or because Fairtrade is presumably better than mainstream trade.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> M71

<sup>335</sup> M 88

<sup>336</sup> M 70

<sup>337</sup> M 16

<sup>338</sup> T36

<sup>339</sup> M 7

<sup>340</sup> M 16

<sup>341</sup> M 83

*I would buy Fairtrade bananas not because I have a huge faith in the market, but as a chance*<sup>342</sup>

However since self-interest was found to drive the Sceptical behaviour; more value was attributed to properties including taste, quality, price and availability and Fairtrade was found to compete with these values. Fairtrade was often considered on the belief that it might do some good, but the support was only as strong as the evidence<sup>343</sup> available and also if the product met the purchase criteria of quality, price, availability and desirability.

*Weighing Up* in Questioning but Supporting<sup>344</sup> behaviour tended to be predicated upon receiving adequate responses to the questions which arose about the process of Fairtrade in general. These basic factors were weighed before Fairtrade was considered as an available option. However if Fairtrade was part of the desired product, it was considered.

*If I can buy a Fairtrade product and it's a good product then I will*<sup>345</sup>

There was a desire among the consumers to see Fairtrade work however, and if there was parity between two products, one being Fairtrade and the other not, then on the off-chance that the monies might be remitted back to the producer,<sup>346</sup> the consumers opted for Fairtrade.

For consumers exhibiting Supporting but Vacillating behaviour, the *Weighing Up* process entails many influences affecting the product choice when the purchase options are evaluated. The need was to take due consideration of the ethical proposition of Fairtrade as well as other influences, such as price, availability, quality, taste etc. The main difference between this behaviour group and the other groups is that there is no valid reason for including or excluding Fairtrade from the *Weighing Up* process, for example one respondent said:

*I often don't even notice if a product is Fairtrade or not*<sup>347</sup>

Subsidiary to Fairtrade being not significant, were perceptions such as the product not being tried and trusted,<sup>348</sup> so might be a waste of money or the product was not in the usual place for selection, therefore it needed to be sought out<sup>349</sup>, which took time and effort.<sup>350</sup> All of these perceptions were found to add to the 'price' of the selected product<sup>351</sup> when it came to it being

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<sup>342</sup> T5

<sup>343</sup> M 5

<sup>344</sup> M7

<sup>345</sup> T14

<sup>346</sup> M 68

<sup>347</sup> T6

<sup>348</sup> M 11

<sup>349</sup> M 14

<sup>350</sup> M 92

<sup>351</sup> M 4

weighed up, so the process became increasingly complex as all the major and minor factors, add into the *Weighing Up* process for this behavioural type.

Supporting and Committed behaviour type entails the *Weighing Up* process stepping outside of the ramifications of simple common choice, and bringing to the metaphorical negotiating table the consideration of making a pro Fairtrade evaluation and therefore entering into a contract with the Fairtrade ethos. It entails ignoring any doubts. One of the respondents remarked -

*I wouldn't know 100% that it's all Fairtrade as it says, but I will still buy Fairtrade*<sup>352</sup>

Consumers supporting the ethos of Fairtrade were found to think that by supporting Fairtrade they are using their power to tackle the exploitation, both environmental and social, which they understood was taking place in marginalised third world countries. This *Weighing Up*, in assessing the costs and benefits of Fairtrade, also considered the investment in local education, agriculture and infrastructure which Fairtrade offers. The moral obligation for these consumers, which recognition of Fairtrade brings, endowed Fairtrade products with an almost irresistible imperative, demanding that the consumers bought them.

#### **4.4.2.3. Situational Prioritising**<sup>353</sup>

The concept of *Situational Prioritising* as emerged from the data describes consumers' purchasing behaviour, as they were found to seek the best fit for their needs from the available options. It describes the multiple influences on the consumer during the purchase decision. In the context of Fairtrade purchasing, *Situational Prioritising* is affected by the conflict between a sense of moral obligation<sup>354</sup> and the demands of habit or desire.

There were found to be short-term and long-term situational influences which affected the consumers' purchase behaviour in the context of Fairtrade. The short term situation influences which affected the consumers included in-store price reductions or promotional offers on products.<sup>355</sup> Where there is a comparable Fairtrade option available during *Weighing Up*, *Situational Prioritising* becomes issue-driven and the influences included among them the demands imposed by moral obligation.

The origin of influences on *Situational Prioritising* were found to be two-fold in that some of them came from the immediacy of the situation, for example buying Fairtrade products as gifts for friends or family, as one of the respondents said:

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<sup>352</sup> T12

<sup>353</sup> M22

<sup>354</sup> M 100

<sup>355</sup> M 35

*Yes and if gift buying is a need, so that's fine but I'm not going to buy a Fairtrade garment unless its near to Christmas or somebody's birthday, and there's a stall there and it's affordable*<sup>356</sup>

These are particularly important for the supporting and committed consumer behaviour which entails abiding by the demands of conscience wherever this is possible. Whereas the long term situational factors include changes such as occupational, income or family status - one respondent who was about to retire, anticipated not being able to buy Fairtrade after retirement because of budgetary constraints.<sup>357</sup>

*'At the moment while I am still working, it doesn't make any difference. When I retire and I'm on a measly pension, it might be different'*<sup>358</sup>

Another respondent stated that at present, due to her student status she is unable to afford Fairtrade, however, once she is in a job she would like to buy Fairtrade products.

*'At the moment, being a student, cost would be significant'*<sup>359</sup>

As with the concept of *Ambivalence* and *Weighing Up, Situational Prioritising* which affects the consumers' behaviour and purchase decisions, changes with the different behavioural groups, although not substantially, since each group has different reasons and motivations for their decisions and actions. Under these circumstances, the influence of the Fairtrade option on decision making depends how deeply the consumer is aware<sup>360</sup> of Fairtrade and to what extent they have become emotionally involved with the concept. On the one extreme, there is a deep empathy<sup>361</sup> with the plight of the producers; while on the other lies the selfishness of self-catering.

The concept of *Self-Catering* as emerged from the data conceptualises the ways in which the perceived priorities of the consumer are privileged in their treatment. Matters such as preferred quality, taste, colour or style, were found, which the consumers considered while making a purchase choice. As such, Self-catering entails performing an overarching role until it comes into conflict with moral or ethical demands on the consumer, since it involves placing personal wishes, desires and needs before other demands such as duty or moral obligation. Self-catering influences the choice of shop or supermarket which the consumer may go to, since

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<sup>356</sup> T21

<sup>357</sup> M 36

<sup>358</sup> T140

<sup>359</sup> T61

<sup>360</sup> M 49

<sup>361</sup> M 73

convenience,<sup>362</sup> low prices<sup>363</sup> or a reputation for quality<sup>364</sup> for example, influence the consumers' choices. To quote one of the respondents –

*'Sainsbury's was just down the road so I used to go there all the time. Here Tesco is nearer so it's more convenient. I will go by the supermarket that is nearest to me'*<sup>365</sup>

According to another respondent, the inconvenience of a long journey and the costs of making it are not taken into consideration, for example one respondent said-

*'More recently (I am) going to a designer factory outlet because you can get designer brands at discount prices and it is remarkably cheap for what you get like the one at Bridgend ..... and it just makes sense'*<sup>366</sup>

In fact, as an embodiment of *Self-Catering* as *Situational Prioritising*, one of the respondents stated that –

*'When I'm out in a restaurant and consuming in a restaurant, I don't ask the restaurant is this chocolate cake fairly traded or not, because I am more driven by psychological and physiological need than by social justice'*<sup>367</sup>

Self-catering then is driven by the desire to fulfil a want it causes consumers to be motivated by price, disposable money, taste, quality, desire to do good<sup>368</sup>, other manifestations of self-interest, and comes into play primarily in the form of *Situational Prioritising* during Evaluating<sup>369</sup>.

It is found that the aspect of budget overlaps from *Situational Prioritising* into *Self-Catering*, since it can be a major inhibiting factor in Fairtrade purchase decision. Although this tends to be refuted by the Supporting and Committed consumers who accept that Fairtrade products may cost more, but they still should be bought. However, consumers manifesting Sceptical, Cynical, and Questioning but Supporting behaviour were found to put self before Fairtrade, for example one of the respondents remarked-

*'I don't always automatically buy Fairtrade because it depends upon how flush I am feeling that week, if I am feeling that I have got the money and have a feeling that I am well disposed, then I will buy Fairtrade'*<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> M 14

<sup>363</sup> M 4

<sup>364</sup> M 11

<sup>365</sup> M 6

<sup>366</sup> T18

<sup>367</sup> M15

<sup>368</sup> M 83

<sup>369</sup> M 71

<sup>370</sup> T8



This is found to be a selfish attitude: the consumer needs to be well disposed before being willing to help.

Whilst consumers exhibiting *Self-Catering* adopt a selfish stance in *Situational Prioritising*, the consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour are found to be antithetical to that, since the inclination is to prioritise the needs of the exploited producers ahead of self<sup>371</sup>. However this could prove difficult on occasions when for some reason consumers were found to have doubts<sup>372</sup> about the authenticity of the concept, such as in the face of documentaries which portray Fairtrade as not being particularly fair. At times like this, the consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour try to put rumours to one side and continue supporting Fairtrade regardless, because they believe in it, hence they reject rumours and suspend any disbelief in Fairtrade which the rumours can cause.<sup>373</sup>

Sometimes however there may simply be no available product. One respondent – who is otherwise a dedicated Fairtrade product user – bemoans the fact that being petite, she usually cannot find Fairtrade clothing to fit, so she compromises<sup>374</sup> by finding an ethical alternative –

*I buy charity shop clothes as much as I can*<sup>375</sup>

In order that a better understanding of the interplays which *Situational Prioritising* can engender is attained, it is examined through the lens of different behavioural types.

In some cases, factors like taste<sup>376</sup> or style, particularly in clothing, could take priority over Fairtrade products in the same category, but the purchase decision according to this behaviour type is found to be driven by the need for fulfilment and a very strong sense of moral obligation to Fairtrade.<sup>377</sup> *Situational Prioritising* in this case involved predominantly empathising<sup>378</sup> with the producer and prioritising the Fairtrade option for the putative purchase, since in the *Weighing Up* of alternatives, the intrinsic value of being Fairtrade<sup>379</sup> possessed paramount importance.

*Situational Prioritising*, for the consumers exhibiting Vacillating but Supporting behaviour, suggested that if there was a Fairtrade option for a product then theoretically it should be considered, and the *Weighing Up* of the product options for this behaviour supported a decision to buy Fairtrade.

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<sup>371</sup> M 73

<sup>372</sup> M 7

<sup>373</sup> M 72

<sup>374</sup> M 2

<sup>375</sup> T31

<sup>376</sup> M 12

<sup>377</sup> M 100

<sup>378</sup> M 73

<sup>379</sup> M 101

However, there were found to be many other countervailing factors which get in the way. Among these, perhaps the most important was that of budget which played a significant role in *Situational Prioritising*, and if, for example, there was a significant price differential between the Fairtrade product and the mainstream variant, then the cheaper product was bought regardless of the fact that it wasn't Fairtrade, for example one respondent said-

*If the price is higher..... I will make a bee line to a cheaper price.....so sometimes I don't even notice if it is Fairtrade or not*<sup>380</sup>

Other factors such as availability, convenience and desirability came into play to amend the previous evaluating of the product. These factors could bring immediacy and a strong pressure on the consumer to select something which is immediately available, fulfilled current needs, appeased demands, but which is not Fairtrade. Doubts<sup>381</sup> about the integrity of the Fairtrade movement may arise as a reason for perhaps not buying, but this behavioural type exhibits an inclination towards Fairtrade, and so willing suspension of disbelief<sup>382</sup> is applied to overcome the hurdle of doubt.

The product under review has values which include being Fairtrade, so any *Situational Prioritising* needs to consider values which have come to prominence during the *Weighing Up* process. For the consumers exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour their intentions tended to be moderated by considerations such as price, availability, taste and quality to obtain the best fit for expectations, and while Fairtrade was considered, its weight is not so great in the balance. It was considered that for Fairtrade to work, it would be a good thing, but since the probability is that it doesn't, there were found to be serious doubts about spending money in the absence of proof, so in *Situational Prioritising* the ethical component of Fairtrade is not considered vitally important.

The consumers manifesting Sceptical behaviour almost entirely employed Self Catering and hence were influenced strongly by *Situational Prioritising*<sup>383</sup>. If a suitable product is there, is available, and the price is right, it would be bought. Whereas, Cynical behaviour<sup>384</sup> involves putting self first hence *Situational Prioritising* entails looking for what the consumers had decided that they wanted to buy. For consumers exhibiting this behaviour, Fairtrade is a matter of

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<sup>380</sup> T6

<sup>381</sup> M 7

<sup>382</sup> M 72

<sup>383</sup> M 71

<sup>384</sup> M 28

insignificance through the Evaluating Stage, and all that is left is to buy whichever product has current appeal and desirability for the consumer.<sup>385</sup>

Summarising *Situational Prioritising*, it describes a powerful influence on the consumers' purchasing decisions at the time of the decision, mediated by the consumer's behavioural type.

Having experienced Ambivalence in choice, and having Weighed Up the available choices, Situationally prioritising their choices, the consumers reach a point where most of the competing tensions in their minds have been resolved into an apparently binary choice - the demands of self or of conscience - and they move forward, so entering the stage of Acting.

#### ***4.4.3. Stage of Acting***

The stage of Acting involves the point at which the consumers had, for the most part, made up their minds, and had taken the decision to invest or not to invest in Fairtrade products. This is the penultimate stage in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. The word 'acting' derives from the Latin verb, *ago*, normally presented as *ago, agere, egi actum*, (White, 1926)<sup>386</sup>, and signifying to put into motion, or to move (something). Contextually, Acting refers to the process which took place after (at least theoretically) a conscious decision had been made.

Considering Acting within the context of Fairtrade consumption, the question was not that of simply reaching for an item to be paid for later, but of the complex of emotional involvements which that gesture entailed rather than being the culmination of the process of purchasing. As discussed in the previous section, taking the decision to act in a particular way could be affected by *Situational Prioritising*, which by reinforcing previously held ideals can act as a catalyst, re-establishing those ideals, but which can also affect a decision when the consumer was about to commit to buying or not buying Fairtrade products.

From the interviews, it was found that the stage of Acting is not simply a binary stage, - buy or not buy - but entails more than two purchase patterns. These actions are a) buy Fairtrade, b) buy a product which is not Fairtrade but desirable, c) buy a product which is not Fairtrade but is ethical; Ethical Substituting<sup>387</sup>, and, d) if neither a Fairtrade option nor an ethical substitute is available then Going Without<sup>388</sup> and coming back next time for the Fairtrade option. These buying patterns are explicated in the next section taking into consideration the five behavioural

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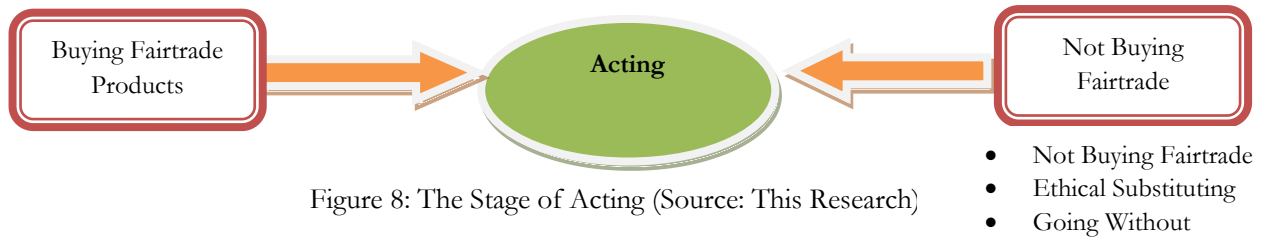
<sup>385</sup> M 16

<sup>386</sup> A Complete Latin-English and English-Latin Dictionary for the Use of Junior Students. John T. White, D. D. Oxon, pub. Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd. London, 1926 (1902).

<sup>387</sup> M 2

<sup>388</sup> M 3

types of Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed behaviour.



#### 4.4.3.1. Buying Fairtrade Products

With regards to buying Fairtrade the Supporting and Committed buying behaviour entails buying Fairtrade almost all of the time and sometimes complaining when Fairtrade options are not available<sup>389</sup>. For this behavioural group while there was found to be a cognitive element in the stage of Acting, it was substantially instinctive, because the consumer was aware of the ramifications of the Fairtrade ethos and its moral proposition, and considered disregarding or ignoring such powerful compulsions to be completely alien to his or her normal moral integrity. For example one of the female respondents, supporting Fairtrade and locally produces products said that:

*Buying Fairtrade is normal for me....it has been internalised'*<sup>390</sup>

For the consumers supporting the ethos of Fairtrade, there was found to be occasionally a degree of spontaneity in the consumers' Acting since it is often a simple case of 'see Fairtrade – buy Fairtrade' and buying Fairtrade becomes part of subconscious<sup>391</sup> behaviour. Furthermore, as a consequence of constant repetition, buying Fairtrade had become almost mechanical, and was considered as a norm.

Another dimension of the concept of buying is when consumers were found to buy Fairtrade products not because it was Fairtrade but because it was desirable to them. Respondents exhibiting Supporting but Vacillating and the Questioning but Supporting behaviours were found to buy Fairtrade under specific circumstances, especially when the product was desirable or buying in the hope that it might help somebody, and out of conscience, since failing to buy made them feel guilty.

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<sup>389</sup> M66

<sup>390</sup> T145

<sup>391</sup> M112

#### 4.4.3.2. Not Buying Fairtrade Products

Consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour did not invest in Fairtrade and therefore the stage of Acting was quite straightforward being predicated upon profound cynicism<sup>392</sup> about the motives of big business and charities, both of which were considered to be present in Fairtrade. As a result of *Weighing Up* and *Situational Prioritising* in the stage of Evaluating, which consists primarily of deciding what the consumers wanted for themselves, Fairtrade was not to be trusted<sup>393</sup> and hence rejected.

Like the consumers showing Cynical behaviour, consumers who exhibited Sceptical behaviour showed behavioural patterns which also substantially involved not-buying Fairtrade unless the purchase was good for them. Sceptical behaviour in the context of buying involved doubts about Fairtrade doing any good for the marginalised producers – who are, in any event, of secondary importance, since the stories are not believed. Therefore, the product was not bought except by accident. Buying Fairtrade was further found to be jeopardised by the uncertainty<sup>394</sup> due to the lack of any evidence<sup>395</sup> which would justify investing in Fairtrade.

Questioning but Supporting behaviour was found to sometimes entail not buying Fairtrade because of doubt about the workability<sup>396</sup> of the Fairtrade process, and also because the product was not desirable at the time of purchase. However, the Supporting but Vacillating behaviour entails not buying Fairtrade because of factors such as price, quality and convenience.

In understanding the stage of Acting one of the contributions of the present study is the further in-depth analysis of consumers' purchase patterns. From the responses it was found that for the consumers indicating Supporting and Committed behaviour, if there was no Fairtrade product available, actions like Ethical Substituting<sup>397</sup> and Going Without<sup>398</sup> took place. These are expounded in the next section.

*Ethical Substituting*<sup>399</sup> is a concept which emerged from the data, describing the way in which consumers dedicated to supporting a particular ethical model, would, if that is not available, transfer their loyalties *pro tempore* to some other ethical product – which may espouse an entirely different ethic. Consumers, who were found to be committed to buying Fairtrade products but were unable to, will seek out another ethical product rather than buying something which they

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<sup>392</sup> M 28

<sup>393</sup> M81

<sup>394</sup> M82

<sup>395</sup> M83

<sup>396</sup> M84

<sup>397</sup> M 2

<sup>398</sup> M 3

<sup>399</sup> M51

believe is exploitative. For example one of the females interviewed, who has supported Fairtrade for about fifteen years, expressed her concern as-

*'well because I am very small, I often can't find Fairtrade clothing in my size. It's just a fact; that's it so I have to go for non-Fairtrade clothing sometimes, but if there's an ethical option, I've got some two weddings coming up in the next couple of months and I bought a dress from a shop which sells Fairtrade clothes in Cardiff but I buy ethical because it's the next best option'*<sup>400</sup>

Their justification lies in the concept that ethical production should be universal but Fairtrade is the ethical trader of choice. This suggests that there might be a lack of understanding among purchasers of the ramifications of Fairtrade as opposed to its ethical competitors. This could have managerial implications since it may be necessary to distance the Fairtrade image from other ethical products.

The emergent concept of *Going Without* explains the behaviour of consumers manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour who were found to deliberately undergo self-deprivation rather than purchase a product which they perceived to be unethical. Going Without also means salving conscience by ensuring that Fairtrade is bought on the next visit.

*'Well, I'd have a good look on the shelves before not buying Fairtrade..... I'd just not buy anything rather than letting it worry me'*<sup>401</sup>

This concept which emerged from this research describes the way in which a committed consumer who is unable to satisfy the demand which commitment places on him or her, resolves that commitment. This is a concept which can be employed as a way of achieving a temporary reconciliation of the discomfort which they feel at having bought a non Fairtrade product.

Metaphorically speaking, the dust has now settled. The consumers are aware of their situation, and if there was a need to make amends, the stage of Reflecting is when they decide to do so.

#### **4.4.4. Stage of Reflecting**

After the purchase is completed, consumers were found to re- evaluate their purchase decisions, trying to settle them in their minds. For some of the respondents there was not much to reconsider about their purchase decision, whilst for others comes the time of reckoning when their actions were reviewed and their conscience made its presence felt. At this point the consumers who did not buy a Fairtrade product began to experience guilt<sup>402</sup> and the resulting

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<sup>400</sup> T131

<sup>401</sup> T139

<sup>402</sup> M 55

dissonance because of that failure. However the degree of guilt and dissonance was found to be dependent on the behaviour type manifested by the consumers. The stage of Reflecting has two properties of Reinforcing and Reconciling (Figure 9). Further, the consumers who felt guilty if they did not buy Fairtrade products were found to employ the emergent Reconciling Strategies, depending on the behaviour type manifested by the consumers.

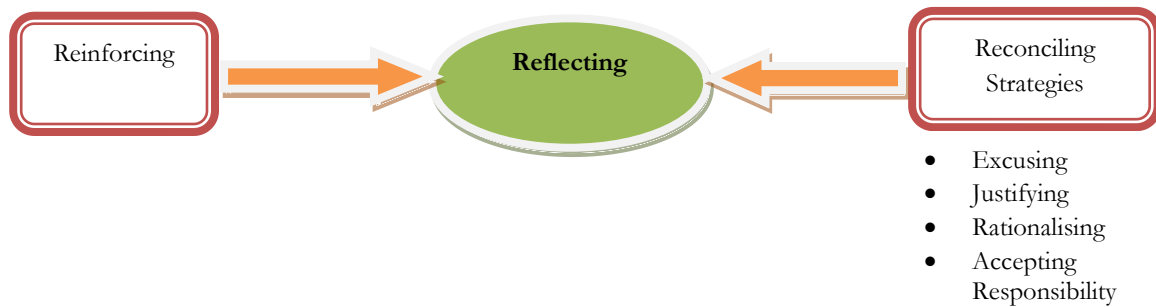


Figure 9: The Stage of Reflecting (Source: This Research)

The properties of the stage of Reflecting- *Reinforcing* and *Reconciling* are explicated below.

#### 4.4.4.1. Reinforcing

It was found that when consumers bought the Fairtrade product they tried to reinforce their decision and felt good<sup>403</sup> about it. Consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed, Vacillating but Supporting and the Questioning but Supporting behaviour were found to strengthen their decision. They felt that they had done the morally right thing, and that would reinforce their behaviour for next time. One of the respondents reflected upon her experience as follows-

*I feel good about Fairtrade because I think that it's really important that everyone who contributes to the making of any product gets a fair wage in the end and not only those people who might be working let's say in a western country where the goods are being sold, but also those people that live like some coffee farmers in Columbia or wherever, that they also have a fair outcome in this that we don't extort them. So I really I feel better: because with many products I buy, I know that those are being made under not so good circumstances, and I choose better products which I think have been made using fairer better ways like Fairtrade products<sup>404</sup>*

<sup>403</sup> M66

<sup>404</sup> T3

The above quote explicates the fact that consumers who supported Fairtrade felt satisfied after buying a Fairtrade product. This strengthened their belief and the ideology of voting, by their pockets, against the exploitation<sup>405</sup> of marginalised producers in the developing countries.

