

Ethical, eco, organic, green...what does it all mean?

Authors: Joanna Blanco-Velo, Gaynor Lea-Greenwood, Dr Jess Power and Dr David Tyler, Dept of Clothing & Design Technology, Hollings Faculty, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

Correspondence: Joanna Blanco-Velo, Dept of Clothing & Design Technology, Hollings Faculty, Manchester Metropolitan University, M14 6HR, UK Email: j.blanco-velo@mmu.ac.uk

Abstract

The highly motivated ethical consumer has been under investigation since the mid 1970's, defined as a distinct consumer segment most notably since the early 1990s and been relatively well documented in terms of behaviours, values, decision making, attitudes and motivation. Despite the recent mainstreaming of a broad range of ethical products and a steady increase in media presentation of ethical issues, the perceptions of the mainstream consumer remain relatively under researched.

This paper reports upon the exploratory investigation undertaken to examine the nature of the ethical fashion message presented in popular print media. The aim of this first phase of study was to gain insight into the extent to which, the terms used in the communication of ethical fashion are understood by female consumers who are representative of the wider British public. A qualitative methodology was carried out using a grounded theory approach via the methods of qualitative content analysis, Q Method, word association and focus group discussion. Data sources and data collection methods were selected for their relevance in progressing the development of insights to the sending and receiving of the ethical fashion message.

The findings of this research demonstrate the extent to which the ethical fashion message varies in its delivery. Outcomes suggest that the complexity of the message leads to confusion and poor levels of engagement amongst mainstream consumers. Findings provide evidence that the mainstream consumer does understand the 'ethical language', the question raised is the extent to which this understanding is transferable to ethical fashion. Further analysis of the nature and source of this confusion may provide a route map for the successful marketing of ethical fashion products.

Key words: Mainstream Consumers, Ethical Fashion, Media Communication, Q Method, Grounded Theory.

Introduction & Theoretical Background

The Co-operative Bank report (2008, p.4) states that from 2006 – 2007 (within the time period of this study) the sales of ethical clothing rose 71% to £89m; the same document reports that as the UK entered an economic downturn, commentators were predicting that consumers would switch their priorities from 'values to value'. Mintel (2009), however, suggests that, 'adverse economic conditions are likely to have only a muted effect on the ethical clothing sector' which is reported to be growing despite being currently only 0.4% of the total clothing market. Mintel (2009) suggests that it is the mainstream consumers' lack of understanding that is the main impediment to ethical clothing breaking through its niche; a suggestion supported by Thomas (2008) and Beard (2008) and an issue that will be the subject of this investigation.

The Co-operative Bank documents illustrate (2007, p.4; 2008, p.3; 2009, p.4) that within the ten-year period of their publication, consumer spending on all ethical goods has increased almost threefold. The reports suggest that a factor supporting this is a general increase in consumer awareness as matters relating to ethical purchasing are reported more widely in the UK's mainstream media; tabloid newspapers and broad sheets give increasingly more column inches to the reporting of ethical and environmental matters. This media exposure is supported by articles presented in weekend colour supplements (Siegle, 2007; Brinton, 2008; Spencer, 2008) tabloid dailies (Davis, 2006; Craik, 2007; Kennedy, 2007) fashion magazines such as Red (Pearson, 2008), Marie-Claire (Portas, 2008) and supermarket magazines such as those produced by Tesco and Asda.

Recent reports suggest that the less affluent consumer considers green and ethical issues to be 'very important' and that they are likely to express their concern through purchase decisions when they can (Mintel, 2008). The evident mainstreaming and increase in the sales of ethically produced food (Low & Davenport, 2006; Mintel, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Kanjii, 2008; Mintel, 2008) suggests that the mainstream

consumer is ethically aware, can be influenced by media presentation of ethical issues and is willing to make purchasing decisions based upon ethical considerations.

Thomas (2008) proposes that the terminology of ethical fashion is perhaps the greatest inhibitor of consumer understanding and the cause of confusion due to its multiple layers of definition and usage. The words used in mainstream fashion communications in relation to 'fashion, ecology, the environment, sustainability and ethics are not fully understood or are used incorrectly' (Thomas, 2008 p.527), a situation that has the potential to undermine the industry's stakeholder drive towards a clear product proposition and growth in the sector (BSI, 2006). Thomas (2008) calls for scholarly appraisal of the language as, for example, a means to support more accurate labelling of garments. In a bid to contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of the communication of ethical fashion, this investigation approaches the problem from the opposite side of the communications continuum; to analyse the meaning that mainstream consumers attach to the words used in the delivery of the ethical fashion message through mainstream print media.