One respondent who is a dedicated supporter of Fairtrade, attributes her ethical approach to the world in general to her religious upbringing which has guided her path through life. She buys Fairtrade goods because they help the producer, but also because she feels good about it-

*I feel confident, happy that I am getting a good quality product, I know hopefully a bit of the impact that buying it will make, also I tend to feel like I'll savour it a bit more as well. I think it's because it can give you a feeling of satisfaction that you wouldn't otherwise get<sup>406</sup>*

However this Reinforcing attitude was not found to be the case in the consumers exhibiting Cynical or Sceptical behaviour because of the distrust in the Fairtrade organisations and the multinationals in general.

It was also found that for some consumers who did not buy Fairtrade, upon reflecting, they felt uncomfortable, for example one respondent said:

*I feel the prick of conscience when I do not buy Fairtrade<sup>407</sup>*

The supporting consumers especially may at this point actually feel disappointment<sup>408</sup> that he or she failed to take the subjectively proper course of action, and will suffer the mental discomfort of having a guilty conscience and were found to need to reconcile their demands of conscience. The emergent concept of Reconciling and the Reconciling Strategies employed by the respondents is explicated below.

#### **4.4.4.2. Reconciling**

It was found that once the consumer was aware of the purpose of Fairtrade, the understanding that the producers need help against exploitation produces a moral arrow. Failure to follow that moral arrow left the consumer feeling mental discomfort which had to be dealt with. This precipitated the need to find a way of reconciling the problem, - that is, of obtaining some form of conciliation between the sense of doing the right thing by subscribing to the ethos of Fairtrade and the exigencies of necessity- conventional purchase decisions, the situational demands and striking a balance between conscience and self. One of the conditions which was found to precipitate the need for Reconciliation was that of post purchase guilty conscience and

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<sup>405</sup> M58

<sup>406</sup> T6

<sup>407</sup> T5

<sup>408</sup> M 42



the resulting dissonance. The origins of post purchase dissonance lie in the nature and purpose of Fairtrade and the demands which it places on the consumers. In the presence of a Fairtrade option, the normal purchase demands still existed, but there was also a challenge to the consumers' conscience to invest in Fairtrade preferentially, so as to support the producers of the products. This produced a situation fraught with overtones of doing good, of helping others, and suggested that the respondents would feel guilty if they didn't spare a few pennies to help. Everything which flew contrary to the consumer's moral arrow,<sup>409</sup> therefore caused mental dissonance. This feeling of dissonance is perhaps best described as having a 'guilty conscience'. For the respondents whose behaviour fell into the Supporting and Committed, Questioning but Supporting or the Supporting but Vacillating types, after they had completed their shopping, if they had not bought Fairtrade products when the opportunity was available, this led to a feeling of guilt which created a mental dissonance. Not being comfortable mentally with their decision to choose a non-Fairtrade product, the respondents felt the need to reconcile their actions with their sense of moral obligation.

However, consumers exhibiting Cynical or Sceptical behaviour towards Fairtrade suggested that they did not feel very guilty if they did not buy the Fairtrade product because the problem is so physically distant from them and they were unable to relate to the problem of the marginalised producers in the developing countries.

The cognitive dissonance felt when acting against the moral arrow of conscience, affected all the respondents but in different ways, as discussed above, and therefore the means by which the problem was resolved also differed depending on their behavioural type as they tried to Reconcile the Demands of Conscience, since once the feeling of dissonance has arisen, the consumer begins to adopt reconciling strategies to alleviate this dissonance.

In order to ameliorate any feelings of discomfort which consumers felt by not buying a Fairtrade product they employed *Reconciling Strategies*. *Reconciling Strategies* include the strategies which, depending on the subjective situation, were employed to achieve self-forgiveness. These strategies were found to be those of *Excusing*<sup>410</sup>, *Justifying*<sup>411</sup>, *Rationalising and Accepting Responsibility*<sup>412</sup>, each of which is discussed in detail.

Of all the behaviour types, consumers exhibiting the Vacillating but Supporting behaviour type were found to be most likely in need of Reconciling Strategies in the post-purchase period. The

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<sup>409</sup> M 100

<sup>410</sup> M 94

<sup>411</sup> M 17

<sup>412</sup> M 15

reason being that the Vacillating but Supporting behaviour was found to entail substantial uncertainty and a general indecisiveness leading to the consumer having many internal debates which need to be resolved. Excuses were employed as a guilt coping mechanism for any suggestion of failure to comply with a moral arrow. This behaviour type seldom seeks to justify their actions since there is usually no logical rationale for what they do, rather, being weak, they will always seek excuses. Excuses were found to be related to various 'causes', availability of the product, not knowing about it or where to find it – anything which shifts responsibility<sup>413</sup> for failure from the consumer onto someone or something else. For example one of the respondents said-

*It is unfortunate. sometimes I go into Tesco and I can't, and there's no Fairtrade bananas, I have to buy an ordinary banana and I feel sorry for myself and for my conscience, but the supply issue is not my fault. At least I had the consciousness that I wanted*<sup>414</sup>

This form of excuse regarding the lack of availability of Fairtrade suggests that there are very few Fairtrade options or alternatives, but that if there were more, then the consumer would definitely buy Fairtrade.

Excuse on the basis of convenience were also cited, stockists of Fairtrade products were considered to be inconvenient for the consumer. Therefore the question of buying Fairtrade products did not arise since the consumer was not readily able to access them, for example one of the consumers manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour stated-

*I want them[Fairtrade products] to be more available you know I get quite annoyed when I go to the supermarket and I can't find a Fairtrade option because you know ok I can't speak for the rest of the world but generally people here have a busy life*<sup>415</sup>

Some respondents used excuses by claiming that the quality is too poor, - or, for example, in the case of tea, that the tea is too weak. With coffee, some respondents suggest that they do not like the taste.

*If I know for example that I don't like the tea bags as much as I like other tea bags, so if it's something that I use every day, I would only go for the tea bags I liked best whether they were Fairtrade or not, because my tea is very important to me*<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> M 17

<sup>414</sup> T7

<sup>415</sup> T5

<sup>416</sup> T2

Taste doesn't just cover oral perceptions but it was found to be a significant life style factor and for some consumers buying Fairtrade products was seen to be in poor taste.

From the above it is clear that some consumers, especially those who were not committed towards buying Fairtrade did not buy the Fairtrade products regularly and therefore, employed excuses as a guilt coping strategy.

In the context of present study, the difference between *Justifying* and *Excusing* as Reconciling Strategies is that *Excuses* were employed as a means to deny responsibility, however knowing that the act in question is wrong, whereas, *Justifications* were employed as a means to accept responsibility for the act but the consumers did not think that the act was wrong. Consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour employed primarily Justifications as a means of exonerating themselves. It was considered that principally Fairtrade would not exist unless someone high up the ladder was making money out of it. One of the respondents stated-

*'All Companies are lying liars who lie.'*<sup>417</sup>

The justifying strategies employed by this group, which follow below, may be summed by saying that they have a deep mistrust of business in general and Fairtrade in particular. This enables them to reconcile their failure to invest in Fairtrade because no good will come of it.

For the Sceptical behaviour type, easing conscience is more inclined to take the form of Justifying their actions by the rejection of Fairtrade as being a relatively unworkable ideal, therefore not worth risking money on. According to the consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour, the lack of adequate policing leaves Fairtrade open to fraud, suggesting that paying an ethical premium is simply throwing good money away. This was therefore put forward as a strong Justification of not investing in Fairtrade, for example one respondent said-

*'I don't know who is responsible for ensuring that things are sold for Fairtrade but it would be good if we could be made more aware perhaps fair bit of awareness...'*<sup>418</sup>

Furthermore, according to some respondents the increase in price of Fairtrade products is also considered as a justification for not buying the Fairtrade products. This kind of excuse was seen to be employed by consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour, for example one of the respondents stated:

*'I wouldn't feel guilt if there was a large price discrepancy between Fairtrade and an alternative equal product, I would feel no guilt at buying the non-Fairtrade product'*<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> T1

<sup>418</sup> T23

<sup>419</sup> T14

Unlike Excusing, Rationalising strategies were found to be employed by consumers by providing valid rationales for performing or not performing a given action. These rationales tend to be logical and coherent, and are usually valid reasons as compared to excuses or justifications. While Excuses for not buying Fairtrade products were employed as a Reconciling Strategy mostly by the Supporting but Vacillating behavioural type, the more common strategy was that of providing rationales for the behaviour and hence justifying it. The respondents exhibiting Questioning but Supporting behaviour were not opposed to Fairtrade, and were found to support the idea of Fairtrade but found that the trust expected of them is more than they are willing to give, and therefore they tried to rationalize their behaviour. There were various influences which intruded when the decisions was about to be made and caused distraction.

If Fairtrade is to be accepted as a viable trading model, then the organisers need to prove that it works, is free from corruption and hence is a credible operation. Since this is apparently not done, there is therefore not much point in investing in Fairtrade so the respondents will not bother and their behaviour is rationalised by their doubts.

*I think I've read some newspaper articles where they are debunking this myth about Fairtrade, saying 'actually the people who are producing for Fairtrade aren't getting a fair deal,' so I'm kind of receiving conflicting messages”<sup>420</sup>*

Furthermore, lack of information based on Fairtrade not being very transparent in its dealings was used as a way to Rationalise not buying Fairtrade products. Fairtrade was seen as a flawed mechanism, designed to reward the rich, the profit-led corporations and the supermarkets. This allows the consumer to vindicate his or her purchase decision not to buy Fairtrade. The Fairtrade system was seen to be not transparent<sup>421</sup> and that there was not much information available, the consumer could not know if the money was remitted to the producer. These reasons allowed consumers to employ Rationalising as coping mechanisms to assuage their guilt.

The consumers exhibiting Supporting to Committed behaviour type were seen to go out of their way to buy Fairtrade products, and as a result they seldom needed to employ Reconciling strategies. If however, the decision resulted in a non-Fairtrade purchase, then the after-purchase dissonance was very high and needed to be thoroughly Reconciled. So, the Reconciling Strategy employed was that of Accepting Responsibility<sup>422</sup>, which entails self-blaming for their decisions.

*If I had the evidence but chose not to buy to save money, that probably would make me feel a bit guilty”<sup>423</sup>*

Some of the consumers were found to *Accept Responsibility* for not looking for information about Fairtrade, for example one of the respondents stated:

*I can't be bothered to look at the evidence for the information about Fairtrade products as opposed to any other products, and that's partly because of being lazy and busy”<sup>424</sup>*

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<sup>420</sup> T40

<sup>421</sup> M7

<sup>422</sup> M 15

<sup>423</sup> T21

This effectively sums up the different methods by which the consumers tried to deal with what is essentially a guilty conscience, so that they can relax and enjoy what they have bought. The intensity of their reconciling is very much a matter of behavioural type, but inevitably leads to the experience being looped back to their forming. In conclusion, the summary of the Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience according to the five behavioural types is detailed below, (Table17).

Behavioural Type	Comfort Zoning		Evaluating			Acting	Reflecting	
	Forming	General Purchase Pattern	Ambivalence	Weighing Up	Situational Prioritising		Reinforcing	Reconciling
<b>Cynical</b>	<i>Disillusionment Distrust Contempt Side-lining Self Catering</i>	Desirability	Little	Everything up against Fairtrade	Self-Catering	Not Buying	Dismissive	Justifying
<b>Sceptical</b>	<i>Questioning and Doubting Suspicion Seeking proof Sidelineing</i>	Desirability	More than in the Cynical behaviour	Everything up against Fairtrade	Self-Catering	Not Buying	Dismissive	Justifying Rationalising
<b>Questioning but Supporting</b>	<i>Questioning Supporting Vacillating</i>	Desirability	More than in the Cynical and Sceptical behaviour	Everything up against Fairtrade	Self-Catering	Vacillating	Feel good	Excusing Justifying Rationalising
<b>Supporting but Vacillating</b>	<i>Uncertainty Passive involvement Self Catering</i>	Desirability	Most Ambivalent behaviour	Everything up against Fairtrade	Self-Catering	Vacillating	Feel good	Excusing Justifying
<b>Supporting and Committed</b>	<i>Empathising Involving and Engaging Committed</i>	Investing in the ethos of Fairtrade	Little	Fairtrade comes first	Fairtrade	Buying Ethical Substituting Going Without	Feel good	Excusing Justifying Accepting Responsibility

Table 17: Summary of the Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience According to the Five Behavioural Types (Source: This Research)

#### ***4.4.5. Feedback Loop***

Consumers having contemplated their actions in their recent purchasing experience, and having reconciled any guilt they felt at not having followed their conscience, the respondents allowed their conscience to settle and accept what they have achieved. Once the situation is acceptable, they settle into their comfort zone until the next purchase.

From whatever decisions have been reached in the process above, there is a 'note to self' to either carry on as normal or to change behaviour so as not to have to experience a guilty conscience again. For the consumer who has followed the Demands of Conscience, there is a comfortable feeling of having done the right thing. This reinforces the decision for next time, while for the consumers who have not done the right thing, the discomfort reinforces the message to decide in favour of purchasing the Fairtrade goods next time.

The foregoing shows that the process of reconciling as it appears in the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, is a BSPP which allows for the selective employment of various strategies by the consumer to alleviate mental discomfort caused by failing to fulfil their moral obligations as perceived from their Forming and as demanded by their moral arrow.

#### ***4.4.6. Evaluating the Credibility of the Emergent Theory***

The aim of grounded theory is to produce an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses concerning the relationships between the concepts which make up the theory. The evidence required by a grounded theory lies in the propositions that support the development of a substantive theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992). The proof of the theory lies in the rigour which was applied to the present study since that establishes the careful grounding in the data from which the theory emerged. The credibility of this study therefore lies in the extent to which it meets the criteria for a classic grounded theory, offering a set of theoretical propositions which account for resolving the participant's main concern. Chapter two discusses in detail the criteria of fit, work, relevance and modifiability (Glaser, 1978). In the next section, the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is evaluated against criteria of fit, work, modifiability and relevance.

##### ***4.4.6.1. Fit***

Fit asks the question of to what extent the emerged theory represents the behaviour being studied (Glaser, 1978), and in that lies its validity. The main concern of Reconciling Demands of Conscience aptly captures the dilemma faced by consumers of an ethical bent when contemplating investing in Fairtrade products. This concern has been demonstrated to some

extent in the ethical decision making models in the arena of Marketing Ethics (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), Organizational Behaviour (Trevino, 1986), Management (Jones, 1991) and Consumer Behaviour (Marks & Mayo, 1991).

The grounded theory which is the subject of this thesis, having been generated through the rigorous and systematic application of all the stages of grounded theory development offers procedural credibility. By constantly grounding the concepts in the data and their fitting to new data, the ultimate theory remains close to the data from which it emerged (Glaser, 1998). Furthermore rigorous application of the constant comparison method has ensured that codes and concepts have emerged from the data, not from preconception on the part of the researcher.

#### ***4.4.6.2. Work***

Workability is defined as the ability of the theory to explain how respondents resolve their main concern and the variations in the data, which are taken into account. The main concern and the continuum of behavioural types (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed) conceptualised in this study, are fully grounded in the data, and emerged as the result of the constant comparison method. The findings from the present study have been presented to some participants, academics and practitioners at various occasions who agreed on the insights provided regarding fair trade consumer behaviour, therefore the emergent theory exhibits workability. Furthermore, the theory presented in this study has the ability to incorporate findings from other areas such as ethical decision making, fair trade consumer behaviour, behavioural economics and consumer segmentation studies.

#### ***4.4.6.3. Modifiability***

By Modifiability is signified the ability of the grounded theory to admit new information and data, thereby increasing the scope and strength of the emergent substantive theory (Thulesius et al., 2003). A grounded theory is not meant to be proved, but simply modified as new data becomes available as part of the process of constant comparison (Glaser, 2003). Further sampling across various sites could increase the explanatory power of the theory, for example sampling in recycling, sweatshops or other contexts of consumer behaviour. The scope of the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience could be further enhanced, by exploring different contexts in which participants are faced with an ambivalent situation or when there are conflicting demands. The integration of extant literature has demonstrated that this phenomenon is able to span several domains in which people are faced with ethical dilemmas. However, the sampling cannot continue unabated, and an end must be achieved, even though it is simply a comma: never a full stop. To quote Glaser “it must come to an end, usually based on human



limits, with an appeal to future research to give directions for a subsequent grounded theory researcher.” (Glaser 2001, p 183).

#### 4.4.6.4. *Relevance*

By 'Relevance' is meant the importance of the main concern in the substantive study area, something which Glaser (1978, 1998) refers to as *grab* of the emergent theory. Relevance in the context of this study has been guaranteed by systematic application of the constant comparison method, and theoretical sampling, and by avoiding any preconception which an early review of the literature would inevitably have caused. The continuous memo writing and comparison have ensured that the work always remained very close to the data from which the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience emerged. The evaluation of the emergent grounded theory against the criteria of fit, work, modifiability and relevance is summarised in Table 18.

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Fit	Correspondence of the categories and their relationships to the substantive area of research.	Content and methodology experts independently analysed the author’s interpretations, processes, and memos. Additionally, research participants also reviewed these interpretations and gave comments as to whether the interpretations reflected participants’ concerns. The interpretations from these sources were finally reconciled with author’s interpretations.
Work	Workability refers to the practical implications of the emergent theory.	Research participants and fair trade practitioners were asked to review summaries of research findings. The study was presented at the Fair Trade International Symposium. <sup>425</sup> Practitioners and academics agreed that the present study provides insights into the phenomenon of Fairtrade consumer behaviour which is meaningful to the practitioners and academics.
Modifiability	Modifiability of the theory accounts for any additional information by comparing findings across people, places and time.	As the research progressed, the author kept a record of memos, figures detailing concept development and other types of records.
Relevance	The theory provides new or alternative explanations for behaviour that go beyond that offered in the literature. Relevance measures the weight of the theory’s contribution as a new or alternative explanation.	Research participants were asked to comment on how well the research addressed the core issues. Additionally, with second and third interviews with some of the participants further clarified the interpretations. Initial drafts of the theory were presented to the participants. In the present research the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and its four stages were discussed with the participants to identify the core issues of the research from participant’s view point.

Table 18: Summary of the Evaluation of the Emergent Substantive Theory

The theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience as presented is theoretically complete. It shows fit, relevance, workability and modifiability in the substantive area, while remaining open

<sup>425</sup> Presentation at the 4<sup>th</sup> Fair Trade International Symposium, at Liverpool, UK, 2012. Web address: <http://www.fairtradeinternationalsymposium.org/ftis-2012/call-for-papers>

to modification from other data; hence it will possess lasting relevance and utility. This theory was developed in the context of Fairtrade consumer behaviour. However, it has wider relevance, as has been suggested by the integration of extant literature in the field of Fairtrade consumer behaviour as well as closely allied and relevant fields of study. The breadth of the literature reviewed in Chapter Five suggests that there are other perspectives from which to try to comprehend the ethical dilemmas faced by consumers and marketing managers. This suggests a wider conceptual generality of the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. The emergent theory may have relevance in other areas of business ethics, suggesting the potential for developing a formal theory to explain the complex process of ethical decision making in general (Glaser 1978).

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the emergent process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. It is found that the process of purchasing in the context of Fairtrade is different from the normal mainstream purchase activity and that this stems from the ethos of Fairtrade, of being there to provide a fairer deal for marginalised producers in third world countries. There was a degree of confusion shown about many aspects of the Fairtrade movement, not least was the uncertainty about the remitting of funds to the producer. In the interests of Fairtrade, this needs to be cleared up and the system needs to be more frank and open. There was also found suspicion of links between Fairtrade and large companies which are perceived to be inherently exploitative. This could be better explained by the FTF.

The concept of ethical, pro-producer trading as manifested by Fairtrade has proved to be divisive, since opinions are fairly polarised with some respondents being highly suspicious of the intentions of the Fairtrade organisation, while others were completely convinced to the extent that they felt mental discomfort very strongly if they failed to buy Fairtrade products but bought mainstream instead. Between the two are shades of opinion, but with the exception of respondents who were completely indifferent and apathetic towards Fairtrade, the remainder to a greater or lesser extent felt some degree of guilt if they offended their conscience by not investing in Fairtrade products when they had the chance. The need to deal with the mental discomfort which the respondents felt is conceptualised as Reconciling Demands of Conscience, which describes the manner by which the respondents address their main concern, which was explicated as Demands of Conscience.

The next chapter nests the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience in the extant literature.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion and Integration of Literature

#### 5.1 Introduction

Presenting the theoretical contributions of the present study, the previous two chapters (Chapter Three and Four) explicated the emergent grounded theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, the concept of Behavioural Mutability and the continuum of five behavioural groups (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed). As explained in Chapter Two, in a grounded theory study the literature review comes after theory development to nest the emergent theory within the extant literature. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relevance of the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience into both context and perspective by reviewing the literature in the substantive area of Fairtrade consumer behaviour and the relevant literature in other fields.

As guided by the emergent theory, this chapter explores literature in four broad areas of knowledge: (1) Consumer segmentation paradox, the literature on consumer segmentation is reviewed because of its relevance to the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability (for details, refer to Chapter Three). (2) Ethical decision making, (3) Fair trade consumer decision making. The reason for reviewing models which reflect consumer decision making, ethical decision making and fair trade purchase decision making, is that they are contingent upon the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, while (4), the reason for evaluating literature regarding dissonance and guilt coping theories is that consumers in the present study were found to employ Reconciling Strategies (for details, refer to Chapter Four) as guilt coping mechanisms when they fail to follow the demands of conscience.

Each of these areas of knowledge is related to the premises pertinent to the emergent theory. The chapter is divided into three sections, the first of which explores the concept of consumer segmentation in comparison with the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability and adds to the discourse surrounding the equivocal findings pertinent to consumer segmentation. The second section discusses the extant ethical decision making models and draws parallels between the emergent process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and the existing ethical decision making models, whilst the third section discusses guilt coping mechanisms in the existing

literature and compares them with the emergent Reconciling Strategies developed in the present study. In each of these sections, the extant literature is compared and contrasted with the emergent theory. The intention is to highlight how the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience has supported, added to and challenged each of the theoretical works cited. Moreover, by comparing extant literature as additional data, this discussion chapter seeks to further enhance understanding of the theory itself. By providing more data for constant comparison, the integration of extant literature is intended to develop a more generalised understanding of the burgeoning theory and its concepts (Glaser 1998). The chapter concludes by the modification of the emergent theory as a way of integrating the relevant aspects of the extant theories reviewed in this chapter.

## **5.2. Segmentation Paradox**

A plethora of extant research addresses the concept of consumer segments, however the findings are contradictory, and there appears to be conflict regarding classification of ethical consumers. This section reviews the literature pertaining to the consumers' segmentation debate, which will then feed into the concept of Behavioural Mutability as emerged from the present study. A common feature of ethical consumer segmentation, in particular fair trade studies, is that several researchers have explored the relations of ethical consumption to individual characteristics, in terms of demographics (Brown, 2011; Pedregal & Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2011; Halepete et al., 2009; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Cowe & Williams, 2000; Newholm, 1999 and Bird & Hughes, 1997), personal values (Doran, 2009, 2010; Doran & Natale, 2012; Ray & Anderson, 2000; Littrell & Dickson 1999), consumer motivation (Bird & Hughes, 1997), and environmental affects (Newholm, 2009). The various types of ethical segmentation in the extant fair trade consumer behaviour literature are explained in the next section.

### ***5.2.1. Segmentation based on Ethical Motivation***

There have been several attempts at segmenting the UK Fairtrade consumer. For example Bird & Hughes (1997) proposed three groups of consumers - ethical, semi-ethical and selfish. The group names are self-explanatory, and are based on ethical motivation and willingness to buy Fairtrade produce. The first group, ethical consumers, are committed to buying. The second group, semi-ethical consumers, are influenced by other attributes as well, for example, a doubt of charities. However, they are willing to be persuaded. The third category, selfish consumers, buy for what they want for themselves and Fairtrade is irrelevant. Fairtrade consumption, particularly in the UK, has changed enormously since 2008 and thus this segmentation by Bird & Hughes (1997) might not be the best representation of the current Fairtrade scenario. Also, the use of

the term and choice of descriptors for the segments and their respective features, such as 'ethical' and 'ethical beliefs' in the context of the study is a clear demonstration of their presumed position.

### ***5.2.2. Segmentation based on Demographics***

Cowe & Williams (2000), using survey data and focus groups, tried to adapt this to the ethical stands of consumers, ranging from those whom they described as strong, hardliners, down to those whose support was perceived to be weak. The authors named these segments of Fairtrade consumers as global watchdogs (ethical hardliners) taking 5% of the UK market, the brand generation comprising of 6% of the UK Fairtrade market, conscientious consumers (18%), 'look after my own' (22%) and 'do what I can' taking (49%), thus producing five segments. Similar to the study of Bird & Hughes (1997), there is an inherent assumption in these descriptions that all consumers are ethically driven.

The demographics of these segments suggest that the ethical hardliners are affluent professionals aged 35-55, while the brand generation who contextually would select brand over Fairtrade were for the most part young, under twenty five years old and probably students. The next group is surely a misnomer – conscientious consumers - since they are motivated by value and quality – which could include Fairtrade as a value – rather than by conscience. They are described as being conservative with a small 'c', not particularly brand aware and more or less up-market. The 'look after my own group' are mainly young on low incomes, while the 'do what I can' who are their polar opposites, are described as being older, a quarter being over retirement age, and being possessed of weak ethical motivation.

This classification proposed by Cowe & Williams (2000) was an improvement on segmentation adopted by Bird & Hughes (1997) in terms of how the classification was done by employing both quantitative and qualitative data, and the basis used for the segmentation (ethical stands and geo-demography). However both these studies were based on claimed behaviour and thus prone to social desirability effects.

### ***5.2.3. Segmentation based on Environmental Affects***

Fairtrade consumers have also been grouped on the basis of how they allow extrinsic and intrinsic environmental factors to guide their purchase decision (Newholm, 1999) which can result in actions such as boycotting unethical outlets. They go further and suggest that purchase is not the only way of supporting Fairtrade. This is reflected in the characteristics used to describe the segments of distancers, integrators and rationalisers.

In the light of this classification, Nicholls & Opal (2005) questioned the assumption that there is a common descriptor for the presumed 'ethical consumer'. The point being that many people as shown by the characteristics of the three segments can exhibit favourable fair trade shopper attitudes whilst being motivated differently. Following the same argument, it may be possible that many people buy fair trade products or stay away from unfairly traded products but their attitudes are predicated on different motivational factors. However, the question by Nicholls & Opal (2005) should have rather been directed towards finding the values driving fair trade purchasing attitudes instead of reinforcing the presumed position that those buying fair trade products are 'ethical shoppers' and hence there is the need to find common characteristics to describe the assumed 'ethical fair trade consumer'.

#### ***5.2.4. Segmentation based on Demographics and Personal Values***

Investigating Belgian consumers' willingness to pay for Fairtrade coffee, de Pelsmacker et al. (2005) proposed segmentation based on demographics and personal values. They classified consumers into Fair trade Lovers, Fair trade Likers, Flavour Lovers, and Brand Lovers. For example Fairtrade Lovers were mostly male, highly educated and between the age of 31 to 45 years. Furthermore, according to personal values, based on Rokeach Scale, they found that Fair-trade lovers were less conventional than flavour lovers and brand lovers. Fair-trade lovers and fair-trade likers were found to be more idealistic than brand likers and flavour lovers. Brand lovers were significantly more motivated by self-interest than any other group of respondents. Fair-trade likers were significantly more idealistic than the other two clusters.

The idealism shown in fair-trade lovers is similar to the culturally creative group of consumers (Ray & Anderson, 2000). De Pelsmacker et al.'s (2005) findings regarding the relation between consumers' age and ethical decision making has also been supported by other studies (for example Pedregal & Ozcaglar-Toulouse 2011; Littrell & Dickson 1997; Roberts 1996). However the limitation of this classification is that the sample group was comprised entirely of students and staff at Ghent University, thus obtaining a badly skewed result, since the age segmented groups are dominated by university students.

#### ***5.2.5. Segmentation based on Psychographics***

Goig (2007) suggests that a new type of consumer has emerged who is more aware of the social interactions of the world and this brought about the idea of citizenship through consumption. This suggests that Fairtrade consumers could be regarded as having a global cognitive orientation. This is part of identity creation and an awareness that they are not immune to what happens elsewhere in the world. Goig contends that this will lead to increased adoption of

Fairtrade as it is a part of ethical consumption. He describes Fairtrade as a rebellion against consumerism and contextually describes four typologies: economic collaborators, locally orientated, globally orientated, and distrustful. However, segmentation on the basis of psychographics is found to poses limitations, (Goulding, 2008).

### ***5.2.6. Segmentation based on Actual Purchase Activity***

Brown (2011) proposed a classification of Fairtrade consumers based on actual purchase activity in contrast with prior research which focused on consumer identity. He divides consumers into three distinct categories - promoters, conscientious consumers and purchasers. *Promoters* are largely from the upper middle class and believe that their purchases help stamp out inequalities, *conscientious consumers* tend to be highly educated upper middle class and buy for ethical reasons but are not as committed as the promoters. *Purchasers* were found to be working class who have not heard of Fairtrade, but buy Fairtrade coffee because they want a good cup of coffee. It is clear that his sampling methods have resulted in a skewed result. This study had a large section devoted to extraordinary experiences through international travel – something which the majority of consumers do not have the resources to do.

Examining the role of both Fairtrade and organic labels on consumers' willingness to pay, Didier & Lucie (2008) found that the effect of personal values on the purchase of Fairtrade and organic product is not significant, and some of the consumers manifested total indifference towards ethical labels. Other factors such as price, taste and health issues were found to supersede the ethical dimension of a product. However for a group of older consumers in their sample, they found that Fairtrade is more important than other product attributes and they were willing to pay. This finding supports the demographic segments proposed by other researchers (Brown, 2011; Tallontire et al., 2011; de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Memery et al., 2005; Littrell & Dickson, 1997; Roberts, 1996).

From the above discussion, it is clear that one stream of ethical consumer behaviour research proposes segmenting consumers into fixed categories and that there is a relationship between consumer decision making and the segments they fall into. However another stream of ethical consumer behaviour literature proposes that the relationship between the ethical consumers' purchase decision and consumer segmentation is inconsistent.

It is not surprising that there is a lack of consensus over the findings, because the ethical consumer behaviour literature does not take into account behavioural nuances (Miller et al., 2001). The argument of this study is that placing consumers into fixed categories is futile and by classifying consumers into fixed categories, researchers fail to take into account the behavioural

complexities posed by fair trade purchase behaviour, rendering it difficult to classify fair trade consumers (Golding, 2009; Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). It is also evident that behaviour is changeable as external influences impinge upon it (Roberts et al., 1999; Carrington et al., 2010). A descriptive analysis of Fairtrade attitudes and buying behaviour (de Pelsmacker et al., 2006) showed that there are very few differences in attitudes and behaviours between socio-demographic categories. The relationship between gender and ethical consumer behaviour is found to be inconsistent (de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Bhate & Lawler, 1997; Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980). It is found in the literature that socio-demographic segmentation lacks the ability to identify the socially responsible consumer (de Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

In a study of American consumers conducted by Doran (2009), she found that when demographic data were entered into a regression model to determine the relationship between age and ethical consumption, the relationship was not significant. This finding is in line with earlier studies (Dickson, 2001; Anderson & Cunningham, 1972).

### **5.3. Behavioural Changeability<sup>426</sup>**

A key issue with the majority of segmentation studies discussed above is the way in which researchers have focused on situational surveys, by subjecting a group of consumers to a set of questions or ethical scenarios, and subsequently classifying them into fixed segments. Also, the gender bias in the samples selected for studies further complicates the issue of consumer segmentation (de Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

This leads into the third stream of research which not only proposes that consumer segmentation is fungible but also points towards a more dynamic concept of behavioural change. The emergent concept of behavioural mutability is situated in this strand of research. While the current research clearly demonstrates how the concept of behavioural mutability could be applied to Fairtrade consumer purchase behaviour, there are very few previous studies which have suggested its applicability to consumer behaviour. Peattie (1995) studying green consumers also proposed uncertainty in behaviour and posits that the uncertain behaviour is predicated upon the networks of information which are available. Furthermore, Moreau et al. (2001) propose the concept of consumer behavioural change and the general overview of consumer mutability as a means of persuading consumers to uptake new products, and diminishing entrenched knowledge structures. People changing the way they behave is not novel: what is novel contextually is the ways in which ethical and moral demands on the consumer can mutate

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<sup>426</sup> In context of present study, this concept is termed as behavioural mutability.



and modify their behaviour as a function of information being provided. Such change has the potential to be either biased against the moral standpoint of Fairtrade or be supportive of it.

Adams & Raisborough (2010) provide the only extant study found in the substantive area of fair trade consumer behaviour which highlights behavioural mutability. They analysed secondary data of everyday life stories of consumers and proposed four categories - commitment to being good, hard to be good, good but doubting and closer to home. These categories describe consumers as moving between supporting Fairtrade and being ambivalent towards it and suggest that factors such as personal experience or provision of solid proof about the workability of Fairtrade can reinforce behaviour, or perhaps cause a migration across categories for the consumer.

McDonald et al (2006) further extended the concepts of voluntary and non-voluntary simplifiers by proposing a third rather vacillating category of beginner voluntary simplifiers (BVS). Voluntary simplifiers (VS) are people who choose, “out of free will — rather than by being coerced by poverty, government austerity programs, or being imprisoned — to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning” (Etzioni, 1998, p. 620). In developing the vacillating category, they found that consumers move across a behavioural continuum, as opposed to the concept of fixed consumer segments, McDonald et al. (2006, p. 531) suggest “These groups (voluntary simplifiers, non - voluntary simplifiers and beginner voluntary simplifiers) should not be conceptualized as distinct, static or coherent statements of lifestyles, but treated as overlapping, fluid and inconsistent streams of purchase and/or non-purchase decisions”.

This clearly supports the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability. Moreover, their (McDonald et al., 2006) findings support the argument made in the present study that consumer’s behaviour is mutable and that consumers cannot necessarily be fixed into demographic or psychographic segments. McDonald et al. (2006) further suggest that except for the extreme ends of the behavioural continuum, the majority of the consumers fit into the vacillating BVS group since external influences have the power to change their behaviour, and the BVS group is claimed also to be more diverse and heterogeneous than the other two. The BVS group proposed by McDonald et al. (2006) of vacillating consumers is similar to the Fairtrade consumer behaviour types - Questioning but Supporting and the Supporting and Vacillating (Figure 4) in the present study. These entail vacillating in their purchase behaviour towards Fairtrade, subject to internal and external influences.

McDonald et al. (2006) further propose the two extreme ends of voluntary simplifiers (VS) non-voluntary simplifiers (NVS) like the Cynical behaviour which entails total rejection of Fairtrade and the Supporting and Committed behavioural type that involves being wholly committed to Fairtrade. McDonald et al. (2006) propose the behavioural changeability and continuum of behaviour in the context of voluntary simplicity, but there is no comprehensive development of the behavioural groups and there is no diagrammatic representation of their behavioural continuum. The emergent concept of five behavioural groups in this current study (see Chapter 3) shares similarities with the continuum proposed by McDonald et al. (2006). The present study acknowledges and clearly represents the concept of a behavioural continuum, specifically, in Fairtrade context.

The previous section reviewed literature pertaining to the debate about consumer segmentation and argued that classifying ethical consumers into fixed categories is futile; instead the reality of the matter is that consumer behaviour is dynamic and mutable. The emergent continuum of five behaviour types conceptualises the ways in which consumers might move between the behaviour types at the time of purchase and support is found for this assertion in the existing literature (McDonald et al., 2006; Peattie, 1995). After nesting the concept of Behavioural Mutability in the discourse of consumer segmentation, the next section reviews the literature pertinent to consumer decision making. The section is divided into three sub-sections, the first sub-section reviews the consumer decision making models, the second sub-section examines the ethical decision making models and the final sub-section reviews the extant fair trade decision making models. These models are compared and contrasted with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. Finally, a modified theory of Reconciling is proposed, which explicates the ways in which consumers resolve their demands of conscience in the context of Fairtrade purchase behaviour.

#### **5.4. Review of the Extant Consumer Decision Making Models**

Economists in particular have been interested in consumer decision making for a substantial period of time. This economic view proposed that consumer choice is always rational, and self takes priority over others (Zinkhan, 1992). Utility theory which evolved from this view, posits that consumers make choices based on rational economic thinking, viewing outcomes as what they expect to happen and are only concerned about themselves (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). This suggests that valid decision making is predicated upon adequate provision of information to enable accurate quantification of contextual consumer choice. Ethical concerns are dismissed as being of no value and are thus omitted from this concept since there is neither

profit nor benefit evident for the consumer in an interaction which has a one sided benefit weighted in favour of the producer.

This current study shows that the majority of respondents interviewed indicated an extrinsic concern for the marginalised producers of the developing countries and that this concern was particularly found in the consumers manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour. The utility model also proposes that the consumer needs to be provided with adequate information to enable accurate evaluation of the choices available, and the importance of information to the intending consumer has been found in this current study also. From this, the logical deduction is that the consumer, in order that he or she might make a rational decision, would need to be aware of all the options attaching to a specific purchase and would need to be able to weigh each one adequately so as to arrive at a rational decision, (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). This is particularly applicable to consumers exhibiting Sceptical, and Questioning but Supporting behaviour, for whom the opacity of the Fairtrade system was perceived to be a major concern. However none of the respondents was found to predicate their purchase decision solely on the amount of information available at the time of purchase. Many respondents, especially those supporting the ethos of Fairtrade acknowledged the fact that due to the distant nature of the phenomenon it is not possible to acquire information, and therefore, their decision was predicated upon empathy and altruism, but these aspects of consumer purchase are not taken into account by the proponents of the Utility theory.

On the other hand the psychodynamic perspective, based primarily on the work of Freud (1997) suggests that behaviour is not always controlled by conscious thought nor environmental factors but is based on basic biological drives and is instinctual, hence self is all important and there can be little place for compassion. In the context of this present study, this perspective was found to be reflected in the consumers who showed total indifference towards Fairtrade and to a comparatively lesser degree in the consumers exhibiting Cynical and Sceptical behaviour. However, that was not found to be the case for the consumers manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour.

The behavioural approach to consumer behaviour offers a third perspective, which denies instinctual behaviour and suggests that all influences are external. The origins of this concept lie in the work of Pavlov (1927) who proposed the concept of classical conditioning as a means of predicting behaviour. According to this concept a behaviour once learned remains in force, as a conditioned reflex, being reinforced each time it is repeated (Pavlov, 1927). From this current study, it is found that the consumers, while influenced by the Fairtrade logo, the purchase

environment, peer pressures, Fairtrade promotional events such as the Fairtrade fortnight etc. also feel an instinct to help other people and they express this by investing in the ethos of Fairtrade. This perspective also supports the emergent theory in the context of habitual behaviour and the concept that repeating behaviour reinforces it, establishing it as a habit. For example, one of the respondents interviewed, manifesting Supporting and Committed behaviour, stated that she had been buying Fairtrade produce for so long that it had become a norm, Fairtrade for her was habitual purchase behaviour.

However, behavioural research is accepted as being only a partial explanation of human activity, and there is scope for developing a much fuller understanding, because behaviourism does not account for the variations of response observed in a population exposed to similar influences (Stewart, 1994). From the cognitive view point, a consumer is regarded as an information processor and the emphasis is on the cognitive processes involved in a purchase process. This approach is most widely used in the consumer behaviour field, and proposes that environmental considerations are secondary to intrinsic perceptions despite environment and experience playing a significant role as inputs helping consumer decision making (Stewart, 1994). Bray (2008) further suggests that the cognitive approach has usurped the position of behaviourism as the main paradigm for consumer behaviour. Therefore, the cognitive perspective of understanding consumer behaviour is found to be explaining the phenomenon in a more comprehensive way (Ribeaux & Poppleton, 1978).

Within the cognitive perspective, there are analytical models and prescriptive models, which are also known as grand models (Bray, 2008). Analytical models create the skeletal frame upon which the theory is built, whilst prescriptive models provide guidelines for the structuring of human behaviour (Moital, 2007). The most common analytical consumer behaviour models are those of the theory of Buying Behaviour (Howard & Sheth, 1969) and the Consumer Decision Model (Engel, Kollat & Blackwell, 1968). However the dominant prescriptive models are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) proposed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen & Fishbein (1985). These models are briefly discussed and compared with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience later.

The Howard & Sheth's (1969) **Theory of Buyer Behaviour** tried to integrate social, psychological and marketing influences on the consumer purchase decision making to create a coherent model which could analyse a wide range of buying situations including commercial and industrial. The various stimuli for purchasing are considered along with other variables, being perceptual and learned, and which are processed through the activity of informational search.

These variables are the subjective stimuli which affect the consumer, and may be categorised as significant stimuli being aspects of the products (Loudon & Della Bitta 1993), the symbolic influences which are derived from the constructs of marketers and advertisers, which have different influences on consumers, (Foxall, 1990; Howard & Sheth, 1969), and the social stimuli of the consumer's social group. Other intervening variables needing consideration are perceptions and experiential or learning constructs. The former includes such matters as perceived price or quality which have the capacity to distort perceptions, while the learning constructs include impetus and outcome, sense of ability to achieve desired outcome, habit of mind in purchasing, brand preference, and limiting factors such as budget and experiential feedback from previous purchases. Consumer decision making is influenced by the strength of the consumer's attitude to the different brands and choices available and is mediated by both knowledge and experience (Howard & Sheth, 1969). Exogenous variables including social class, financial status and culture have the ability to influence behaviour, although Loudon & Della Bitta (1993) suggest that these could be better defined. The outputs include variables which represent the purchaser's response and demonstrate the steps to buying - attention – how much information the consumer has absorbed; comprehension – how much the consumer has understood; attitude – the purchaser's self-interested evaluation of the product, and purchase behaviour which describes the act of buying the product once all other considerations have been allowed for.

One of the major differences between the emergent theory and the Buyer Behaviour Model (Howard & Sheth, 1969) is the sequential considerations imposed on purchase behaviour. The Buyer Behaviour Model suggests that attitudes and intentions lead into behaviour, which shares similarities with the perspective model of TRA and TPB (as explained below). This sequence and causal relationship has been contradicted in the literature, especially the ethical decision making and fair trade decision making literature, which suggests that attitudes and intentions do not always lead to ethical behaviour (Carrington et al., 2014).

The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is not a linear sequential model, but is an iterative process by which consumers process their ethical concerns of demands on conscience. However, the emergent theory is in line with the buyer behaviour model regarding the concept of predisposition, which reflects the emergent concept of Forming in the present study. Forming depicts the consumers as a construct whose behaviour is mediated by the influences which affected their being up to that point. For example, the consumers exhibiting Cynical behaviour towards Fairtrade were found to be predisposed through disappointment and disillusionment to reject the Fairtrade promise. On the other hand, the consumers exhibiting

Supporting and Committed behaviour towards Fairtrade were found to have been experientially conditioned to the point that their predisposition was to regard supporting Fairtrade as a way of life. Furthermore, the concept of exogenous variables in the buyer behaviour model were also found to inhibit Fairtrade purchase including quality, price, taste, budgetary constraints etc. (Bray et al., 2011). The exogenous variables of social class, culture, organisation and importance of purchase in the buyer behaviour models, were not found to have any impact on the Fairtrade purchase in the present study.

The **Consumer Decision Model** (also known as the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model) was originally developed in 1968 by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell, and close parallels to it will be found in Howard & Sheth's (1969) Theory of Buying Behaviour.

The model has seven stages – recognition of need, search for information internally and externally, evaluation of alternatives, buying, post purchase consideration and disposal. The model discusses the stimuli which drive these stages, suggesting that previous experience weighs heavily in the opening balance followed by external variables and cultural/familial influences. The various consumer choices are weighted by the creation of beliefs, attitudes and purchase intentions.

After the consumer has identified a need, he or she seeks information from memory and experience, or from external sources, and the degree to which this is done will be affected by the complexity and significance of the purchase decision. This produces information which is applied while evaluating purchase choices and this evaluation is also mediated via environmental and individual variables. Intention is regarded as the immediate precursor to purchase. Situational factors are considered to bear a significant influence and can consist of the various pressures extant at the time of purchase. This model also considers post-purchase reflection and disposal of the product after use. The Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model (*Consumer Decision Model*) agrees substantially with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. A parallel is certainly obvious while comparing this model to the current theory as both models tacitly accept the motivation of need. The Consumer Decision Model classifies decision-making as a seven-stage process while the current theory proposes four stages of behaviour.

The search for external information is incorporated into the stage of Evaluating; however the difference lies in the non-active information search. Some respondents stated that they did not have time to hunt for information regarding Fairtrade products. By challenging the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard suggestion that the search for information, internally and externally, is a separate stage, the emergent theory argues that it is not always the case. This is particularly

applicable to consumers' habitual buying. Furthermore the stage of Evaluating in the emergent theory also explicates the concept of Ambivalence which explains that when there is a choice between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade product, the consumer is in a state of ambivalence. In the ethical decision making literature, this estate is also referred to an ethical dilemma (Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Marks & Mayo, 1991). Furthermore, the emergent concept of *Situational Prioritising* bears similarities with a few of the individual differences and environmental influences affecting purchase decisions.

The stage of Acting in the emergent model is reflected by the purchase stage, however in the consumer decision making model, the actual purchase is not explained any further. One of the major contributions of the emergent theory is the understanding of the various nuances involved in the actual purchase, which are ignored by the previous models. As such, the emergent theory not only explains the binary buying or not buying behaviour, but also introduces the concepts of Ethical Substituting and Going Without, in the context of Fairtrade. The post purchase stage in the consumer decision making model is not dissimilar to the stage of Reflecting, in the emergent theory. Although similar to the purchase stage in the existing consumer decision making models, the post- purchase stage is underdeveloped. In the emergent theory, the stage of Reflecting further involves the concepts of Reinforcing and Reconciling, which explicate the ways in which the consumer comes to terms with his or her purchase. Furthermore, the consumer decision making model does not explicitly take cognisance of the experiential feedback from the post purchase stage, except in the context of consumer satisfaction. Finally, the consumer decision-making model considers the disposal stage which was not found in responses from the consumers of the present study in the context of Fairtrade purchase behaviour.

The perspective models were first developed in the 1960's, when marketing researchers increasingly focused on beliefs and attitudes as determinants of consumer buying behaviour (Ahtola, 1975). The most influential work in this area was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen who proposed models of attitude formation known as TRA and TPB. TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is a very simplistic description of the decision process; suggesting that attitude towards behaviour, perceived behavioural control and the consumer's subjective norm create intention which produces behaviour. The authors do, however, suggest that attitude is a learned predisposition which is both evaluative and affective. Developing this thematic approach, Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) suggest an ambiguity in this description of attitude. Contending that belief and attitude are similar Ajzen & Fishbein (1985) suggest that there is very little distinction between them. However, they contend that a distinction can be made by employing cognition, affect and conation, such that knowledge about something, feelings towards it, behavioural

intention and subsequent actions can be indicators of attitude. Furthermore, this may be regarded as a retrospective view, since it is dependent upon observing what is done and then describing attitude from the interpretation of that observation. From this proposition it is suggested that actions are then further mediated by intention to perform or participate in a particular behaviour, hence the behavioural/intentions model which they propose suggests that while beliefs about the consequences of a behaviour will affect the attitude towards that behaviour - thus mediating intention to perform that behaviour, this is further mediated by normative beliefs and subjective norms about that behaviour. However to improve the predictive power of the TRA, Ajzen and Fishbein developed the TPB.

In a similar manner to Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) TRA, so Ajzen & Fishbein's (1985) TPB depends heavily upon the concept of intention as being the principal factor influencing behaviour, since it is considered that intention is the motivator for behaviour, the stronger the intention, the more likely the actor is to see the act through to its logical culmination. TPB suggests that intention is derived from attitude subjective norms and the perception of the degree to which the actor is in control. This latter is to some extent dependant on past experience of how easy or hard the action was going to be. If these are favourable, then the translation from intention into behaviour is more likely to take place. Thus these considerations can possess varying degrees of impact on the fulfilling of intent. It is suggested by Ajzen & Fishbein (1985) that combinations of attitude, intention and behavioural control weigh differently in different transactions.