Communicating the Ethical Fashion Message

The Ethical Fashion Stakeholder Workshop (BSI, 2006), was held to establish an initiative to encourage growth in the UK's ethical fashion sector: to discuss industry best practices, common mechanisms for tackling pressing problems and a communal strategy for strengthening the ethical fashion market. An outcome of the workshop attended by senior retail figures, was a list of the perceived 'blockers' and 'enablers' to growth. Amongst the 'blockers' were the following statements: *communication, lack of consumer communication, lack of awareness within the industry, consumer's lack of awareness, lack of consumer demand is driven by lack of education*. It was recognised that 'enablers' were *the media, a clear proposition to consumers, press and media, mainstreaming, media communications, raising public awareness*.

The years 2006 – 2008 are perceived to be the 'watershed phase' when ethical fashion moved in its potential from being a philanthropic niche to becoming the commercial reality that ethical fashion stakeholders hoped for (Beard, 2008, p.452). As reported by the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (2008), media coverage of ethical and environmental issues increased by 80% in 2007. Between 2007 and 2008, a number of fashion magazines published a green or eco special issue (Candy, 2007; Schulman, 2007; Bevan, 2008). In 2007, War on Want and Labour Behind the Label's "Lets Clean Up Fashion" report led to The Guardian newspaper (McVeigh, 2007) reporting on their investigations into manufacturers for the value fashion market with similar stories reported in the tabloid press. With a circulation of circa 1.5 million and, potentially, exposure to twice that many people, between 2006 and 2008 the free newspaper Metro regularly presented articles relating to ethical fashion, for example; Marks & Spencer's "Look Behind the Label" campaign and Plan A, London Fashion Week's "Estethica", Primark worker's conditions and a rising trend in clothes swaps (Metro 2006; 2007; 2008). In the summer of 2008, BBC 1 broadcast Panorama's investigation into the working practices of Primark (Panorama, 2008) while BBC 3's "Blood, Sweat & T Shirts" (Blood, Sweat & T Shirts, 2008) highlighted the realities of off shore production practices to younger audiences. Despite high profile reportage, this does not appear to have translated into mainstream consumer behaviour nor does it appear to have enabled growth in the sector.

During this peak of mainstream media communication, the UK government body DEFRA commissioned an investigation into public understanding of sustainable clothing, the outcome was that levels of awareness and understanding of the sustainability impacts of clothing were low, (Fisher et al, 2009). The report recommended that retailers integrate information on the sustainability implications of clothing acquisition, use and disposal into the retail environment; a proposal that appears to be reinforced by Mintel (2009) in their suggestion that 'larger retailers would benefit themselves, and the sector, by promoting greater understanding' of clothing related ethical issues. Given the findings of Thomas (2008), Beard (2008) and Morgan & Birtwistle (2009) it would appear that the development of consumer understanding is complicated by the use of some terminology and the moderated variables of socio economics.

The Ethical Fashion Consumer

The literature that explores consumer behaviour in relation to ethical fashion has to date emphasised the behaviour of the highly motivated ethical consumer. Research activity has considered consumer ethics in clothing choice (Dickson & Litrell, 1997; Shaw & Duff, 2002; Tomolillo & Shaw, 2004; Shaw et al, 2006), consumer attitudes to ethical practice in garment production (Dickson, 1999; Klein, 2001; Dickson, 2000; Dickson, 2001; Iwanov, McEachern & Jeffrey, 2005) and the profiling of ethical clothing consumers (Dickson, 2005). A new body of literature is emerging that focuses upon the language of ethical fashion and is related to branding practice (Beard, 2008; Thomas, 2008). This recent work emphasises the ethical fashion message, its meaning and consumer understanding of it. Whilst there exists in the literature, a gap regarding mainstream consumption of ethical clothing, the gap in relation to the communication of the ethical fashion message is wider.

Mass Media Communications, Consumers and Meaning

Building upon the work of McCracken (1986; 1987; 1989), Hirschmann & Thompson (1997) report that the findings of their research indicate that the non-advertising components of magazines, television and other forms of mass media e.g. editorial, have more power than advertising to persuade consumers to adopt particular lifestyles. The authors reflect upon a substantial body of literature (Ewan & Ewan, 1982; Miller, 1988; Ogles, 1987; O'Guinn, Faber & Rice, 1985; Schiller, 1989; Hirschmann & Thompson, 1997) and suggest that to ignore the influences of mass media on consumers is to fail to address the significance of the role of the media in shaping the frame of reference by which consumers interpret meaning from the more specific marketing communications effort. The suggestion is that media and marketing communications share a symbiotic relationship; the media providing the potential to enhance consumer understanding of marketing messages and the potential to guide readers in how to be a certain type of consumer. This would appear to be reflected in the recently claimed media influence upon the growth of the ethical foods market (Hiscott, 2008).