From the above review of literature, there appear to be possible limitations in applying TPB and TRA to understand the complexities of Fairtrade consumer behaviour, four of which are as follows. Firstly, the quantitative nature of TRA and TPB, dependent as it is upon preconceptions and outcomes, is limited in its ability to unravel the truth. Notwithstanding the current use of TPB in exploring relationships in ethical consumer choice such as Fairtrade, it remains founded in a procrustean structure which fails to make allowances for consumer responses (Goulding, 2009). Secondly, TPB and TRA consider behaviour as a direct outcome of attitudes and intentions, but this postulate appears to be flawed (Auger & Devinney, 2007; Shaw et al., 2007; Belk et al., 2005; Sheeran, 2002; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Follows & Jobber, 2000).

The theory of Reconciling demands of Conscience does not profess linear or sequential relationships between attitudes, intention and behaviour; instead it proposes that consumer behaviour might change as external influences impact upon the consumers' judgement. This linear relationship paradox is also expressed in ethical behaviour literature by the prevalence of



the “attitude-behaviour gap”, (Bray et al., 2011; Auger & Devinney, 2007; de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Elliot & Jankel-Elliot, 2003; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). The situation clearly refutes, for example, Fukukawa’s (2003) contention that a consumer’s intent will determine the outcome of his or her purchasing behaviour, which contention is equally critiqued by Bagozzi et al. (2000) and Morwitz et al. (2007) as oversimplifying this complicated process. Carrington et al. (2010), suggest that consumers do not always follow their avowed intentions. Thirdly, there is concern about a social desirability bias in studies utilising quantitative measures and questionnaires to collect data. Socially acceptable responses are often provided by the respondents (Nancarrow et al., 2001), thus contributing to the attitude-behaviour gap (de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Auger et al., 2003). So as to reduce the desirability bias regarding the stated and actual behaviour of consumers, the present study utilises qualitative interviewees along with the till receipts of the respondents, thus comparing the actual and the stated behaviour. It was found that in some instances, the consumer’s ethical concerns about Fairtrade do not translate into their purchase behaviour. In so doing the emergent theory not only supports the argument surrounding the attitude behaviour gap but also contributes to the understanding of this gap by proposing and explicating the concepts of *Situational Prioritising* and Behavioural Mutability. Fourthly, behaviour is not always planned (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). It is regarded as random, observable, but not predictable (Carrington et al., 2010).

In the present study, it was found that consumers’ shopping behaviour and especially Fairtrade buying behaviour may include habitual buying which does not require too much involvement, therefore the TPB is limited in its contribution to understanding the complexities of consumer behaviour and in particular ethical consumer behaviour. Ajzen (1991) himself acknowledges the fact that TPB does not take cognisance of ethical considerations, social pressures and moral obligations, yet these can bring a strong influence on decisions.

The introduction of an ethical component into the routine of daily purchase creates an increased number of complexities in the reasoning and rationales behind investment, as allowances need to be made for emotionally driven judgments, alongside judgments predicated on want, need and desire. Desire to be ethical, when there is a moral issue at stake, often lies directly in conflict with economic self-interest, - and this is something which does not appear to be readily understood in the existing consumer decision making models. A moral issue exists when action or lack of action by someone can benefit or harm another person, (Velasquez & Rostankowski, 1985) and there is equally a lack of understanding of moral issues in the existing models (Jones, 1991).

While this section explicates and compares the extant consumer decision making theories, the next section first presents the extant ethical decision making models and then compares the existing theories and the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

### 5.5. Review of Extant Ethical Decision Making Models

Ethical behaviour literature is permeated with models and theories attempting to clarify, explain and understand management ethical behaviour. . Hence models discussed are primarily those which are related to this strand and include Cognitive Moral Development (Kohlberg, 1969), the Four component Model (Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986), the General Theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), the Integrated Model of Ethical Decision Making (Ferrell et al., 1989), the Ethical Decision Making Model (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989), the Issue Contingent Model (Jones, 1991), and the Model of Consumer Ethical Dilemmas (Marks & Mayo, 1991). Each of these models which approaches ethical decision making is now explained, and then contrasted with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

Kohlberg's (1969) view of **cognitive moral development** is a six stage process of achieving moral maturity. He suggests that to achieve this moral maturity people need to evolve from obedience because of fear of punishment, through manipulating the rules to achieve self-advantage. This is followed by behaving so as to comply with the contextual norms of significant others through performing duties which have been accepted. This leads into the final stage which is comprised of principled behaviour such as abiding by the rules of social contract, from which evolves the emergence of self-focussed ethical principles which will disobey rules if rules are perceived to be unethical. The **four component structure** as proposed by Rest, (1986), which is primarily based on Kohlberg's (1969) moral development model featuring a moral agent who must recognise a moral issue, make a moral judgment, and establish the moral intent to place moral considerations ahead of other concerns, and then act on those moral concerns. All these stages are distinct and linear. It also examines cognitive moral development through the stages of identifying the moral issue, making a moral judgment, establishing a moral intent then engaging in moral action, and as such is reflected in the TPB (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1985) in the form of attitude affecting intention and intention leading to behaviour.

Siting her study of organisational ethical decision making in the atmosphere of distrust post Watergate, Treviño (1986), suggests that the public view of management ethical standards has been enough to encourage close inspection of these ethical standards. She therefore proposes an **interactionist model** predicated on the assumption that decision making in an organisation results from interaction between both the player and the situation. Addressing it from this

viewpoint, she considers that the origin of the ethical decision making process is the existence of an ethical dilemma, similar to Hunt & Vitell's (1986) ethical problem situation, and the way this ethical dilemma is handled is filtered through the manager's stage of moral development, a concept based on Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive moral development. However moral cognition is not considered to be adequate to predict ethical behaviour because the outcome is moderated by situational moderators such as job content, organizational culture and work characteristics, as well as internal individual moderators deriving from the manager's maturity, experience and self-confidence. The outcome is in the form of either ethical or unethical behaviour. The ability to carry the decision through is considered to be affected by strength of ego and locus of control, together with obedience to the authority of conscience, and perhaps an understanding of the outcomes of an action. And finally, the situational moderators feed back into the individual's moral development.

Hunt & Vitell (1986) propose the first **ethical decision making model** in the field of marketing. They present the general theory of Marketing Ethics which is predicated upon an individual's deontological and teleological evaluation of the ethical alternatives. From a more cognitive perspective, Hunt & Vitell's (1986) model begins with substantive siting of the problem for the manager, which provides a referential origin predicated upon the factors of the contextual environment. The factors which could affect the perception of an ethical problem are those of the culture of the business environment, the nature of the industry itself, the organisational environment and the actor's personal experience.

Having established this structure, the ethical problem, rather than being abstract, can be nested contextually and referentially, thus achieving a truer perspective. From this perspective, the marketer is able to perceive the problem more clearly, as well as being able to perceive any alternative courses of action, and the consequences and ramifications of any chosen path. The decision involves both deontological inputs including the rightness or wrongness of the ethical alternatives and teleological inputs concerning the perceived consequence of each alternative, so directing the manager in the making of an accurate ethical judgement which directs subsequent behaviour through original intentions. The intention and behaviour link in this decision making process, although not explicitly signposted by Hunt & Vitell (1986) points towards Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) TRA. However, they acknowledge the fact that there could be an inconsistency between intention and behaviour and when such a situation arises, the individual may feel guilt.

The Hunt & Vitell (1986) model has been modified and constructs have been added to it to increase the predictive power of the model. One of the variants of their model is the Application

of Hunt & Vitell's theory of Ethics (Vitell et al., 2001) applied to consumers' ethical decision making, suggesting the importance of moral philosophies such as deontology and teleology. They found that when faced with ethical dilemmas and forming ethical judgement, consumers consider the deontological factors or ethical norms more important than the behavioural consequences. Furthermore, they found personal characteristics to be indecisive in determining consumers' ethical judgement. The most recent variant of Hunt & Vitell's (1986) model in the context of ethical consumer decision making is by Vitell et al. (2013). This model criticises the existing models which they consider show the consumer to follow rational decision making processes, and overlook the emotional state. Vitell et al. (2013) introduced the constructs of emotion and its role in ethical decision making (Agnihotri et al., 2012), the theory of emotions (Lazarus, 1991), self-control (Tice et al., 2001; Tangney et al 2004; Baumeister, 2005) and moral potency, which is an unstable psychological state, readily open to change as the result of extrinsic influences.

In an attempt at understanding the ways in which marketing managers take decisions in an ethical situation, Ferrell et al. (1989) offer a **multiple stage, integrated model for ethical decision making** in marketing. As the name suggests Ferrell et al.'s. (1989) model consists of components from Ferrell & Gresham (1985), Kohlberg (1969) Hunt & Vitell (1986) and Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) models integrated into the model. In the first stage, the model suggests that an ethical dilemma is created by the macro environmental forces such as the social and economic environment. The second stage is adopted from Kohlberg's (1969) moral development concept, which entails the recognition of the moral dilemma being dependent on the stage of moral development a manager has achieved at the point of decision making. However, a managers' social learning influences his or her moral development (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

This includes opportunity, and the influences of such as family, peers and superiors in a work environment, to produce cognitive rational decision making. Adopted from Hunt & Vitell's (1986) model, the next stage of moral evaluation consists of moral philosophies of teleological (consequential) and deontological (rightness or wrongness) implications as the individual actor gains understanding of the possible potential outcomes of his or her behaviour. The next two stages are based on Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) TRA, which suggest that ethical judgement drives action through individual intentions. However, the intention-behaviour link has been found to be paradoxical by the extant literature (Carrington et al., 2012). The last component of this integrated model is the behavioural evaluation of the decisions made which then feeds into the manager's personal experience and into the organisational culture.

The **empirical ethical decision making model** presented by Dubinsky & Loken, (1989), explicates the ways in which marketing managers deal with ethical decisions. It is fundamentally based on Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) TRA which proposes that an individual's decision making process is rational and systematic. In retrospect, the model posits that intention is a prerequisite for ethical or unethical behaviour and intentions are in turn influenced by an individual's attitude, subjective norms, or perceptions regarding the society's deontological values. The attitudes are then a result of an individual's belief system. This model, like TRA is a linear, prescriptive model of ethical decision making. One could argue that ethical decision making is a complex form of decision making which involves emotional aspects and not just rational factors; hence it ceases to be a linear process and becomes significantly more convoluted.

Jones (1991) in his model proposes that a moral issue varies in terms of moral intensity and that an **issue contingent model** is the most suitable approach for understanding ethical decision making. Propinquity, immediacy of outcome, and the contingent issue have the ability to affect behaviour (Jones, 1991) yet most models, seem to avoid inclusion of the contingency of the characteristics of the issue at stake, leading to the assumption that the processes remain the same for all individuals under all circumstances, hence all issues are identical, whereas Jones (1991) considers that the moral issue affects all stages of moral decision making and behaviour. Hence Jones posits six characteristics of a moral issue which need to be incorporated into any model - *the magnitude of any consequences, general social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy of outcomes* (Ainslie, 1992; Foxall, 2010), *propinquity and concentration of effort* since these will all be related to moral decision making. However, Jones also posits that situational variables may affect behaviour, and suggests that existing models need modification to allow for these concepts. Furthermore Jones (1991) suggests that the details of the moral decision making processes become irrelevant if the person does not recognise that he or she is dealing with a moral issue.

Hunt & Vitell's (1986) original model, designed to represent ethical decision making regarding marketing managers, is adapted by Marks & Mayo (1991) who collapse the three environments postulated in Hunt & Vitell's (1986) model (cultural, industry and organisational) into just 'cultural environment', and substitute 'reference groups' as being indicative of the societal influences forming the character of the consumer. The concept of **consumer ethical dilemma** is posited to be distinct from normal routine dilemmas of choice, (Marks & Mayo, 1991). Further, it is proposed that an ethical or moral dilemma occurs in consumers when an action may harm self or a third party, or if the teleological implications are contrary to the intent of the decision to behave in a particular way. Their study indicates that while the respondents were able to identify an ethical dilemma, yet the consequences which favoured the respondents were

preferred, thus the ethical dilemma was resolved by self-interest. From this, Marks & Mayo suggest that the Hunt & Vitell (1986) model should incorporate a stage which allows differentiation between self and others inasmuch as teleological consequences are concerned. Having reviewed the ethical decision making models, the following section compares and contrasts these models with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

### **5.6. Comparison of Emergent Theory with Extant Decision Making Models**

The comparison between the extant ethical decision making models and the emergent theory is based on parameters such as context of decision making, the original disciplines in which the models were first developed, the empirical foundation, if any, the theoretical underpinning, behavioural nuances and the constructs/concepts which make up these decision making model. A summary of the comparison of the extant ethical decision making models and the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is presented in Table 19 followed by a detailed comparison.

Parameters	Ethical Decision Making Models								Emergent Theory: Reconciling Demands of Conscience
	Kohlberg Moral Development (1969)	Four component Model (Rest, 1986)	General Theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt & Vitell, 1986)	Person-Situation Interactionist Model (Treviño, 1986)	Ethical Decision Making Model (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989)	Integrated Model of Ethical Decision Making (Ferrell et al, 1989)	Issue contingent model (Jones, 1991)	Model of Consumer Ethical Dilemmas Marks & (Mayo 1991)	
<b>Context</b>	Ethical Dilemma	Moral Decision making	Ethical Decision Making	Ethical Decision Making	Ethical Decision Making	Ethical Decision Making	Ethical Decision Making	Ethical Decision Making	Fair Trade Consumer Behaviour
<b>Origin</b>	Psychology	Organizational Behaviour	Marketing Ethics	Organizational Behaviour	Marketing	Marketing	Organisational Behaviour	Marketing Ethics	Consumer Behaviour
<b>Empirical</b>	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Theoretical underpinning</b>	Piaget's theory of moral development (1932)	Kohlberg (1969)	Partly based on Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975)	Kohlberg's Cognitive Development Model	Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975)	Cognitive – affect and Social-learning theory, Kohlberg (1969) Ferrell & Gresham (1985) and Hunt & Vitell	Rest's four-component model	General Theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt & Vitell, 1986)	Grounded in data

						(1986)			
<b>Behavioural Nuances</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Five behavioural groups:
<b>Constructs/ Concepts</b>	Level 1 - Pre-conventional morality Level 2 - Conventional morality Level 3 - Post-conventional morality	(1) Recognition of moral issue, (2) Making moral judgments, (3) Establish moral intent, and (4) Implement moral actions.	(1) Perceived Ethical Problem, (2) Perceived alternatives and Perceived consequences, (3) Ethical Judgement, (4) Intention, (5) Behaviour (6) Actual Consequences	(1) Ethical Dilemma, (2) Stage of Cognitive moral Development, (3) Ethical and Unethical Behaviour	(1) Belief formation, (2) Attitudes, (3) Subjective norms, (4) Intention and (5) Behaviour	(1) Ethical Issue or dilemma, (2) Individual Decision Making, (3) Behaviour, (4) Evaluation, of Behaviour	Based on Rest's model. Moral Intensity: Magnitude of Consequences, Social Consensus, Probability of Effect, Temporal Immediacy, Proximity, Concentration of Effect	(1) Perceived ethical problem, (2) Ethical Evaluation, (3) Ethical Judgement, (4) Intention (5) Behaviour, (6) Actual Consequences	Comfort Zoning: Evaluating, , Acting and Reflecting

Table 19: Comparison of Extant Ethical Decision Making Models with the Emergent Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience



### ***5.6.1. Context***

The contexts of the extant models discussed above are those of ethical dilemma (Kohlberg, 1969), moral decision making (Rest, 1986), ethical decision making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Trevino, 1986; Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell et al., 1989, Jones, 1991) and ethical consumer decision making (1991). However the models of ethical consumer decision making (Marks & Mayo, 1991; Vitell et al., 2013) are adaptations of previous models developed in the context of marketing management (Hunt & Vitell., 1986). The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the first theory developed in the context of Fairtrade consumer decision making. It is not an adaptation or derivation of previous models and as such offers new insights and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Its substantive area is clearly defined, yet the findings could be applied to other decision making contexts, particularly ethical, consumption constituencies, while the theory itself is constantly modifiable to take cognisance of changes in the market environment.

### ***5.6.2. Origin***

The origin of the models discussed above is mostly in organizational behaviour (Treviño, 1986; Jones, 1991) or marketing management (Hunt & Vitell., 1986; Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell et al 1989). None of the ethical decision making models were originated in the field of consumer behaviour, but are based on existing models. For example as Marks & Mayo's (1991) model and Vitell et al's. (2013) model of consumers' ethical decision making model are based on Hunt & Vitell's (1986) General Theory of Marketing Ethics, and a number of models in ethical decision making are based on the TPB and the TRA. The current process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is, however, grounded in data, has not been influenced by the existing models, and therefore represents the view from participant's viewpoint. The present research has its origins in an interest triggered by the emerging phenomenon of Fairtrade, and understanding the dynamics of consume behaviour within this context.

### ***5.6.3. Empirical***

Out of the eight models of ethical decision making discussed above, only three models are empirically based. These models are Kohlberg's (1929) Moral Development model, Dubinsky & Loken's (1989) model of Ethical Decision Making and Marks & Mayo's (1991) model of Consumer Ethical Dilemmas. The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, however, is developed by adhering to the tenets of classic grounded theory method, and grounded in the data. In a series of seventy in-depth interviews, consumers' views covered the

gamut of reactions to Fairtrade, with the interviewer, never guiding their responses nor holding an opinion for or against Fairtrade. The data were collected and analysed adhering to the tenets of grounded theory (Glaser 1992, 1998, 2012). Hence the emergent theory is grounded purely in consumers' responses and is not derived from existing models. This gives a fresher approach than the existing literature and a better understanding of Fairtrade consumer decision making.

#### ***5.6.4. Theoretical Perspective***

The greater part of extant consumer behaviour theories consist of modifications, adaptations, updates and minor additions to some previous theory. Thus it could be said that Rest, (1986), built on Kohlberg's (1969) model of moral development. Treviño (1986), takes her influences from Kohlberg, while Dubinsky & Loken, (1989), begin from the premise of TPB propounded by Fishbein & Ajzen (1985), and Ferrell et al. (1989), take their influences from both Kohlberg (1969) and Hunt & Vitell (1986).. Jones, (1991) draws on the foundations of Rest's four component model. Marks & Mayo (1991) refer to Hunt & Vitell (1986). Vitell et al. (2013) take their influences from Hunt & Vitell (1986, 1993) as well as models proposed by Gaudine & Thorne (2001) and Agnihotri et al. (2012) discussing the relationship between emotions and ethical judgements. The emergent theory's validity is enhanced by its being grounded in the data. The viewpoints are those of the responding consumers, not the researcher, and hence there is no question of making facts fit the theory. Rather, the theory emerged from the facts. The theory therefore is not a simple adaptation of previous theoretical work.

#### ***5.6.5. Constructs/ Concepts***

The constructs and concepts which make up the ethical decision making models are analysed in comparison with the emergent theory.

##### **5.6.5.1. Comparing First Stage of Models**

The starting point in the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is the stage of Comfort Zoning, which consists of *Forming* and consumers' *General Purchase Pattern*. *Forming* describes all the influences which created the consumer, however it is subject to change as internal and external factors impinge upon it. It can be seen that Kohlberg's (1969) moral development bears similarities to the emergent concept of *Forming*, in the first stage of Comfort Zoning, since *Forming* describes the way in which the consumer arrives at the point of mature ethical decision making as it has been conceived within this study. The consumer was found to have a subliminal desire to remain within his or her comfort zone. Anything which affected his

or her comfort zone was usually avoided. The moral obligation of Fairtrade was found to affect their comfort zones, since it imposed demands of conscience on the consumer.

For those who supported the ethos of Fairtrade, this reinforced their moral stance towards Fairtrade and thus encouraged them to invest in the ethos of Fairtrade. Those who rejected the ethos of Fairtrade felt uncomfortable. This therefore, created an ethical dilemma, which has been explained earlier in the emergent theory as the demands of conscience, conceptualised as the main concern of consumers when faced with the choice of purchasing Fairtrade products. The intensity of this dilemma was found to be a function of the emergent five consumer behavioural types (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed). Regardless of which behavioural category, the consumers fall into during a purchase decision, their main concern when faced with the choice of buying or not buying Fairtrade products is found to be the demands of conscience which are derived from the appeals to conscience which the ethical proposition espoused by Fairtrade invokes. Respondents experienced varying degrees of demands of conscience, since in the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making, consumers experience a situation which is not a straightforward 'want to buy' or 'do not want to buy', since it is fraught with overtones of doing good<sup>427</sup> and of helping others.<sup>428</sup> In general, in the extant literature, conscience is normally associated with the committing of a criminal offence, for example, recidivist delinquency, (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Scott & Lyman, 1968), or evasion of tax (Eisenhauer, 2006). Steenhaut & van Kenhove (2006) posit conscience as being an anticipated guilt experienced prior to taking an action which could either be fraudulent or immoral. In ethical consumerism, conscience is seldom mentioned, although the ambit of moral behaviour is the source of much investigation, and the impact which it has on purchase behaviour is widely discussed. The reasons for consumers behaving in a manner which implies conscience – altruism, for example, are debatable, although neuropsychologists suggest that behaving in a manner which went against narrow self-interest, compliance with conscience, for example, is self-rewarding (Kimeldorf et al., 2006), yet this is antithetical to the economist's view of man as being a rational creature which puts himself first (Miller, 2013). Indeed, the guiding principles of marketing have for years been directed at this 'rational' consumer to the extent that he or she is considered by economists to be the norm. This could enhance understanding of why models of consumer behaviour rarely consider conscience or moral values. Miller (2013) suggests that this norm is a powerful influence on consumption behaviour, driving actions and behaviour with no regard for conscience.

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<sup>427</sup> M 102

<sup>428</sup> M 83

The first stage of most of the extant models is recognising the moral issue (Rest 1986), perceived ethical problem (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), and Ethical Dilemma (Treviño, 1986). In the context of marketing management, Hunt & Vitell (1986) posit that a moral dilemma occurs in a situation where a problem arises which is perceived to possess an ethical content. Building on Hunt & Vitell's (1986) definition of moral dilemma, that a moral dilemma is present when there are at least two opposing interests, one of which has a moral centring, Marks & Mayo (1991) suggest that a consumer ethical dilemma occurs if these situations occur in a consumption context. Considering this in the present context of Fairtrade ethical consumption, the dilemma which occurs is that of demands of conscience as opposed to self-interest. Hence the ethical demands of the Fairtrade product can be opposed by the concurrent hedonic demands of self-gratification.

This current study has found that conscience is a major arbiter in consumer behaviour. Consumers have demonstrated that not only do the majority wish to behave ethically, but for those who fail there is a residual cognitive dissonance caused by their failure. A significant proportion of the consumers who participated in this current study considered that behaving ethically was the norm, and deviating from that was irrational, thus occupying a polarised posture which is antithetical to that claimed by neoclassical economic theory. These findings lie comfortably with the findings of many researchers in this field of ethical decision making (McEachern, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2007; Bray et al., 2011) and reveal a description of the consumer as occupying a position on an ethical scale such that usually the intention is to behave ethically.

#### **5.6.5.2. Comparing Ethical Evaluating**

In the extant ethical decision making models, emphasis is on the stage of Evaluating, explicating how people evaluate ethical or moral alternatives making moral judgements (Rest, 1986), ethical judgement, deontological evaluation and teleological evaluation (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), ethical judgement (Marks & Mayo, 1991). In the emergent theory, the second stage is that of Evaluating, which consists of *Ambivalence*, *Weighing Up* and *Situational Prioritising*. Ambivalence in the present context refers to the choice between Fairtrade product and a mainstream equivalent, particularly where there is parity in price, quality and taste. This results in the need to weigh up the characteristics of the competing choices. The emergent concept of *Weighing Up* refers directly to this evaluation of properties of the putative purchase. This *Weighing Up* is again a function of the

behavioural types<sup>429</sup>. Hunt & Vitell (1986), building on the moral philosophies of deontology and teleology, predicate the deontological evaluation on sense of obligation and duty, whereas the teleological evaluation depends on the perceived outcomes or consequences of an action. Marks & Mayo (1991) modified the teleological understanding by suggesting that the consequences are considered both for the decision maker and others. From this, Marks & Mayo (1991) postulate that only those effects which affect the decision maker are taken into consideration when the problem resolution is considered. This contrasts sharply with the findings of this current study which found concern for the marginalised producer to be a driving concern for several respondents.

The emergent concept of *Situational Prioritising* explicates the influence of immediacy on consumer choice. This is found to be derived from factors which are present at the time, such as limitations of budget, time, convenience, etc, which by their presence affected the purchase decision. This concept is found to be similar to Jones (1991) concept of proximity, which he suggests increases the moral intensity of the issue. *Situational Prioritising* could explain to some extent the disparity frequently observed between attitude, intention and behaviour in ethical decision making literature.

In line with the Ajzen & Fishbein's (1985) TPB model, the ethical decision making models of Rest (1986), Hunt & Vitell (1986), Dubinsky & Loken (1989), Jones (1991) and Marks & Mayo (1991) follow the sequence of intentions leading to behaviour. This relationship of intention leading to behaviour has been challenged in the extant literature, as intentions do not always lead to behaviour (Carrigan et al., 2012). Many extant studies point at this paradox of discrepancy between consumers, attitudes, intentions and behaviour, known in the literature as the attitude-behaviour gap, intention-behaviour gap or words-deeds discrepancy (Cowe & Williams, 2000; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Carrington et al., 2014; Strong, 1997).

Many attempts have been made in the present literature to reduce the attitude-behaviour gap, which in itself is paradoxical. For example, Bray (2008) suggests that behaviour is said to be equal to behavioural intention but this does not explain the attitude-behaviour gap, however he suggests that this may be because altruism, ethics and social responsibility are largely ignored in existing models. Carrington et al. (2010) suggest that beliefs determine attitudes which in turn lead to intentions and these intentions inform behaviour, while de Pelsmacker & Janssens (2007) suggest that social norms and behavioural control moderate intention and behaviour. Carrington et al. (2010) takes this further, suggesting that there are two gaps- attitude-intent and intent-

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<sup>429</sup> As explained in chapter Three, these behaviour types are those of Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed.

behaviour and that there are limitations on these since focus has been on disparities and relationships between attitudes and intentions. However, in line with the argument from the present study, Long (2010), is of the opinion that a definitive conclusion has not been reached to support the contention of an attitude-behaviour gap. From the present study, it is found that this phenomenon is mostly present in the Vacillating but Supporting behavioural group, which entails weak commitment, whereas the extreme ends of the behavioural continuum of Supporting and Committed, Cynical and Sceptical behaviour seldom change in their commitment to buy or not to buy Fairtrade respectively. Therefore, the extant literature's oversimplification of the dynamics of consumer behaviour leads to the misunderstanding of the said attitude behaviour gap.

#### **5.6.5.3. Comparing Actual Behaviour**

The models discussed above do not provide a detailed examination of any actual behaviour. The emphasis is more on cognitive factors such as moral development, ethical evaluation, and intentions than the actual purchase, therefore, substantially ignoring the most important part of the process – the commitment to purchase. In ethical consumer decision making, many researchers in order to understand the decision-making process of consumers when faced with a choice of ethical products, concentrate on the intention to behave (e.g. Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Shaw & Shiu, 2002; de Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Shaw et al., 2006, Shaw et al., 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008) and not on the actual behaviour (Carrigan et al., 2012). In comparison, the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience and the stage of Acting (see chapter 4) entail actual purchase behavioural patterns of buying Fairtrade or not buying Fairtrade. Unlike the existing ethical decision making models which explicate the simple binary state of behaving ethically or unethically, the emergent stage of Acting extends this binary state to allow for variations. These variations were found to be those of Ethical Substituting, which entails selecting a different ethical product when the Fairtrade alternative is not available, and Going Without which is deliberate self-deprivation rather than accepting an unethical substitute. These purchase behavioural variations are a major contribution to the existing models.

#### **5.6.5.4. Comparing Post-Behaviour**

The post-behaviour evaluation is taken into account by Hunt & Vitell (1986) and Marks & Mayo (1991) as the evaluation of actual behavioural consequences, and Ferrell et al., (1989) as evaluation of behaviour. The last stage of Reflecting in the emergent theory explains in detail the post-purchase behaviour in the context of Fairtrade purchase. In the stage of Reflecting consumers were found to come to terms with their purchase decision. The two concepts in the

reflecting stage are those of Reinforcing and Reconciling. In the present context, consumers reinforced their decision to buy Fairtrade products by experiencing satisfaction at having complied with the demands of their conscience. The emergent concept of Reconciling (see Chapter Four) describes the manner in which consumers attempt to assuage any feels of guilt which they experienced by failing to follow their moral arrow. Very few researchers discuss possible post-purchase guilt and the methods employed for mediating it (Gregory-Smith et al., 2013), and as far as the models are concerned, for the most part it does not exist – thereby excluding from the models the experiential feedback which can modify future behaviour.

Hunt & Vitell (1986) while contributing little to understanding, post ethical decision behaviour, go as far as mentioning guilt, but how people cope with this guilt is not taken into consideration.

Yet post-purchase guilt, and its accompanying cognitive dissonance, play a major role in modifying the consumer's future behaviour, and hence its consideration must be of importance to understanding precisely why consumer do or do not buy Fairtrade products. Recently, Vitell et al. (2013) have added the construct of emotions into their model, but provide no indication of how the consumer copes with any guilt produced, nor how this can affect future purchase behaviour, whereas the emergent theory explicates the guilt coping strategies as the emergent Reconciling Strategies and shows how these have an effect upon the consumer's behaviour via a constant experiential loop which mediates future behaviour.

#### **5.6.5.5. Comparing Feedback Loop**

The extant models including the feedback loop or post-purchase behaviour are those of the General Theory of Marketing Ethics (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), the Person Situation Interactionist Model (Treviño, 1986), the Integrated Model of Ethical Decision Making (Ferrell et al., 1989) and the Model of Consumer Ethical Dilemma (Marks & Mayo, 1991). In the same vein, it was found very early in the conceptualisation of the behaviours which emerged from the data, that consumers' feedback of experiential information into their *Forming* was such that it mutated to allow for this feedback, thus mediating future behaviour.

#### **5.6. Comparing Behavioural Nuances**

Consumer behaviour has been found throughout this study to be multi-faceted and nuanced, yet none of the extant models make any allowance for these shades of behaviour. None of the models take into account the ability of the consumer to perform apparently contradictory actions simultaneously because there might be an unseen objective to their behaviour, nor do any of the

models discuss the concept of behavioural mutability which is clearly explicated and justified in this current study.

Although this study identified five distinct behavioural types, it also observed that these were simply nodes around which the behaviour existed. For example, in the behaviour group found, of Supported and Committed behaviour, consumers will go out of their way to buy Fairtrade produce, forsaking all others, going without rather than buying non-Fairtrade, or as a last resort substituting a comparable ethical product for Fairtrade. Whereas Vacillating behaviour is such that it can be moved either into a fully committed relationship with Fairtrade or can degrade into a state of doubt. Equally the behaviour described as Questioning is such that it may be easily degraded into scepticism or elevated into support for Fairtrade. If one were to consider these behaviours impartially, it is apparent that there are overlaps, and that it would not take very much, perhaps by way of information, to push one of the behaviours orbiting one node to migrate to an adjacent node. Equally however, it would not, perhaps take much to engineer a reverse migration. Hence, behaviour may be described not as fixed, but as mutable, influenced by a variety of experiential inputs.

The present theory concurs with Jones' (1991) concept of moral intensity and issue contingency, as the issue or context is found to be important in ethical decision making. This is evident from the Indifferent behaviour found in the respondents, since there was no available context by which Fairtrade could become relevant, so the behaviour was omitted from the study, although its use as a touchstone remains important. However, there is a component of Jones (1991) study which is not found to be true in this study of Fairtrade. Jones suggests that propinquity intensifies emotional involvement, and while for a sizable proportion of respondents to this study, supporting an exploited farmer thousands of miles away appears to be trivial – almost an irrelevance, for some, this distance, perceived through a perception of self as being over privileged resulted in the phenomenon of Nurturing at a distance, - a new finding from this study.

Extant models with the exception of the recent model by Vitell et al. (2013) do not take into account the emotional aspect of consumers' ethical decision making, whereas, in their model, they include emotions such as guilt. The present model, based on the context of Fairtrade purchase decision making process, takes into account both negative and positive emotions of guilt and the feel-good factor. The process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience takes a step further by explaining the coping techniques utilised but the respondents when feeling guilty, because they failed to follow the demands of conscience.



The above section reviewed and compared the extant ethical decision making models with the emergent theory. The next section specifically reviews the fair trade decision making models and compares and contrasts these models with the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which explains the consumer decision process when faced with the choice of ethical products.

### **5.7. Review of Extant Fair Trade Decision Making Models**

Fairtrade literature has witnessed an emerging trend in the application of TPB and TRA in an attempt to predict purchasing behaviour (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008; Chatzidakis et al., 2006; Shaw & Shiu, 2002). Researchers have either extended or modified TPB and TRA in order to improve predictability. For instance, Shaw et al. (2000) and Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. (2006) found the predictive power of TPB increased when ethical obligations internalised ethical concerns about what is right or wrong, ethical self-identity or the salience of ethics in constructing self-identity, were used to extend the traditional TPB model. Others have focused on extending TPB in order to predict Fairtrade consumption and bridge what has become known as the ethics purchase gap (Cowe & Williams, 2000). Nicholls & Lee (2006) investigating child consumer socialization processes in terms of attitude development towards Fairtrade consumption, proposed brand image as an important potential bridge between purchase intention and actual behaviour, and found that brand takes an early hold on the imagination of children.

This current study found that information can have an important affect on consumer purchase behaviour. Several general aspects of consumer attitudes which are not evident within the TPB have also been investigated, such as support for human rights (Hertel, 2009) and need for self-uniqueness (Halepete et al., 2009). However, the accepted process of extending an existing approach has so far failed to fully explicate Fairtrade consumer behaviour (Andorfer & Liebe, 2012). Furthermore, proposing that values drive behaviour and that the existing models do not reflect this issue, Shaw & Clarke (1999) suggest that values need incorporation into any consumer behaviour model to provide a more complete view of the processes taking place. Shaw et al. (2000), using TPB, developed a modified model for decision-making which included ethical obligation and self-identity which helped understand ethical decision making processes. They question the assumption in TPB that attitude results from the sum of behavioural beliefs. Understanding the role of self-identity and moral obligation to predict behaviour is considered essential to produce a model which explains decision making when there is an ethical or a moral dimension apparent. This aspect of self-identity was not found in the current study, however

some consumers exhibiting Sceptical and Cynical behaviour accepted that behaviour was predicated on self-image. At no point did respondents suggest that they subscribed to the ethos of Fairtrade because it coincided with their self-image.

Bray et al (2011) by utilising a qualitative approach developed a model of impeding factors in the purchase of Fairtrade. The similarities between his model and the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience lie in the factors which inhibit purchase of fair trade products and the resulting guilt from failing to follow the demands of conscience. These are found to be impeded by price, experience, ethical obligation, quality, consumer inertia, consumer cynicism, effort required and availability of product, thereby producing outcomes which vary between self-interest leading to cognitive dissonance for failing, which induces a sense of guilt, to ethical consumption or boycotting at the other end of the scale. Bray et al. suggest that Fairtrade goods are generally perceived as inferior since the concentration is on ethical standards rather than on the intrinsic values of quality, taste and desirability. Bray et al. (2011), comparing the extant ethical decision making models, considers Jones (1991) model to be the most comprehensive model, but criticises other existing models which do not make allowances for self-interest to take precedence over ethical compunctions. Furthermore in understanding the ethical decision making process by employing qualitative methods, Hassan et al (2013) found that uncertainty surrounding the complexity and ambiguity of the ethical issues adversely affect consumers ethical purchase.

Although there was a small portion of the respondents to this current study who had experienced some Fairtrade products of poor quality, this was a very substantial minority. In line with the findings of the present study, Hunt & Vitell (1986, 1993) and Shaw & Clarke (1999) suggest that situational factors such as price, availability, time and convenience can also have an effect on ethical purchase decision making, also proposed by Carrigan & Attalla (2001) who suggest that ethical buying tends to occur only where there is price, quality and convenience parity.

All the studies discussed above have built on and extended, or tried to extend, previous studies so as to make them fit with the generally not fully aligned outcomes. This current study avoids those problems since it owes nothing to any previous study. It therefore offers a totally new perspective on Fairtrade consumer behaviour although there are some points in previous studies which parallel the findings which emerged in the emergent Theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience.

Having explained in detail the ethical decision-making models, the discussion now turns to guilt coping mechanisms which are explained in the next section. In the present study, it was found that when consumers fail to invest in Fairtrade they felt guilt, resulting in post-purchase dissonance. The next section explores the existing literature on dissonance and the theories explaining the coping mechanisms applied by people when they fail to act morally or ethically.

### **5.8. Dissonance and Guilt**

This study shows that, at times, consumers choose alternatives which may be unethical or may not serve their own interest particularly well, because behaving otherwise could have unwanted consequences for other people. To some extent, these findings agree with Hunt & Vitell's (1986) suggestion that the most ethical choice may not be made because different consequences are sought by the individual. Suggestions have been presented that ethical consumer behaviour is usually inconsistent or dissonant (McEachern et al., 2010; Szmigin et al., 2009). Both McEachern et al. (2010) and Szmigin et al., (2009), propose the concept of flexible ethical consumer behaviour and this they suggest may produce cognitive dissonance.

Festinger (1957) proposes a theory of cognitive dissonance to describe a paradox of human behaviour, wanting something because someone else has it, or valuing something which we own as of greater merit than that which someone else owns. This offers at least some explanation of why choices are made which seem arbitrary and unjustified.

Festinger (1957) initially proposed that, because dissonance is uncomfortable, the individual will try to either avoid it or reduce it. Dissonance therefore occurs in such situations as might be a conflict between desire and duty. Festinger proposed dissonance to be a phenomenon which occurs after a decision is made; hence, it would also occur often after a purchase decision has been reached and the purchase effected. Therefore cognitive dissonance has considerable relevance to consumer behaviour understanding in the context of Fairtrade, and is particularly important to the theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. The post-purchase phase in the stage of Reflecting is defined as that phase during which the dissonance occurs when the consumers failed to follow the demands of their conscience, and when they needed to come to terms with their decisions. In the context of the present study, it was found that when consumers failed to buy Fairtrade products they experience a guilty conscience which induced cognitive dissonance. As expressed by the consumers exhibiting Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting but Committed behaviour, guilt in the present context is described as a feeling of disappointment of not being able to help the producers in the developing countries. Gregory-Smith et al (2013) describe three forms of guilt as being guilt at

failing to abide by one's own norms, guilt at failing society's norms and guilt at failing the standards expected by family and friends. Of these three, the one which impinges on Fairtrade purchase behaviour in the current study is the 'failing to abide by the one's own norms.' They also suggest that guilt varies and that self-induced guilt is more enduring than the guilt inflicted by a third party. Steenhaut & Kenhove (2006) suggest that anticipated guilt plays a role in ethically 'questionable' consumer situations. This is seen from the point of view of consumers trying to cheat the retailer. They suggest that ethical beliefs are predictors of behaviour and determine behaviour and that intention to indulge in unethical behaviour causes guilt beforehand. Marks & Mayo (1991) posit that feelings of guilt may be evoked by choosing an unethical or inappropriate alternative. However, from the present study, it is found that anticipated guilt is simply the guidance of conscience. In the context of this current study, dissonance is considered to have its provenance in either guilt or in non-socially approved activities, this latter being peer or public opinion. Gregory-Smith et al. (2013) suggest that post-purchase dissonance will never disappear completely and that individuals will try to reduce dissonance by differing methods. Szmigin et al. (2009) contend that consumers will employ a range of coping mechanisms to achieve cognitive consistency. The application of various coping mechanisms to human behaviour and specifically, fair trade consumer behaviour is discussed below.

### **5.9. Coping Mechanisms**

The theory of Neutralisation as proposed by Sykes & Matza (1957) originated in a very different context from that of ethical consumer behaviour. Based on the premise that juvenile delinquency and its origins were misunderstood, and not simply based on gang culture, inverting normal social values, Sykes & Matza (1957) developed a theory predicated on the facility with which the juvenile delinquents have a convenient 'excuse' for their actions, although this excuse would only justify their actions in a sociopathic manner.

They proposed five types of neutralisation techniques which they suggest the juvenile delinquent employs: (1) denial of responsibility – the acts are caused by forces outside of the control of the juvenile delinquent, (2) denial of injury – if he 'borrows' a car without the owner's consent but returns it, there is no hurt, hence no fault so no blame, (3) denial of victim – they brought it on themselves, by being homosexual, Jewish, black, in the wrong place, so deserved to be robbed or beaten up. Alternatively, shop lifting is justified because the shop charges far too much, so by stealing from the shop, the juvenile delinquent is adjusting the balance, (4) condemning the condemners, the people who challenge the behaviour are no saints themselves and have no right

to sit in judgement. Thus, the juvenile delinquent deflects the negative sanctions relating to his violations and (5) appeal to higher loyalties – the demands of society are sacrificed to the needs of a small personal group which could be family or friends. Sykes & Matza (1957) argue that these neutralisation techniques are necessary to loosen the bonds of normal behaviour and allow the juvenile delinquent to function in a society which lies outside the norm.

Applying the theory of neutralisation (1957) is among the various methods employed of examining and understanding the coping strategies in the context of consumer behaviour. Chatzidakis et al. (2007) applied this theory in the context of fair trade consumption and McGregor (2008) conceptualised the guilt coping mechanisms in the context of ethical consumer behaviour in general. However, the applicability of this theory to the paradox of what ethical consumers claim to believe and what they actually do, seems overstrained in the context of Fairtrade (for example Chatzidakis et al., 2007).

Neutralisation from the viewpoints of both Sykes & Matza (1957) and Scott & Lyman (1968) can be seen to have some bearing on understanding consumer behaviour in an ethical context, although applicability to behaviour in the context of Fairtrade consumption leaves neutralising needing to be attenuated. Neutralisation theory has been interpreted into other consumer behaviour contexts, for example, Strutton et al. (1994), discuss the employment of neutralisation techniques to justify inappropriate behaviour of a fraudulent nature. They examine two particular aspects of consumer fraud, shop lifting (acquisition) and fraudulent return of goods for refund (disposition) and the ways in which the consumer is able to overcome guilt by the application of the techniques expounded in Sykes & Matza (1957).

The behaviour they study indicates a sociopathic character orientation which permits of such acts without experiencing problems with conscience. As such, its relevance to Fairtrade consumer behaviour is at best tangential. Other ethical behaviour environments in which neutralisation has been applied as a means to increased understanding include environmental contexts. For example, Fritsche & Mayrhofer (2001) discuss neutralisation as a way of justifying environmentally harmful behaviours, particularly the concept that the individual consumer doesn't need to bother to recycle for example, because most other people don't bother. Considering this in the context of Fairtrade consumer behaviour, the consumer would suggest that there is no point in buying Fairtrade because nobody else does.

Fritsche (2005), returning to the theme of neutralisation, suggested that its adaptability is such that it has been used in many fields, citing general delinquency and crime, violence and

aggression, workplace deviance (being late for work), cheating, environmentally harmful behaviour, drug use, religious dissonance, organisational behaviour and deviant occupations.

McGregor (2008) however, conceptualises neutralisation as a means of discussing consumer failure to follow through on their ethical intentions. She discusses intent to harm (Daigle, 2005) and citing Hamlin (1988), suggests that the neutralisation will only take place if the consumer's behaviour is called into question, either by himself/herself or others. McGregor (2008) discusses other neutralisation scenarios and provides a total of thirteen conceptualised behaviours, drawn from other researchers such as Brinkmann (2005), Cromwell & Thurman (2003) and Peeler (2002), illustrative of the adaptability of the theory of neutralisation to be used to justify aberrant behaviour. She suggests that behaviour is predicated on the principles of responsibility, integrity, compassion and forgiveness, thus any deviation from these principles would need neutralisation. Her study is built upon the concept of moral intensity (Jones, 1991), but none of this is grounded in data, being derived from evolved examples to illustrate concepts.

As a consideration of the behavioural groups which emerged from this current study will show, behaviour is not as inflexible as she seems to suggest but is mutable as a function of external impetus. McGregor then develops distinct scenarios to conceptualise her idea of neutralisation but these are not drawn empirically from interviews, but are created as illustrations of her concepts.

Considering her interpretation of the five canons of neutralisation proposed by Sykes & Matza (1957), McGregor (2008), on (consumer) denial of responsibility, suggests that the deniers 'believe that their life circumstances predisposed them to engage in immoral acts', (p.6), that in essence it is 'not their fault'. Her vignette portrays the consumer claiming that things are beyond the consumer's control: her theoretical consumer says that 'I have no choice: everything I want to buy is made off-shore using child labour.' This is not indicative of an ethically minded consumer, but of one who probably does not even begin to understand the origins of, and rationale for, ethical concerns such as Fairtrade. There is no sense of guilt: just a flat denial.

Considering (consumer) denial of injury, her theoretical consumer states 'I am just one person. What harm can I cause?', while her (consumer) denial of victim has the 'consumer' suggesting that it is the fault of the producer for not working hard enough. She therefore suggest that it is easy to deny the existence of the far distant producer, thus there is no victim. This is reflected in Appeal to a higher loyalty which is portrayed as wishing to support local/national producers so as to preserve jobs and businesses. (This is exhibited in this current study by consumers who buy British when they can: however, it is found that these same consumers extend their ethical

concerns to Fairtrade for produce which cannot be grown locally). From the North American viewpoint, this is demonstrated more fully in Howard & Allen, (2010) who exhibit the behaviour of consumers in the US whose purchasing is predicated on buying American.

Reflecting, from a British viewpoint on McGregor's (2008) interpretations, she appears to possess a closed mind-set, hinting at insularity. There is a lack of exposure to the significance of third world problems in the 'responses' of her vignette 'consumers', hence their 'responses' lack the smack of reality. Expanding on Sykes & Matza's (1957) neutralization techniques, McGregor (2008), drawing on other researchers, cites necessity, (Minor, 1981), the ledger (Klockars, 1974), need for law, (Coleman, 1994), entitlement (Coleman, 1994), acceptability, (Henry & Eaton, 1994), individuality (Henry & Eaton 1994) and comparison or postponement (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003) as excuses for violating perceived norms.

Chatzidakis et al. (2007) in the Fairtrade consumer behaviour context, adapt neutralisation to understand the attitude behaviour gap in ethical consumption. By so doing they make the assumption that buying Fairtrade goods can be described as normative behaviour, which therefore justifies the appellation of not buying Fairtrade as 'non normative' (Chatzidakis et al. 2007, p.91), which in turn leads into the attempt at understanding the behaviour using the Sykes & Matza (1957) neutralisation theory to manage it.

If the behaviour of not buying Fairtrade produce is non-normative, then Chatzidakis and McGregor (2008) are justified in applying neutralization theory, however, this does not correspond with behavioural types elucidated by this current study, and is indicative of not so much a conscience-struck honest person, as it is with a hardened recidivist.

Examining the application of neutralisation by Chatzidakis et al. (2007) as a means of understanding any sense of dissonance which the consumer experiences for failing to buy Fairtrade, it is found that: 'denial of responsibility' is blaming someone or something else for failure. Affordability, availability, quality and taste fall into this rationale. This is behaviour which says 'it's not my fault: I was forced to do this!', but its application here is a very heavy handed way of trying to understand it, treating as it does with broad strokes, so that any nuanced behaviour disappears.

In contrast, the behaviours demonstrated by this current study show that while this blaming and shifting responsibility takes place, the behaviour is very nuanced, multi-faceted and cannot be understood easily and fully by the concept of 'denial of responsibility'. Even the word 'denial' is expressive of intense emotion, caused by being (falsely) accused of doing something which is, presumably, wrong. The consumer exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour who buys

something other than Fairtrade when Fairtrade is available will try to exonerate him or herself by hedging or shifting the responsibility. This consumer feels guilty because he or she gave way to temptation and bought something because they liked the taste, even though they knew that they should buy Fairtrade, and need to reconcile what is often a disappointment with themselves. They apply the Reconciling Strategy of Accepting Responsibility and not of denial of responsibility. Depending upon the behavioural types exhibited, - Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed - the consumer seeks self-exonerating excuses for their behaviour as a limiting strategy because of their feelings of guilt. With the exception of the consumers exhibiting Cynical and Sceptical behaviour the rest rarely seek to justify their actions since they accept that there is no justification for not buying Fairtrade if they could. They accept that investing in Fairtrade *is* their responsibility, and develop strategies which enable them to cope with failure: this is how consumer behaviour - in this study, at least – differs from that depicted by Chatzidakis et al. (2007) who do not take into account the gentler, more nuanced emotions experienced by the Fairtrade consumer.

The examples used by Chatzidakis et al. (2007) for ‘denial of injury’ hardly fit into this category; if unfair trade is systemic, avoiding buying Fairtrade is causing harm, - and if the consumer is relatively helpless to improve the situation, failing to try will also cause harm. The consumers interviewed for this current study whose behaviour emerged as Sceptical and to some lesser extent, Cynical, do not suggest that by their inaction they are not harming the producer, rather, they employ the strategy of suggesting that they are willing to be convinced if proof is given. The more they tend towards the cynical end of the continuum, the more likely they are to dismiss the thought, although they still remain open to argument. They may doubt that what little they can do will help, but the volition is still present, as is an awareness that something needs to be done to improve the situation in the third world. They just feel that Fairtrade may not be the best way to achieve this. The other behavioural types in this study - Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed - are aware that injury can be caused by neglect and by failure. They realise that *not* doing something helpful can be just as harmful as doing something damaging. Their need to reconcile their feelings stems substantially from this realisation that they have failed to help.

The way in which Chatzidakis et al (2007) employ ‘condemning the condemners’ to the fair trade consumer behaviour context, is confusing, they seem to be concatenating ‘condemning the condemners’ with ‘denial of responsibility.’ In this current study, the behaviour of complaining about lack of information, availability, or accessibility of Fairtrade products is exhibited by two behavioural groups, - Questioning but Supporting, and Sceptical, - whose demand for more



information – or complaint of lack of information, is sometimes used as an Excuse for not buying, but more often is simply complaining that they cannot find the goods they seek. It is seldom if ever employed as a way of condemning the Fairtrade movement for any perceived inadequacies. It is also employed as a strategy to reconcile failure to buy Fairtrade, in the sense of their volition being thwarted and nipped in the bud because Fairtrade is not doing enough to encourage them.

The consumer behaviour identified in this current study as being Sceptical to Cynical might employ this ‘condemning the condemner’ as a strategy illustrating the potential failings of Fairtrade because of the lack of transparency and the uncertainty as to whether ‘the money goes back to the producer’. If, they would argue, all is above board, then they need to be shown that it is so. For example, referring to some of the respondents to this current study, comments were made that Fairtrade is just a scam, and that large corporations such as Nestlé and Cadbury are simply jumping on the band wagon.

Furthermore, Chatzidakis et al. (2007) equate ‘appeal to higher loyalties’ with laziness, habitual shopping and self-interest, which is stretching the analogy to the point of breaking. Self-interest does exist, and is very frequently manifest in Fairtrade consumption, where it includes preferences and objectives directed at self-gratification and fulfilment. However, self-interest is hardly an ‘appeal to higher loyalties’. There is no ‘group’, ‘family’ or ‘gang’ involved. It is simply the consumer allowing personal preferences to outweigh conscience – which usually leaves the consumer with feelings of guilt – for some fleeting pleasure. Consumers were mostly found to be restricted by budgetary constraints, and this frequently leads to them regretting not being able to buy the products they want, including Fairtrade. However, they overcome this by developing an understanding of their ability to control their fiscal environment, frequently accompanied, if they are ethically minded, by the promise to try harder next time.

This is exhibited in this current study particularly by the Questioning but Supporting and the Supporting but Vacillating behavioural groups who are motivated or demotivated by a panoply of conflicting impetus. Since most often these impetus are transient and ephemeral, it is difficult to regard this as appeal to a higher loyalty. It is therefore difficult to understand how Chatzidakis et al. (2007) can consider neutralisation as a suitable vehicle for explaining consumer conflicts of conscience. It seems clearly apparent that Chatzidakis et al.’s (2007) application of neutralisation theory to the fair trade consumer behaviour context therefore is limited in its understanding of the behavioural nuances as explicated in the present study.

In sum, Neutralisation theory was developed to explain the lack of remorse shown by recidivists for the crimes they have committed. It therefore lies as an uneasy bedfellow with consumer feelings of discomfort for not investing in an ethical product such as Fairtrade coffee, tea, or bananas, whereas the recidivist uses his excuses as being socially approved vocabularies for mitigating or relieving responsibility when the conduct is questioned.

Curiously, there is an inversion of this in the behaviour of consumers who are identified as Supporting and Committed: their loyalty lies with Fairtrade.

Furthermore, since this current study has found very clearly – empirically grounded in the data - that the majority of consumers who are aware of Fairtrade and who therefore begin to buy Fairtrade goods and commodities, become increasingly involved in so doing. They are therefore the more likely to want to buy Fairtrade, and will see no need to create a sociopathic attitude to justify avoiding buying it.

They are far more likely to wish they could remember to buy Fairtrade next time so as to avoid feeling uncomfortable at their failure when they reach home and reflect on their purchases. The only consumers whose behaviour approaches an adamant rejection, are the Cynical behavioural group whose jaundiced view of ethical movements in general and Fairtrade in particular, leads them to consider that Fairtrade is simply yet another way of parting the consumer from his or her money. However, this is hardly sociopathic behaviour.

Neutralising allows no space for the more gentle remorse felt by the Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed behaviour groups elucidated in this study: it permits of no regret: it treats of a callous, almost brutal, disregard of other people and causes: of an indifference to the world of ‘straights’. This is not particularly surprising, since its aetiology lies in the dark and turbulent world of teenage ‘juvenile’ delinquency and rebellion. The neutralisation behaviour, does not comply with the behaviours exhibited by majority of the consumers interviewed for this study, since they for the most part accept the responsibility of failing to invest in the ethos of Fairtrade. Moreover, they felt uncomfortable about it and needed to reconcile their discomfort, which often led to the decision to try harder next time. The guilt coping mechanisms, discussed above and the Reconciling Strategies as emerged from the present study are summarised in Table 20.

Author, year	Coping Mechanism	Context
Sykes and Matza (1957)	Denial of responsibility Denial of injury Denial of the victim Condemnation of the condemners Appeal to higher loyalties	Juvenile delinquency: recidivism
Scott and Lyman (1968)	Excuses Justifications	Sociology
McGregor (2008)	Denial of responsibility Justification by postponement Denial of injury Denial of the victim Condemnation of the condemners Appeal to higher loyalties Justification by comparison Metaphor of the ledger Appeal to higher loyalties Defence of necessity Claim of entitlement Claim of individuality	Consumer Behaviour
Chatzidakis et al (2007)	Denial of responsibility Denial of injury Denial of the victim Condemnation of the condemners Appeal to higher loyalties	Fairtrade Consumer Behaviour
This Research	Excusing Justifying Rationalising Accepting Responsibility	Fairtrade Consume Behaviour

Table 20: Summary of Guilt Coping Mechanisms

The theory of neutralisation as proposed by Sykes & Matza (1957) is further developed by Scott & Lyman (1968) who discuss the ways in which a person who has perpetrated a deed of which he or other people might not approve, attempts to exonerated himself from the situation. In the context of this current study, which is concerned with reconciling the mental discomfort resulting from failing to comply with demands of conscience, consumers employed Reconciling Strategies (Chapter Four) depending on the behavioural type exhibited by a consumer. With the exception of the Cynical and the Sceptical behavioural groups, the remaining consumer behavioural groups – Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed (see Chapters 3) - amply demonstrated that the respondents in this study experienced discomfort and hence needed to reconcile by employing Reconciling Strategies- Excusing, Justifying, Rationalising and Accepting Responsibility

Scott & Lyman (1968) differentiated between excuses and justifications given by people when they act unethically. Excuses are regarded differently, being socially approved vocabularies for

mitigating or relieving responsibility when the conduct is questioned. Scott & Lyman (1968) suggest that there are four modal forms by which excuses are typically formulated: 'appeal to accidents, appeal defeasibility, appeal to biological drives and scapegoating'. Modifying Scott & Lyman's (1968) ordering of these modal forms, in the context of reconciling a guilty conscience for failing to buy Fairtrade goods, the most common mode employed by the consumers manifesting Cynical or Sceptical behaviour is that of Blaming in which the blame is attached to some other person, situation or context - not the consumer. Thus, by shifting the blame, the actor has achieved exoneration, and no longer has the burden of guilt. This is particularly employed by the Sceptical and Questioning but Supporting, behavioural groups.

The second most dominant mode is that of *appeal to biological* drives which sees the actor claiming that his or her bodily impulses were too strong to resist. (This excuse is cited by the authors as being provided in many cases of sexual assault: that biological drives can be too powerful to resist.) In the Fairtrade context, this excuse provides as its rationale, the 'fact' that the other product is more attractive - for any given reason, - and so desire takes control, over-riding conscience.

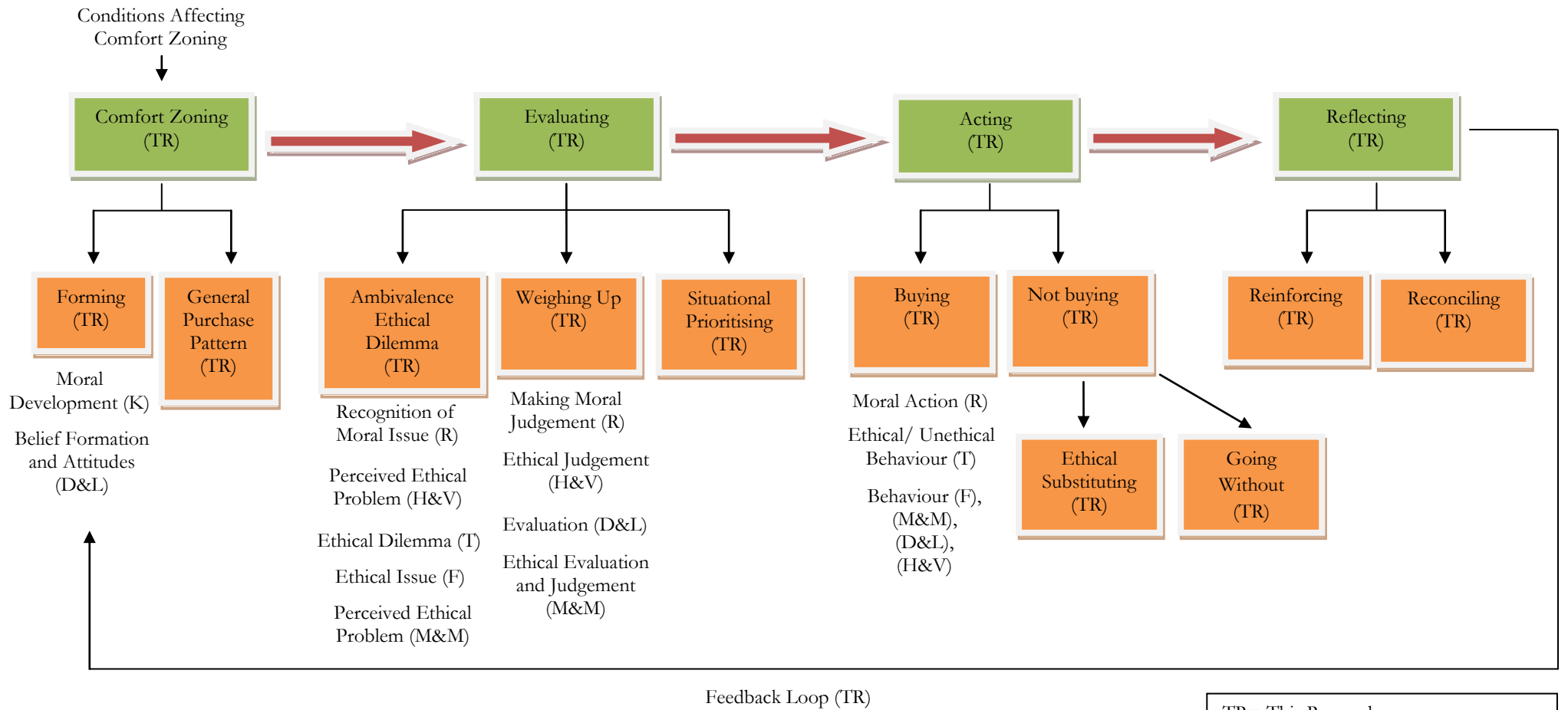
The third of Scott and Lyman's modes is the *appeal to defeasibility*, which seeks to exonerate the actor because of some mental element in his - or her - actions. This cognitive element may be predicated upon lack of intention, drug or alcohol abuse, a claim of ignorance, lack of awareness, failing to understand (the impact of an action), or perhaps not being free to perform an action. Of these, not being free to perform an action appears to be the only aspect of appeal to defeasibility which can impact on the Fairtrade consumer's behaviour.

The constraining patterns which could prevent the consumer from buying Fairtrade emerge as primarily financial limitations, although there may be some physical and geographical limitations which impose restrictions upon the actor's ability to function – such as there not being a shop which sells Fairtrade within travelling distance. Of lesser importance contextually in ethical consumption, is that of intention, or, rather, lack of intention, which Scott & Lyman (1968) suggest is a plea that the outcomes of a particular action could not be foreseen.

The mode of *appeal to accident* is regarded as being the most plausible because of the relative infrequency of occurrence. Scott & Lyman (1968) illustrate this by drawing on the analogy of the clumsy person who is singled out as being accident prone. Thus indicating that 'accidents will happen' but not very often. It is difficult to see how appeal to accidents can have very much bearing on consumer excuses in buying Fairtrade products.

### **5.10. Integration of Emergent Theory with the Extant Models**

The present study broadens the domain of ethical decision making in marketing to include consumers in addition to its past focus on management. The preceding review and discussion of literature in the fields of consumer behaviour, ethical consumer behaviour and fair trade consumer behaviour, led to the integration of existing concepts in the emergent theory.



TR= This Research  
 K = Kohlberg (1969)  
 R= Rest (1986)  
 H&V= Hunt & Vitell (1986)  
 T= Trevino (1986)  
 D&L = Dubinsky and Loken (1989)  
 F = Ferrell et al (1985)  
 M&M= Marks & Mayo (1991)  
 S&M = Sykes and Matza (1957)

Figure 10: Integration of Emergent theory with the Extant Models (This Research)

In the emergent theory, there is a well-defined sequence of cognitive and behavioural states as guided by the emergent behavioural groups. The addition of the concept of ethical dilemma (Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Marks & Mayo, 1991) would improve the explanatory power of the emergent theory. As discussed above the main concern of consumers in the present study of Demands of Conscience further reflects the concept of ethical dilemma. In the emergent grounded theory there are four stages - Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting and Reflecting. The stage of Comfort Zoning reflects Kohlberg's (1969) model of moral development. However unlike Kohlberg's stages of moral development, the concept of Forming in the present study explicates that consumer behaviour is mutable and so is the moral development of consumers. The emergent five behavioural groups further explain the consumer behaviour nuances in the context of Fairtrade purchasing. It was found that consumers could not be fixed into segments rather their behaviour may change and that they move on a continuum of behaviours. This then leads into the concept of Behavioural Mutability, which further explains the changeability of consumer behaviour and its causation.

The next stage of Evaluating shows similarities with the ethical evaluation stages in the various existing models, for example, the stage of moral judgement in the model proposed by Rest (1986), the stage of ethical judgement proposed by Hunt & Vitell (1986), and the ethical evaluation stage presented by Dubinsky & Loken (1989). Furthermore, the Evaluation stage in the emergent theory is reflected in the deontological and teleological evaluations by marketing managers when faced with ethical choices. The stage of Acting shares similarities with the behavioural stages in the existing models, for example the stage of moral action (Rest, 1986), ethical/unethical behaviour (Treviño, 1986) and the behaviour construct in Hunt & Vitell (1986) Marks & Mayo (1991) and Dubinsky & Loken's (1989) model. However in the present theory there are five concepts explaining consumers' purchase decision in this stage. These are 1) Buying Fairtrade products, 2) Not Buying Fairtrade products, 3) Ethical Substituting, 4) Not Buying because of desirability and 5) Going without.

The last stage in the emergent theory is that of Reflecting, however not many existing theories discuss the post decision making stage. One of the major contributions of the present theory is the development of the post purchase stage in the context of Fairtrade purchase behaviour. In the stage of reflecting consumers were found to employ Reconciling Strategies to ease their conscience if they did not buy a Fairtrade product. The utilisation of Neutralization theory (Sykes & Matza, 1959) in the context of consumer behaviour (McGregor, 2008) and Chatzidakis et al. (2007) helped in clarifying and further understanding the emergent Reconciling Strategies

employed by the consumers in the present study as guilt coping mechanisms. After making comparison with the theory of Neutralising it is suggested that behavioural nuances should be taken into account, especially regarding fair trade purchase behaviour because consumers may change their purchase behaviour.

The theories reviewed in this chapter illuminated and expanded on the understanding of fair trade consumer behaviour. It is also apparent that consumers encountered an ethical dilemma which subsequently changed the purchase decision making process. Furthermore, the present study broadens the domain of ethical decision making in marketing to include consumers in addition to its past focus on management.

### **5.11. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the review of literature as guided by the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience. In the first section the limitation of existing literature regarding consumer segmentation is highlighted. The concept of behavioural mutability, as emerged from the data is presented as an alternative approach to existing consumer segmentation studies and is supported by extant literature on ethical consumer behaviour. Locating the emergent theory in the existing literature, the second section explicates in detail the existing ethical decision making models originated in diverse areas such as organizational behaviour, marketing management, marketing ethics and ethical consumer behaviour. A comparison is presented of the existing ethical decision making models. This chapter concludes by reviewing the literature regarding coping mechanisms applied by people when they fail to act morally or ethically, the coping theories are compared and contrasted with the Reconciling strategies developed in the present study. These reconciling strategies conceptualize the ways in which consumers ease their guilt, if they fail to follow the demands of their conscience.

The next chapter concludes the thesis by highlighting the theoretical and methodological contributions. The contributions and implications for theory, research and practice are explicated and recommendations are suggested, specifically in the context of Fairtrade. Limitations and future paths of research are addressed to further enhance the understanding of ethical consumer behaviour and in particular Fairtrade consumer behaviour.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

#### 6.1. Introduction

Since its inception in the early 90s there has been a continued growth in the Fairtrade market in the UK, sales topped £1.5 billion in 2012 (FTF, 2013) and the growing interest among the academics in the substantive area of fair trade has also been established (Hassan et al 2013). At the time of this research study, the efforts by the FTF were at their peak (see Chapter One). During the same time consumer uptake of Fairtrade was growing and sales were rising. The motivation for this research, therefore, arose from the growing interest among the general public and academics in the substantive area of Fairtrade. This research study examined the dynamics of consumer behaviour when faced with the purchase choice of buying a Fairtrade product.

As such, in Chapter One the origins of fair trade movement were traced back to its inception by the Oxfam in 1942 to bring relief to the communities damaged by World War II. From this emerged the early attempts at commercialisation of fair trade goods as a means of providing support for marginalised third world producers. The fair trade movement today can be seen to have come so far that efforts are being made to make Fairtrade the norm, and no longer just the choice of a niche market (FTF, 2012). However, the lack of in depth understanding of the consumer side of Fairtrade is highlighted and the significance of understanding the dynamics of consumer behaviour in Fairtrade markets is expounded (Andorfer and Liebe, 2012). Situating this consumer behaviour study in the substantive area of Fairtrade, the nature and purpose of the FTF, as both a political entity and a product labelling program in the UK, have been explained (Chapter One). It also presents a justification for the structure of the thesis and explains the idea of an open mind as compared to an empty mind with reference to the timing of literature review in a grounded theory study. This study was undertaken by following a classic grounded theory methodology to understand consumers' concerns when faced with the choice of Fairtrade products and the ways in which they are processing those concerns. Chapter 2 then justified the selection of grounded theory methodology approach for studying such a complex phenomenon as consumer behaviour. The origins, various versions and the debate surrounding the neutral position of grounded theory were then discussed. Given the structured nature of the methodology, the fundamentals and the stages involved in the process of generating a



substantive theory are explained. It also presents a critical reflection of the research journey. The next two chapters (Chapters Three and Four) then explicated the main contributions of the present research study. Chapter 3 presented the continuum of the five behavioural types (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed) as emerged from the data in the context of ethical concerns and in particular those associated with Fairtrade, and the concept of Behavioural Mutability. While Chapter 4 presented the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience, demonstrating how the respondents processed their main concern of Demands of Conscience, followed by the Reconciling Strategies applied by consumers as coping mechanisms, to ease their conscience when they fail to follow the demands of their conscience. The emergent theory was then assessed against the evaluation criteria of fit, workability, modifiability and relevance (Glaser 1992). In keeping with the tenets of grounded theory (Glaser 1978, 1998) that the literature review should only be undertaken after the theory has emerged, it has been presented in Chapter 5, both as a critical review of literature pertinent to the emerged theory and as an extended discussion by nesting the emerged theory in the extant literature of consumer behaviour, in particular fair trade consumer behaviour literature. By bringing all the threads together, Chapter 6 closes the present study.

This chapter begins by commenting on the achievement of the study's aims, contributions and implications for theory and research followed by the contributions and implications for practitioners. The thesis concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the study and proposing future research directions.

## **6.2. Achievement of Study Aims**

Since its inception, the aim of this study has been to generate a grounded theory explaining consumer attitudes and behaviour in the substantive area of Fairtrade, and to address the research questions of:

- What is/are the main concern(s) of consumers when faced with the choice of buying Fairtrade commodities? and
- How consumers are processing these concerns?

The first of these questions has been answered by the discovery of the main concern of the appeals to conscience which Fairtrade makes upon the consumer, resulting in Demands of Conscience. Furthermore, the emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability (see Chapter Three)

explicates a continuum of behaviours. It identifies critical nodes along the continuum, demonstrating the ways in which the five emerged behavioural types of Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed might be reflected in the consumer's purchasing conduct, and shows how the consumer may move from one behavioural type to another as a function of extrinsic and intrinsic influences. The second research question of how consumers processed their main concern was answered in the form of the emergent theory which is found to be the Basic Social Psychological Process (BSPP) of Reconciling Demands of Conscience which explicates the ways in which consumers resolved their main concern of Demands of Conscience. It explains the processes by which the respondents dealt with the sensations of obligation and guilt which Fairtrade appeals make, particularly when the demands of other guilt inducing factors, such as hedonic, financial and family/peer demands, are also part of the equation and the consumer gives in to those instead.

This process (Figure 11) comprises of four stages - Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting and Reflecting. The stage of Comfort Zoning describes the desire of the consumer to be somewhere where they feel comfortable, both mentally and physically, and affects their *Forming*. *Forming* conceptualises consumers' purchase behaviour as to be predicated upon a lifetime of formative influences, and consists of the attitudes, values and beliefs which play a part in the consumer's *General Purchase Patterns*. Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning in the form of awareness and mainstreaming of Fairtrade affect consumers' comfort zones. This produces *Ambivalence* among the consumers and created both the need and the capacity for *Weighing Up* potential purchases options by *Situationally Prioritising*, the consumer then enters the Stage of Acting in which he or she acts upon his or her decision and affects a purchase.

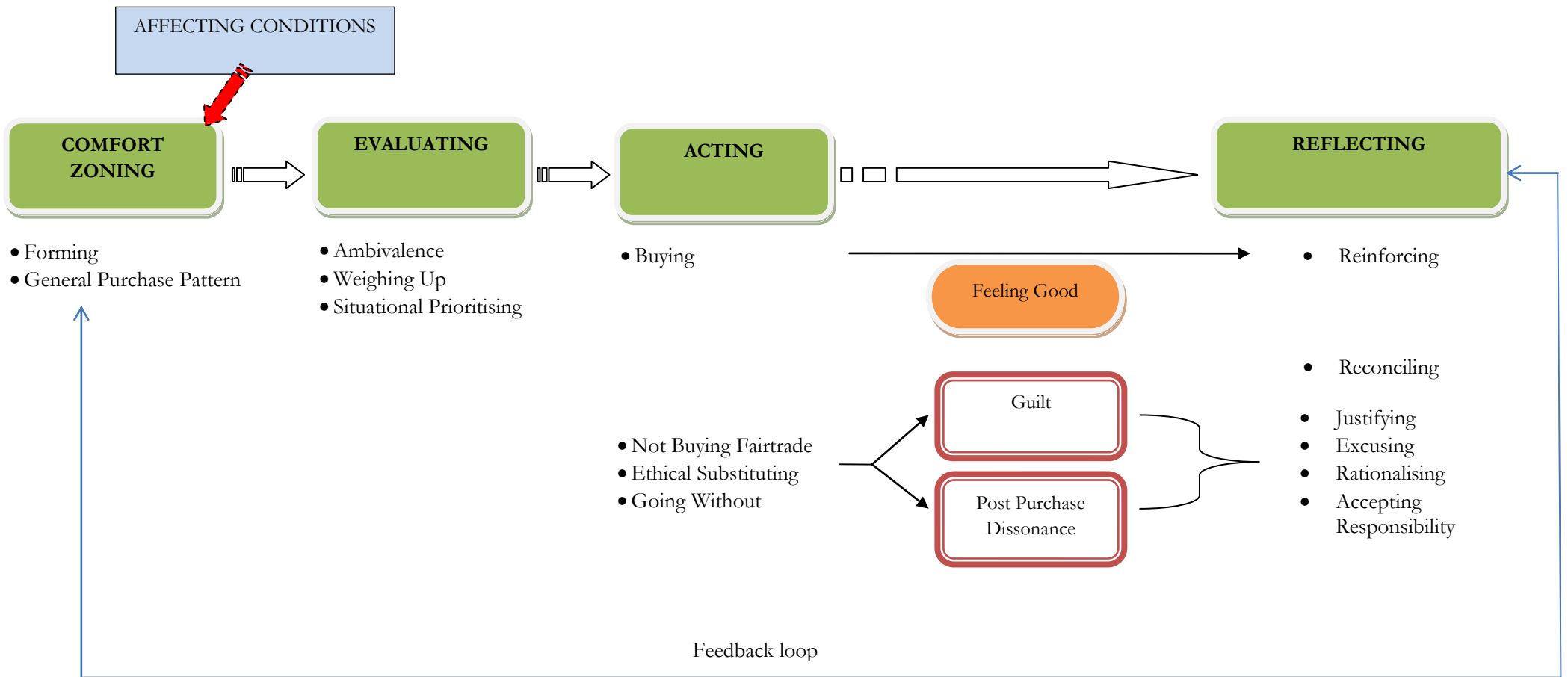


Figure 11: Emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience (This Research)

In the context of the Fairtrade purchase decision making process, at this point, the consumer either buys a Fairtrade product and hence invests in the ethos of Fairtrade or does not buy a Fairtrade product and hence fails to invest in the ethos. In addition to these binary decisions, consumers also employed *Ethical Substitution* by buying an ethical substitute if the Fairtrade product was unavailable especially those who exhibited Supporting and Committed behaviour, or decided not to make a purchase by *Going Without*. When consumers, having chosen not to buy Fairtrade, felt that by not investing in the ethos, they had denied their moral arrow - had acted against the demands of conscience - they experienced the need to Reconcile their decision making, while when they bought a Fairtrade product, they felt the need to Reinforce their decision. At this point they entered the last stage of Reflecting, in which they reflected upon the purchases, reinforcing their decisions and settling themselves psychologically by developing Reconciling Strategies of *Excusing*, *Justifying*, *Rationalising* and *Accepting Responsibility*. As the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is an iterative one, after the stage of Reflecting, the purchase experience reverberates in the form of feedback into the Stage of Comfort Zoning, and may affect the next shopping trip.

### **6.3. Contributions and Implications for Theory and Research**

This study advances the Fairtrade and consumer behaviour literature in several ways. Specifically, application of grounded theory in this substantive area is of immense value. Prior research is predicated on models and theories which owe their provenance to non-fair trade markets (Chatzidakis et al 2007, de Pelsmacker & Janssens 2007), and therefore had at best only exhibited a weak link to the substantive area of this study. Grounded theory offers an 'honest approach to the data that lets the natural organisation of substantive life emergence' (Glaser, 1995 pg. 7). The emergent theory presented in this thesis has been derived from the substantive area of Fairtrade consumer behaviour and the contributions of this study are centred on the role which conscience and guilt play in ethical consumer behaviour, especially when consumers fail to follow the demands of their conscience. It also has wide-reaching implications for parallel research arenas such as business ethics, organisational behaviour, marketing management, ethical consumer behaviour and consumer behaviour in general. Additionally, this study has shown in easy - to - follow steps how grounded theory can be applied to a substantive research area about which little was previously known.

The key theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge relate to the following arenas of extant literature:

- Neutralization theory
- Fairtrade consumer decision making
- Attitude behaviour gap
- Ethical decision making models
- The phenomenon of consumer segmentation
- Methodological contributions

These contributions are briefly outlined in Table 21 below and will be discussed in detail in sections 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.4, 6.3.5 and 6.3.6. The table provides an overview of what this thesis has supported, added and challenged vis-à-vis the existing literature in the aforementioned areas in addition to any new contributions it offers to theory, research and practice.

Contributions to Existing Concepts and Theories	Supported	Added	Challenged	New
Neutralisation Theory	–	Understanding of dissonance and guilt coping mechanisms in the context of Fairtrade consumer behaviour.	The applicability of Chatzidakis et al.'s (2007) utilisation of Neutralisation Theory to fair trade consumer behaviour.	Reconciling Strategies in the context of Fairtrade consumer behaviour.
Fairtrade Consumer Decision Making	–	Understanding of purchase process of Fairtrade products from a consumer point of view.	Over emphasis on the verification and extension of existing models rather than developing new theories.	The purchase decision making process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience in the context of Fairtrade.
Intervening Variables- Attitude Behaviour Gap	<p>Rationalising reasons for the attitude behaviour gap and increasing predictability of behaviour.</p> <p>Impeding factors, positive<sup>430</sup> outcomes and negative<sup>431</sup> outcomes, (Bray et al 2011)</p> <p>The concept of Situational Prioritising, as emerged from this study, supports the understanding of attitude behaviour gap in the existing literature, by explaining the behavioural change at the point of purchase decision in the context of Fairtrade.</p>		The existing models' emphasis the direct relationship between attitude- intentions and behaviour since ethical behaviour is not always predictable.	The emerged behaviour type of Supporting but Vacillating and Questioning but Supporting elucidating the impeding factors in Fairtrade purchase.

<sup>430</sup> Positive outcome implies ethical consumption in the context of the current study.

<sup>431</sup> Negative outcome implies not buying ethical products in the context of the current study.

Ethical decision Making models	Hunt & Vitell 's (1986) concept of ethical dilemma Marks & Mayo (1991) concept of consumer ethical dilemma, which in the present study is the Demands of Conscience.	A model which takes into consideration the mutability of consumer behaviour is presented.	Over emphasis of utilisation of Theory of Planned Behaviour.	The concept of behaviour being on a continuum where five distinct nodes exist around which behaviour changes.
Consumer Segmentation	Modifiability	Behavioural types and behavioural mutability	The procrustean classification of consumers into fixed types.	Introduces the concept of behavioural mutability and explains the causes of change in the substantive area.
Methodological Contribution	Utilisation of the procedures of grounded theory to generate a substantive theory in the context of Fairtrade consumer behaviour and to explain the latent social behavioural patterns.	Evidence of the conceptual development by which means a grounded theory is drawn from empirical data, thereby adding to the classic grounded theory methodological literature demonstrating the process for newcomers. Presentation of a critical discussion of the philosophical position of classic grounded theory and a critical comparison of the three grounded theory versions.	The use of preconceived theoretical frameworks.	

Table 21: Summary of contributions to knowledge (Source: This Research)

### ***6.3.1. Neutralisation Theory***

Neutralisation Theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957) proposes that there is substantial element of pre neutralisation in that the delinquent is led into his or her behaviour by accepting beforehand that he or she not wrong. Reconciling Strategies are the post event strategies, the consumer is not pre reconciled about not buying Fairtrade but he or she feels guilty afterwards. Neutralisation is about anti-social behaviour and criminality, also neutralization techniques are not employed by the, Supporting and Committing to Fairtrade consumers but instead are employed by the Cynical and Sceptical consumers. The Neutralization Theory permits of almost no regret, this is not particularly surprising, since its aetiology lies in the dark and turbulent world of teenage juvenile delinquency (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The ethical consumers do not justify not buying Fairtrade; instead they reconcile their feeling of guilt for not buying Fairtrade by Accepting Responsibility. Reconciling Strategies also step further in understanding consumer coping mechanisms as previously explained by Neutralization theory, but Neutralisation Theory is in the context of delinquent behaviour, and the Reconciling Strategies developed in this study are in the ethical consumer behaviour context, and hence fit better in the Fairtrade consumer behaviour context.

### ***6.3.2. Fair Trade Decision Making Process***

The emphasis in extant literature on verification, and modification of existing theories is considered ineffective in understanding the dynamics of consumer behaviour (Andorfer & Liebe 2012). Therefore, the major contribution of the present study is the development of the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience as the first attempt ever, in the substantive area of Fairtrade, to develop a theory from the consumers' point of view. The emergent theory explicates in detail the attitudes and behaviour of consumers when faced with the choice of buying or rejecting Fairtrade products. It explicates the ways in which consumers process their main concern of Demands of Conscience.

The next section expands on the contributions of the emergent theory to the extant literature of ethical decision making.

### ***6.3.3. Ethical Decision Making Models***

The stages in the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience provide insights into the nature of ethical decision making and transcend extant theories by explicating the complexities



of the dynamics of consumer decision making through the stages of Comfort Zoning, Evaluating, Acting, and Reflecting. Reconciling Demands of Conscience synthesises several concepts in extant literature and theory related to ethical decision making.

The first stage of Comfort Zoning, comprising of *Forming* and consumers' *General Purchase Patterns*. It is a new stage to be considered in the Fairtrade consumer decision making models. It exhibits similarities to Hunt & Vitell's (1986) recognition of the influence of personal, cultural and organisational factors, and Ferrell et al.'s (1989) recognition of the effects of social and economic environment on an individual's ethical decision making. The changing nature of human behaviour as conceptualised by Strauss (1959) and later adopted by Nathaniel, (2003) as the concept of "Becoming", offers similarities and support for the concept of *Forming* in the present study. *Forming* explains that consumers' attitudes and opinions change as a function of their forming, be it a long term or a short term change. The acknowledgement of the recognition of a moral issue (Rest, 1986), an ethical problem situation (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), an ethical dilemma (Treviño 1986), and a consumer ethical dilemma (Marks & Mayo, 1991) is in alignment with the concept of Conditions Affecting Comfort Zoning (for details see Chapter Four) in the present study. These Affecting Conditions include Awareness, and Exposure to the concept of Fairtrade, which disturb the consumers' Comfort Zones. The next stage of Evaluation is supported by the extant ethical decision making literature, (Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Treviño 1986; Jones 1991; Marks & Mayo, 1991; Vitell et al 2013), however the properties and concepts of *Ambivalence* and *Situational Prioritising* in the stage of Evaluating are an addition to the understanding of ethical judgement and evaluation as explicated in the extant ethical decision making models.. *Ambivalence* is found to be experienced by the consumers when their Comfort Zone is disturbed by the Affecting Conditions. The concept of *Situational Prioritising* explicates the ways in which consumers, subject to the situation they are in at the time of purchase, may change their purchase decision (see Chapter Four).

The third stage of Acting is one of the major contributions in the ethical decision making processes because none of the existing models of ethical decisions making explicate in detail the actual behaviour of an individual. In addition to the binary decision of buying or not buying Fairtrade products, this study contributes to the decision making process by further classifying Not Buying into categories including Ethical Substituting, Not Buying and Going Without (explained in detail in Chapter Four).

Few ethical decision making models take into account the post decision making phase. The last stage of Reflecting considers the post purchase phase, where if consumers invest in the ethos of Fairtrade, they feel good and this will reinforce their decision. However if they failed to follow the demands of their conscience they are found to experience dissonance and feel guilty. These behavioural outcomes reflect Bray et al.'s (2011) model of factors impeding Fairtrade consumption; however Bray et al. (2011) provide no further explanation whereas the present theory goes further and explains the guilt coping strategies as being the Reconciling Strategies which consumers employ to ease their conscience. This study has brought light to bear on the previously ignored existence of cognitive dissonance in ethical consumption behaviour, explaining how guilt coping mechanisms operate contextually and how reconciling of guilt is effected. These Reconciling Strategies are similar to Sykes & Matza's theory of Neutralisation (1957) and Scott & Lyman's theory of Accounts (1968). However, as explained above, the context of Neutralisation Theory and the context of buying Fairtrade products are not compatible. Therefore, the Reconciling Strategies are grounded in data purely in the context of Fairtrade buying behaviour. The process of Reconciling does not end at the point of Reconciliation however, as there is an important feedback loop of the purchase experience which feeds into consumers' Forming, thus modifying it on an ongoing basis.

Furthermore, the existing ethical decision making models are challenged for their emphasis on the linear relationship between attitude, intention and behaviour, which is also challenged by the existing literature (Carrington et al 2014). The present grounded theory does not propose verification and is not a linear process; however it proposes that the process of Reconciling Demands of Conscience is an iterative process which is also dependant on the emerged behavioural types (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed). The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience therefore, presents a comprehensive process of ethical decision making in the substantive area of Fairtrade consumer decision making.

#### ***6.3.4. Attitude-Behaviour Gap***

The present study contributes to the discourse surrounding the attitude behaviour gap in the extant ethical decision making literature (Carrington et al. 2014; Bray et al. 2011; Chatzidakis et al. 2006). By the provision of a new model, grounded in the substantive area, this study adds to the understanding of the phenomenon of consumers not taking their ethical concerns to the

supermarkets. The emergent theory explains the reasons underlying the scepticism, cynicism and the implicit doubts, which in turn offers an explanation for some consumers not investing in the ethos of Fairtrade. The present study after further investigation, proposes that the attitude behaviour gap is more applicable to the Supporting but Vacillating behaviour group who are more weak willed, and hence the various impeding factors such as price, availability, convenience, taste etc., are able to have more effect upon their behaviour, whereas the Supporting and Committed behaviour type is found to exhibit a strong commitment towards buying Fairtrade products. Furthermore, to a large extent the existing attitude–intention–behaviour models (Ajzen & Fishbein 1986; Hunt & Vitell 1986; Dubinsky & Loken 1989; Vittel et al 2013) are predicated upon an incomplete concept of the consumer since they fail to take Behavioural Mutability and the behavioural nuances into consideration. This suggests that behavioural predictability needs further study in the light of this new discovery.

#### ***6.3.5. Consumer Segmentation Discourse***

This study explains behaviour in an ethical decision making environment more fully whilst contemporaneously suggesting that segmentation theory does not apply to consumers in such an environment because of the constant potential for behavioural change. There is support found in the extant literature for this proposition (Adam & Raisborough, 2010; McDonald et al., 2006). In proposing the changeability of behaviour the present study goes further in developing a continuum of five behavioural types in the context of Fairtrade. No study to date, in the substantive area has come this far in explaining the Behavioural Mutability concept. This behavioural continuum is similar to McDonald et al (2006)'s behavioural continuum in the context of Voluntary simplicity, however, a substantial part of their continuum is developed from the existing literature, whereas the present study is purely grounded in the consumers' view point. The present study proposes that consumers cannot be fixed into categories, but instead move along the spectrum of behaviours. The five behavioural types, as emerged from the data are those of Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating, and Supporting and Committed (see Chapter Three). Furthermore the study explicated the causes of behavioural change. The revelation of behavioural mutability has applications outside of this study area, since it will help to understand the relationships between attitude, intention and action in other domains.

### ***6.3.6. Methodological Contributions***

In consumer research, it is recognised that the application of qualitative methods in their purest form, compared to quantitative research methods is still in its infancy (Goulding, 2005). The contribution of the present study to the field of consumer behaviour and specifically to fair trade consumer behaviour is the application of the tenets of grounded theory methodology in its truest form, as prescribed by Glaser (1967, 1992, 2012). This research takes into account the utilisation of the full procedures of classic grounded theory methodology (Glaser 1967, 1992) to produce an integrated set of empirically grounded and conceptually abstracted theoretical propositions to explain a latent pattern of behaviour that fits the substantive field. Grounded theory has application in all areas where human behaviour is concerned, from the simple purchase to decisions pertaining to ethical dilemmas, since the emphasis is on behaviour as the unit of analysis. It also possesses particular application in research in the domain of management studies where it is capable of producing “action oriented theoretical products” (Locke, 2001, p. 107). Its utility then is considerable in understanding the underlying forces and influences which dictate consumer decisions.

The emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience has relevance to the substantive area of fair trade consumer behaviour and works to explain the resolution of a main concern of demands of conscience for the participants. The present study is the first attempt at generating theory grounded in data within the context of Fairtrade purchase behaviour, as emphasised in the existing literature (Andorfer & Liebe, 2012).

The emergent substantive theory is also modifiable based on any new data which may emerge. The theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience has been grounded in the data, and not based on existing models. In so doing, this study challenges the traditional approach of qualitative and quantitative research in their use of preconceived theoretical frameworks to initiate research, data collection and analysis. While ethical decision making has been widely studied in the extant literature, exploring the phenomenon of Fairtrade purchase from the perspective of consumers is unique and specific to the present study. Grounded theory’s ability to render an abstract conceptualisation of the data enables the development of theory which transcends the descriptive detail of qualitative data analysis. The methodology provides instead, a parsimonious set of concepts which offer a rich and densely integrated theory yielding a number of theoretical propositions.

Furthermore, in the present study both actual purchase and stated behaviour are studied to understand consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards the purchase of Fairtrade products. The actual purchase behaviour is evidenced by the till receipts provided by the participants (See Chapter 2 for details). In studying the actual behaviour the aim of the study was to reduce the socially desirability bias as documented, extensively, in the extant literature (Nancarrow et al 2001; Carrington et al., 2014). By studying the actual and stated behaviour in tandem, the present study's findings contribute to the understanding of the discourse surrounding the attitude behaviour gap (Carrington et al., 2014).

Finally, this thesis has highlighted some of the challenges to using the full complement of classic grounded theory procedures, particularly in relation to the interface between the inductive nature of classic grounded theory and the context of consumer behaviour research. The perception that data collection and analysis should start straight away is perhaps slightly unrealistic within the context of lengthy ethical approval procedures. Similarly, the amount and flexibility of theoretical sampling is not simply within the control of the individual researcher, but is influenced significantly by external factors. This study perhaps then demonstrates that it is sometimes necessary to revise or "reconcile methodological ideals to fit the demands of the research." Drawing on the theoretical ideas presented within this thesis, it is also proposed that methodological ideals can be stretched only so far before they become a different methodology altogether. Both the experience of conducting this study and the theoretical output thus contribute to knowledge of classic grounded theory by highlighting the realities and practicalities of its practical application (see Chapter Two).

#### **6.4. Contributions and Implications for Practitioners**

The practical utility of grounded theory in the understanding of complex situations has been demonstrated by this study, and hence its understanding by management is of importance. This study has revealed five active behavioural types (Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed) within the overall consumer behavioural typology. The emergent concept of Behavioural Mutability highlights the potential of behavioural change and offers an understanding of consumers whose behaviour is not always ethical or unethical. This inconsistency, according to McGregor (2008), offers hope that consumers may be persuaded to make fair trade consumption a priority. Since these behavioural types have now been identified, it can be seen that if product publicity is targeted at the least

receptive consumers, then the impact will be increasingly greater on the more receptive behaviours, leading to greater commitment and a greater product uptake. This information can be useful for marketing managers because they can tailor their efforts towards these behaviour types and concentrate their efforts on the ways in which behaviour could be modified. From the data, however, some additional challenges regarding the uptake of Fairtrade products have been identified. These challenges and the suggestions made to practitioners are discussed below.

#### **6.4.1. Credibility**

In the present study, transparency is found to be the most important factor in the purchase of Fairtrade products. Specifically in the case of the Sceptical behavioural group, the decisive factor in behavioural change is found to be predicated on the demand for solid proof, before support could be found for Fairtrade. Several respondents, for example, expressed a wish to know if the producers are really benefitting from Fairtrade or not. Also some of the respondents are found to demand a rundown of facts in the form of a report. Marketers, therefore, must find ways in which they could be more explicit about providing the information regarding the impact of Fairtrade on the producers in the developing countries. This is outwith the remit of the vendors who might be described as the practitioners in this context, but instead rebounds upon the heads of the FTF. They need to strengthen consumer understanding of the independent certification process which is called Fairtrade. As is, the adoption of Fairtrade by supermarkets and trans-global corporations such as Cadbury, Starbucks and Nestlé actually poses a threat to Fairtrade's credibility, undermining consumer faith and trust, and therefore increasing scepticism.

There have already been various papers presented, arguing the case for free trade as opposed to fair trade (Sidwell, 2008). However, Fairtrade is catching the public's imagination and from the findings of this current study, it would take a very serious proof of corruption to deter existing committed Fairtrade consumers to stop buying. This study has revealed the mutable nature of consumer behaviour in the context of their consistency – or inconsistency – in pursuing ethical goals. Such a fragile loyalty underlines a lack of trust and commitment, and if Fairtrade is to succeed then the FTF itself needs to address these issues. Furthermore, the FTF needs to demonstrably monitor the veracity of claims by global corporates such as Nestlé, since a degree of scepticism and cynicism has been observed in the respondents. It is therefore, vital that the opacity of the various processes is removed. If Fairtrade has to succeed, then the consumer needs to trust it, so total openness is needed.

#### ***6.4.2. Quality***

The interview data suggest mixed responses regarding the quality of Fairtrade products; however, the majority of respondents associated Fairtrade with a low quality charity image. This could prove critical for Fairtrade. The analysis suggests that products will not be considered by a consumer unless they are of equal or superior quality to the product equivalent to what he or she usually buys. While it might be argued that marketers must therefore continue to work to dispel negative product quality perceptions, it is worth considering that the proliferation of Fairtrade products is beginning to mean that for the consumer there is a choice of Fairtrade products and quality will vary between them. Sales promotional strategies such as in store free samples and tasting sessions could give the consumer an experience and a choice to become involved. Also information regarding Fairtrade could be provided in store and this should be done frequently rather than during the annual Fairtrade fortnight which only takes place once a year. Hence the initial toe in the door process of trying to lure consumers should be encouraged. Building a brand image is found to be a key to the success of mainstreaming Fairtrade (Nicholls & Lee, 2006). Therefore, Fairtrade should endeavour to become synonymous with quality so as to distance itself from its begging bowl image, which has the potential to be destructive on a large scale.

#### ***6.4.3. Availability***

Availability and variety of Fairtrade products was a major problem in the past, but this challenge is being addressed by the FTF and the range of Fairtrade products in shops and stores is increasing rapidly (FTF, 2012). However, this is restricted currently to a narrow range of products and therefore the FTF perception has not reached the consumers interviewed for this research, perhaps because Fairtrade seems to maintain a low profile so consumers don't demand it. For example one of the respondents manifesting Committed and Supporting behaviour, showed concern about the limited variety of clothing in Fairtrade range, and therefore she prefers buying her clothes from other options. The practitioners, therefore, need to concentrate their efforts on increasing not just the availability of Fairtrade products, but also to increase the product range via mainstream channels.

#### ***6.4.4. Information***

Although there is a rapid increase in awareness of Fairtrade, the understanding of the concept is still in its infancy. The majority of the respondents lacked a thorough understanding of the concept of fair trade which resulted in a lack of interest. However, a credible source of information is also important, for example one of the male respondents exhibiting Sceptical behaviour suggested that if a credible source endorsed Fairtrade, he would consider buying Fairtrade. Furthermore, one of the respondents, exhibiting Cynical behaviour considered the “Fairtrade Fortnight” to be a marketing tool to lure consumers. Therefore, it is important that the managers devise communication strategies taking into account the behavioural nuances exhibited by the consumers in the market.

#### ***6.4.5. Convenience***

Convenience is important in all transactions: no more so that in Fairtrade. If the consumer needs to search for the Fairtrade products, then only the committed consumers will bother. If, however, as explained by one of the respondents, it is not only sold in some dark little shop on the other side of town but is freely displayed at the supermarket or corner shop, then uptake might improve, and Fairtrade could become a normal shopping purchase pattern. Furthermore, respondents also showed interest in obtaining information regarding Fairtrade; however the information should be easily available. Some of the respondents suggested providing a smartphone mobile application, by FTF UK, which could give the consumers information about where they could find Fairtrade products along with the information about the traceability of their purchases back to the producers and the impact of Fairtrade. It is also suggested that due to the rampant increase in online shopping, from the comfort of the consumers’ living room, Fairtrade products should be readily available for online purchase.

#### ***6.4.6. Social Premium***

The responses regarding the perceptions of the social premium attaching to Fairtrade products are also found to be mixed. For some consumers, especially those exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour, price is not a decisive factor and they are willing to pay more. On the other hand however, for the majority of consumers exhibiting Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting and Supporting but Vacillating behaviour, price is found to be a major constraint, and is therefore a fundamental inhibitor for growth in demand. The consumer’s understanding



of the purpose of the social premium was found in his study to be very weak. Therefore, practitioners should consider educating consumers about the social premium and the justification for it. Creating a better understanding of where their money goes and addressing the sources of scepticism should increase consumers' willingness to pay a premium for Fairtrade products.

### **6.5. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The nature of Fairtrade is metamorphosing at a fairly rapid rate, consumer behaviour will inevitably change as the result of this, thus opening up new vistas of the imagination for consideration, study and analysis. This study represents one of the first attempts to use grounded theory in this substantive area. However, it is imperative to note the limitations of the current study and suggest directions for future studies in the substantive area.

As compared to the sample size in a usual quantitative study, the findings of the present study have been developed from a relatively small number of in-depth interviews (Seventy) supplemented with observations (sixteen) and till receipt (Twenty Eight) collection. This poses some methodological limitations owing to nature of data collection and sampling methods used. There could be limitations of conducting interviews, for example the process of data collection and the recruitment of respondents is time consuming, and the relatively unstructured nature of the interview guide could pose challenges to the interviewer (Webb, 2002). Although the sample was more eclectic than some previous studies which included samples of students only, for example (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005), all the participants in this study were currently resident in Cardiff. This sample restriction was due to time and resource constraints. Future research could collect data across a wider geographical distribution.

This study has revealed new concepts regarding consumer behaviour, specifically, in a relatively underexplored area of Fairtrade. The substantive grounded theory could contribute towards the development of ethical decision making models in the context of Fairtrade. However, the emergent theory is developed and currently limited to the main backdrop of this study, Fairtrade. Nevertheless, the emergent five behavioural types of this study - Cynical, Sceptical, Questioning but Supporting, Supporting but Vacillating and Supporting and Committed might be extended further. Future research could potentially explore their applicability to existing ethical decision making models, especially in the broader context of consumer behaviour. Also, mixed perceptions regarding the eleemosynary nature of Fairtrade were found in the data, this thread

could also be explored further. Retaining the behaviour types exhibited by indifferent consumers in the continuum could provide alternate explanations for the mixed perceptions and thus be examined in future studies.

Apart from developing the five behaviour types in the context of Fairtrade, this study also elaborates the emergent concept of Ethical Substituting, which explicates the buying behaviour of consumers exhibiting Supporting and Committed behaviour. However, this study does not assess this behaviour over a period of time. Exploring how Ethical Substituting affects consumers in the long run presents a further challenge to understanding how it could impact the overall process of purchase behaviour of Fairtrade products.

This study partially addressed the intention-behaviour gap by acquiring till receipts from some respondents, which is a form of reducing reliance on self-reported behaviour. Since this exercise was voluntary, the respondents could choose to disclose the receipts where they had purchased a Fairtrade product which could imply the existence of a socially desirable bias. However, there were a few instances wherein the respondents also handed in receipts where no Fairtrade product was bought. Other studies could consider using such evidence over time to shed more light on the possible discrepancy between stated and actual purchase behaviour. A working paper is being developed applying the concept of temporal discounting, a concept in the area of behavioural economics, to work towards mitigating the intention-behaviour gap. Despite these limitations, the study suggests an emergent theory which significantly enhances the understanding of process of consumer behaviour in the context of Fairtrade.

## **6.6. Conclusion**

In summary, this research reiterates the significance of taking into consideration behavioural nuances to understand the dynamics of consumer behaviour in a complex substantive area such as Fairtrade. The chapter began by presenting a brief assessment of the extent to which the study's original aims were achieved. As such, the five behavioural groups and the emergent theory of Reconciling Demands of Conscience are summarised. The contributions of this study to theory, practice and research methods are highlighted, including knowledge claims supported, added to and challenged as well as the implications for practitioners are proposed. The study concludes by stating limitations and proposing future research directions.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: Glossary of terms pertinent to grounded theory methodology

Term	Definition
Category	A type of concept. Usually used for higher level of abstraction.
Coding	Conceptualizing data by constant comparison of incident with incident, and with concept to emerge more categories and their properties
Concept	The underlying, meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents.
Constant Comparative Coding	Fundamental operation in the constant comparative method of analysis. The analyst codes incidents for categories and their properties and the theoretical codes that connect them.
Grounded Theory	The process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his/her data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges.
Open Coding	This initial stage of constant comparative analysis, before delimiting the coding to a core category and its properties-or selective coding. The analyst starts with no preconceived codes-he remains entirely open.
Property	A type of concept that is a conceptual characteristic of a category, thus at a lesser level of abstraction than a category. A property is a concept of a concept.
Selective Coding	To selectively code means to cease open coding and to delimit coding to only those variables that relate to the core variable, in sufficiently significant ways to be used in a parsimonious theory.
Theoretical coding	A property of coding and constant comparative analysis that yields the conceptual relationship between categories and their properties as they emerge. Theoretical codes are conceptual connectors to be used implicitly in the way and style in which the analyst writes.

## APPENDIX 2: Example of Interview Transcripts

The following excerpts contain indicators of the core category of Reconciling Demands of Conscience

1. Interview conducted on 12th April 2012

A: so can you explain how erm

R: how I'm going to choose?

A: yeah

R: it depends entirely how I'm feeling, and how busy I am. It depends whether I feel I've got more money or less money that week, so sometimes I will just pick up the usual brand erm other times I will say right, this week I'm going to go for fair trade because I feel that I should so it's almost, almost as if I'm making a charity donation er, that's only just occurred to me now but yeah, that is how it is: at times for example there are bananas for example which are very plentiful in the shop, I'll always go for fair trade.

A: you'd go for ft?

R: yeah, yeah because erm lots of bananas you know erm, so it's either fair trade or not fair trade cos you don't have so much of a choice. If you've got a choice of sixteen brands of instant coffee, then I think oh, I think, I eliminate the most expensive, I eliminate the cheapest, I stop somewhere in the middle and see where my conscience takes me. So sugar, I usually go for ft because there again there isn't that much choice, so it's easier to make the decision, er what else do I get that's ft? I can't think of what else. Those are the main, main items that we get that are ft.

A: I mean like if how, how, I mean you don't always buy ft do you?

R: no, no, not as a matter of policy, you know

A: so that's what I want you to explain, for example, if you have a choice and you don't buy ft

R: and I don't buy ft?

A: yeah, how do you feel at that time?

R: oh, how do I feel?

A: yeah

R: well obviously, *I often feel guilty and will justify it by how much money I've got, or, if I know for example that I don't like the tea bags as much as I like other tea bags*, so if it's something that I use every day, several times a day, like the tea bags, I would go for the tea bags I liked best whether they were ft or not, because my tea is very important to me. There is less of a divergence in quality in something like sugar, but if I have to justify it to myself, I depends I suppose on whether I use the item a lot or consume it a lot but there frequently that element of slight guilt.

A: and how do you feel when you pick up the ft product and justify that?

R: yeah well I feel good, I am doing something positive. Does the Coffee number one brand, do they use ft beans?

A: I don't think so beans but I think they use ft sugar.

R: right, so I always feel good, you know if large chains or other people are using it and serving it to me. To be honest, if it was erm, if when it er if I take a ft product, I'm pleased that I can do so. I am pleased to be able to do that.

A: and why is that?

R: erm because the idea is that the original producer benefits you know, much more from the effort, and that its financially of benefit to the family you know. Might be it potentially lifts them out of poverty, but oo, chocolate! I

often get ft chocolate, erm so erm, that's why I like to buy it. I think nowadays we have this notion of corporate greed, the middle man, you know, squeezing the small producer. You know it happens with the farmers and the milk producers in this country. So, you know, so I think it might have been ????? to be able to give the money back to where it should be , you know, the person who put in the hard work at the grass roots level.

Interview conducted on 20th March 2012

A: since we met last time, has your perception or behaviour towards changed?

R: I don't think there's been any difference in opinions because I think that the issue of ft is that they don't seem to talk about in the news, so what you first hear about ft is like that's what you're stuck with. You know you have that knowledge cos there's no updates on ft cos its all, I think the issue of ft because there isn't anything in the news really that's broad casted. It's all on websites, and once you've clicked on the ft section of a website, you read about it and you're not going to go back again because you're just going to receive the same information, you know, erm, and it's not , I don't think it's advertised so much now in the supermarkets compared to a year two years ago. You go to a supermarket and you see like ft this and ft that, but now I don't see so much

A: or maybe it's the same and you're so used to it now

R: it could be just like the logo blended in with the rest of the food. Maybe they're not promoting it as much as they did, you know, before, erm. I know that for example, that the social school of sciences coffee shop, well all the coffee shops here in the university in inverted commas promote ft products.

A: how do you feel about that?

R: if it's doing good, the yeah but we would never know if it is doing good, you know for the farmers themselves, you know people in the third world countries or should I say the developing countries. I notice like whether this is something changing or globally or it's just the university changing. I notice like the tea they had for the last two years was absolutely disgusting.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ university:

R: yeah the university. The tea bags they were getting were ft tea bags and you put them in, for two years they had the same brand, when I say brand I mean they were ft but a certain brand within the ft is what I mean, and you put a tea bag in the water and it wouldn't brew. You could leave it there for ten minutes and it wouldn't get strong. You know that type of teabag or twenty minutes. I once left it in there for ten, fifteen minutes

A: (giggles) you're kidding me it would be cold by then!

R: I know, it was cold but after fifteen minutes it just didn't brew, it didn't come to that strength: it was like too watery: it was too watery, but then last September I think it was or October, they changed the brand. It was still ft, but a different brand within ft for the tea bags and they're much better so now you put a tea bag in and it brews very quickly.

A: ok

R: but it's still ft you know, so, whether this is a change, whether those two options have been available for the last three years, whether you had more watery tea, or good tea for ft or whether they have changed this tea, I don't know. They don't tell us about that.

A: and like you say we don't know and how it works and we don't know about it, so do you think that, does that bother you that concern you regarding ft?

R: in a way it's good to know, er, what good ft is doing because it could be more beneficial to to ft, I mean if, if ft said to me, if you buy our tea, er then we can guarantee that x percent of the money goes to the farmers who originally produce the tea, you know, gives them a better life, they can get a decent living, enough to survive and look after their family and educate their family and you know even to have proof, to have key studies you know about how it's helping people, then if that was the case, if we knew, had more information about ft, then we might

not buy PG tips or Twinings do you see what I mean

A: but but have you ever looked into ft on line and for example on the websites that have these kind of stories and things

R: no no because it's where do you look, where do you start looking? This was the thing I think, cos the general consumer – I classify myself as a general consumer wouldn't investigate or research on the product, you know, I'm not gonna buy a bottle of coke and investigate on Coca Cola before I buy it, you know or silly things like that,

### APPENDIX 3: Excerpts from interviews conducted with till receipts.

1. Interview conducted on 2nd February 2012

Respondent's Till Receipt



Respondent's interview excerpt with till receipt:

A: do you still buy it then?

B: sometimes I do, but when I am abroad like when I am in Italy or in Portugal, I just get the coffee from there and I know that's not fair trade, but I know that the quality is really, really good, and I know that I like it. So then I feel guilty but I'm getting it. What do you do when you feel guilty by not buying FT?

A: Then coming back to this point, when you say that, okay, do you have any more concerns?

B: no.

A: like the quality? So how do you then balance these two for example like when you are in shop or when you are

buying or when you are faced with buying or not buying, so how do you then, how do you feel

about this , for example like you said 'if the quality is good, I will go for good quality instead of fair trade.'

B: I think the issue come up with coffee, because the other products are just the same, because fair trade chocolate is just the same as non-fair trade chocolate. And with the coffee, here in the UK I am still trying to find the one I would like, a fair trade that I would like. Each country has different – there is no global brand that would produce fair trade. So you can't know if you get it here it's the same there as well. Ok if you go to a café which is a chain and you ask for a coffee more likely the same all over the world, and yes, I'm still trying to find something but I still haven't found a thing I would really like, so its more about experiments and now I am still using coffee that I brought in from Portugal. I brought back a kilo so I would have it for some time.

A: enough for some time?

B: yes but if you are in the shop and erm if I'm in a shop here, but if I am abroad and they don't have fair trade, it's not bad, you don't feel that guilty. You oh know there's no other options, but I buy one kilo and that you don't need at the moment.

A: Can you explain me this, your concern is whether fair trade is fair or not.

B: Its so far away and I am not sure who's clearly buying it. There is always may be some kind of fraud around that, that somebody claimed that something was fair trade but actually was not paying the farmer a fair price, and that's my concern - and it's not 100 % sure and guaranteed in a way.

A: Do you still, how then do you explain, how will you believe in fair trade?

B: This kind of concern is like 5%. I'm sure of fair trade. It's not that I'm like fifty-fifty.

A: So then you would like to believe.

B: Yah I am 95 %.

A: If for example you have fair trade coffee like you said and a better quality coffee, and then at that moment are you in a conflicting situation?

B: Yes I will say yes, it's a kind of something of a consideration, because I am a coffee lover, and sometimes it's sort of ..... if it come to bananas I don't care but when it comes to coffee, it's like I drink it a lot and I like it to be good quality, and sometimes you just ..... I had one particularly bad experience here in UK with fair trade coffee , it was really bad. I had a whole pack of that and it was tasteless and because I didn't want to throw it away, and then I was like hmm, but then I found a better one. Yes

A: Yah so at that time you were in conflict.

B: Yes I found myself in that situation: I had a coffee that I don't really like the coffee that I don't like and its fair trade and should I throw it away and buy a non fair trade but that is really good coffee that I know or should I continue trying to find that one?

So then did you buy the good quality one.

B: no I just found another fair trade which is better.

A: ok so you didn't go for any other coffee?

B: No

A: so then after what was the experience with the other coffee?

B: It was better. Nothing exceptional but it was good

A: what was the motive behind you again buying the fair trade because you said that you didn't have a good experience.

B: sometimes you don't like people or students, I don't know, you don't like students of medicine because of something, but you always give a chance to the next one you meet.

A: then you said you bought a better coffee than fair trade? Then how are you feeling after you bought it?

B: Oh I was on holidays so it didn't really occur. No I would say I was so much in love with that coffee that I was drinking in a café for a few weeks that I thought I would have it at home then I bought it, but I didn't feel really bad about it because I thought, ok, if I'm always drinking the third rate coffee, if this time I got a non-third rate, the world would not collapse. The world would not end.

A: so are you saying that you are kind of reconciling?

B: In a way? What do you mean by that?

A: I mean like for example you've a, you have kind of um reconciled the conflict within you? That you have justified within you?

B: yeah, but what, I, I wouldn't, no, it isn't, I wouldn't confuse it with a conflict. It's not a big issue in my life.

A: okay

B: its not that I would go round student support just because I'm drinking a lot of ?predatory? coffee. No I would not consider it as a big problem, a big issue, it's a non-issue actually, I wouldn't have thought of that, that much, that deeply if you hadn't asked. I think so..

A: so for you fair trade is not....?

B: it is important while shopping like if I have a like a guilty pleasure drinking some really good quality coffee, it's not that I'm crying for two weeks afterwards for each morning when I prepare my coffee. I don't cry..

APPENDIX 4: Research Advertisement

**PARTICIPATE IN FAIRTRADE RESEARCH!**

This is part of a PhD study: please contact me if you would like to have your say. The project involves understanding your attitudes and behaviour towards Fairtrade. Interviews will last 30 – 60 minutes. Also, all information is treated as confidential, and will be destroyed after analysis.



Please contact Alvina Gillani:

Email: [#####](#)

Mobile: #####

Email: <a href="#">#####</a>
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## **APPENDIX 5: Briefing Document**

For the purpose of my PhD I am conducting interviews on consumer's behaviour towards Fairtrade. Your participation in this project will involve discussion of your perceptions, attitudes and behaviour towards Fairtrade. This interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. You will be free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason you experience discomfort during participation in this project, you are free to withdraw or discuss your concerns with myself, ([xxx@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:xxx@cardiff.ac.uk)). The information provided by you will be held confidentially, such that no-one can trace this information back to you individually. You can ask for the information that you provided to be deleted at any time and, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, you can have access to the information at any time. As a compensation for your valuable input and precious time, even if you decide to withdraw from the study, you will be given a gift voucher worth £5 from M&S, Boots or WH Smith.

## APPENDIX 6: Ethical Approval Form

2/11/2009

### CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM: PHD THESIS RESEARCH

(For guidance on how to complete this form, please see <http://www.cf.ac.uk/carbs/research/ethics.html>)

For Office Use: Ref	Meeting
<b>Does your research involve human participants?</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If you have answered 'No' to this question you do not need to complete the rest of this form, otherwise please proceed to the next question	
<b>Does your research have any involvement with the NHS?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you have answered Yes to this question, then your project should firstly be submitted to the NHS National Research Ethics Service. Online applications are available on <a href="http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applicants/">http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applicants/</a> . It could be that you may have to deal directly with the NHS Ethics Service and bypass the Business School's Research Ethics Committee.	
Name of Student: Alvina Jamal Gillani	
Student Number: 0832023	
Section: CARBS Marketing and Strategy	
Email: gillania@cardiff.ac.uk	
Names of Supervisors: Dr. Shumaila Yousafzai Dr. John Pallister	
Supervisors' Email Addresses: Dr. Shumaila Yousafzai: Yousafzais@cardiff.ac.uk Dr. John Pallister: PallisterJG@cardiff.ac.uk	
Title of Thesis: Fair Trade in the UK: A Consumer Behaviour Perspective	
Start and Estimated End Date of Research: Start: October 2008 till October 2011	
Please indicate any sources of funding for this research: Self Funded	

APPLICATION APPROVED  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL  
CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

#### 1. Describe the Methodology to be applied in the research

This study aims to explore how British Consumers feel/think about Ethical Consumption in general and Fair Trade in specific. This research intends to explain the inextricable relationship between consumers' Beliefs, Values and Attitude and how these beliefs and values affect consumers' attitude towards fair Trade products. In order to gain insights in to the issue under consideration this research will include two stages of in depth exploratory data collection.

##### *First stage: Focus Group*

Taking into consideration the exploratory nature of this study Focus Group approach is deemed an effective way to collect data. Furthermore limited research is done into the Beliefs, Values and Attitudes of UK consumers in the context of ethical consumerism and Fair Trade (Shaw and Clarke, 1999, Pelsmacker, Janssens Sterckx and Mielants; Doran, 2009) therefore there is a need to further explore the topic through qualitative research. Through focus groups (Appendix 1: Focus Group Guide) it is intended to dig out "themes" pertaining to Consumer Behaviour in the context of Fair Trade. The primary reason for conducting focus groups is that it encourages the participants to share their point of views in a participative manner. In this way an insight into how consumers perceive "Fair Trade Consumption" will be provided (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

*Second Stage: In depth Interviews*

It is intended that during the first stage of this study; Focus groups, data gathered will be analyzed keeping in mind the objective of the second stage; in depth interviews. The themes which will come forth during the focus groups will be carefully constructed and the interview guide will be build upon these themes.

**2. Describe the participant sample who will be contacted for this Research Project. You need to consider the number of participants, their age, gender, recruitment methods and exclusion/inclusion criteria**

As this research involves British Consumers therefore the objective is to include a wide range of participants. Therefore the sample will be randomly selected regardless of gender, income or occupation however age limit is considered to be between 18 and 65 years of age. Further more it will be taken into consideration that the participants of a group are comfortable to talk in that particular focus group. In order for the study to be more affective the focus groups will be divided in to two categories i.e. "*General Consumers*" and "*Ethical Consumers*". The Focus group participants in the *General Consumer* category will include the general UK consumers who may or may not be extremely ethical due to certain reason. For the second category of focus group; *Ethical Consumers*, the participants will be the subscribers of UK Ethical Consumer magazine who will be selected randomly and subject to availability. Same sampling criterion will be used for in depth interviews. The findings from both the categories will be analyzed across the groups and comparisons will be made of Beliefs, Values and Attitude of general consumers (General Consumer category) and the purely ethical consumers (Ethical Consumer category). By doing so, through this study a broader perspective on Fair trade consumption will be gained (Shaw, Shiu and Clarke, 2000) and perceptions of ethical consumers compared to the perceptions of general consumers can be provided.

The number of participants in each focus group will range from 5 to 7. Initially it is intended to conduct six Focus groups, three from each category. The number of focus groups might increase till the saturation point is achieved (Krueger and Casey, 2000). However in depth interviews will be greater in number than the focus groups.

**3. Describe the consent and participant information arrangements you will make, as well as the**

***methods of debriefing. If you are conducting interviews, you must attach a copy of the consent form you will be using.***

While contacting the participants for the focus groups a letter with a brief description of the focus group is provided (Appendix 2), which includes the nature and purpose of study, why they have been chosen and the focus group schedule (time, date, venue etc) and assurance of confidentiality. Interview guide will be constructed once patterns and themes are provided by data gathered through the focus groups. Debriefing will be provided in the form of a summary of the research if asked by the participants and for this purpose contact details will be noted down.

***4. Please make a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the research and how you intend to deal with them throughout the duration of the project***

This study deals with consumers and their consumption pattern which is rather a general topic however it will be taken into consideration that the focus group information is kept within the focus group and the participants will be advised so. Anonymity concern will be considered by not mentioning the names of the participants in the research and this will be mentioned to the participants.

**PLEASE NOTE that you should include a copy of your questionnaire**

**NB: Copies of your signed and approved Research Ethics Application Form together with accompanying documentation must be bound into your Dissertation or Thesis.**

5. Please complete the following in relation to your research:

		Yes	No	n/a
(a)	Will you describe the main details of the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b)	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c)	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d)	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e)	If you are using a questionnaire, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(f)	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g)	Will you offer to send participants findings from the research (e.g. copies of publications arising from the research)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PLEASE NOTE:**

If you have ticked No to any of 5(a) to 5(g), please give an explanation on a separate sheet.

(Note: N/A = not applicable)

There is an obligation on the lead researcher to bring to the attention of Cardiff Business School Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

Two copies of this form (and attachments) should be submitted to Ms Lainey Clayton, Room F09, Cardiff Business School.

Signed

Print Name  
Alvina Jamal Gillani

Date  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2009

**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

As the supervisor for this research I confirm that I believe that all research ethical issues have been dealt with in accordance with University policy and the research ethics guidelines of the relevant professional organisation.

Signed

Print Name  
Dr. Shumaila Yousafzai

Date  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2009

(Primary supervisor)

**STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL**

This project has been considered using agreed School procedures and is now approved.

Signed

Print Name

Date

(Chair, School Research Ethics Committee)

more detail on project, outcomes etc.

**CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL  
RESEARCH ETHICS**

**Consent Form - Anonymous data**

I understand that my participation in this project will involve a focus group discussion about my beliefs, values and attitudes towards ethical consumption in general and Fair trade in specific which will require 2 hours of my time

*particular*

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with Dr. Shumaila Yousafzai at [yousafzais@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:yousafzais@cardiff.ac.uk)

I understand that the information provided by me will be held totally anonymously, so that it is impossible to trace this information back to me individually. I understand that, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, this information may be retained indefinitely.

I also understand that at the end of the study I may request some additional information and feedback about the purpose and results of the study by applying to the student researcher.

Name of student conducting the research: Alvina Jamal Gillani [gillania@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:gillania@cardiff.ac.uk), PhD student of Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University.  
Name of student's supervisor: Dr. Shumaila Yousafzai

ETHICS APPROVED  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL  
CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

*not safe info*