This position is tempered by the proposal that consumer understanding of the media is an active process of interpretation and production of perceived meaning rather than passive acceptance of persuasive messages (Fiske & Hartley, 1978; Hall, 1980; Turner, 1992). Hirschmann & Thompson (1997 p.45) propose that according to this perspective, consumers 'bring to their viewing of mass media vehicles a range of unique personal experiences of socially derived knowledge grounded in their occupation, gender, age, social class and ethnicity'. This stance challenges the traditional linear communications model (Shannon & Weaver, 1963; Schramm, 1971) in that when considering success or otherwise in the communication of media or marketing messages, it demands a shift in emphasis from the sender of the message to the receiver of the message and questions whether the meaning of the message is received as intended.

Marketing Communications, Meaning and the Ethical Message

It is argued by a body of researchers (Kotler et al, 1999; Schultz, 2000; Proctor & Kitchen, 2002; Pickton & Broderick, 2005) that unlike the traditional marketing model, the central idea of integrated marketing communications (IMC) is that product related communication does not take place in a vacuum but in a broader cultural context (Finn & Gronroos, 2009). IMC is 'the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organisation and its products' (Kotler et al 1999, p.726). However, an extensive literature review (Finn & Gronroos, 2009) confirms that despite an increased awareness of the value and use of media vehicles even the most contemporary IMC practice has a sender centred perspective which is based upon an 'inside-out view'; a view that focuses upon the sender driving integration through the delivery of a consistent message to the consumer, the receiver. In keeping with the general consensus (Morley 1980 a,b; Turner, 1992; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Scott, 1994; Stern, 1996), Finn & Gronroos (2009) argue that it is the consumer (the receiver) not the sender that performs the integration of marketing messages which further emphasises the view that meaning is created by the *receiver* of the message not the sender – a situation in which the intended message may be lost.

Specialist IMC literature (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000; Kitchen & Schultz, 2001; Proctor & Kitchen, 2002) argues that in order to succeed in the postmodern marketing environment, ethical communications messages particularly must be based upon 'outside-in approaches, not about what organisations want to say [inside-out]

but what consumers need to hear' in order to understand the messages and for communication to take place (Proctor & Kitchen, 2002, p. 152). These authors suggest that there is a need to pay greater attention to the production of communications that are considerate of appropriate cultural contexts (Hall, 1980) and will appeal to the mindsets of potential customers - a concept that would appear to have been managed well by the ethical food industry in its direct connection to mainstream cultural perceptions of health.

This concept of cultural context and 'outside-in' is advocated by leading communications agency "Futerra" who specialise in the communication of corporate responsibility and matters related to sustainability. The agency calls for recognition amongst producers of ethical products and services, that the lexicon of ethical goods is often invisible to the majority of the public. They warn that understanding how the public or mainstream consumers respond to the terminology of sustainability or ethical concern is not simply a test of basic understanding of words. In communicating the ethical message, there is a fundamental need for producers and retailers to get closer to the connotative rather than denotative meanings of the words in use (Futerra, 2007); that is, a need to make sure that the meaning that marketers attach to messages is aligned to the interpretations that consumers are likely to make.

Consumer research outcomes regularly state that a lack of consumer action is blamed on insufficient information (Tallontire et al, 2001; Dickson, 2005; Berry & McEachern, 2006; Shaw et al, 2006; Boston Consulting Group, 2009). In the area of ethical fashion, there may not be a lack of information but, as proposed by Berry & McEachern (2006) and more recently by Thomas (2008), it may be a lack of accessibility and an excess of complexity which has led to poor interpretation, confused meaning and limited consumer understanding; a range of issues that lay at the heart of a broader academic debate regarding the communication of sustainable consumption, (Leal Filho, 2000; Jucker, 2002; Kolandai-Matchett, 2009).

This paper explores the evidence that the ethical fashion message is misunderstood by the mainstream consumer due to its complexity and the nature of its delivery.

Methodology

The range of disciplinary perspectives presented in the academic and industry related literature identify a broad set of interrelated research problems. Consideration of these problems led to a set of research questions that would enable entry to the research and inform the selection of relevant data collection methods.

The first broad questions to consider were, who is the mainstream consumer and how might she be defined? Only when these questions had been answered would it be possible to identify which newspapers and magazines she was likely to read and then, which of the relevant publications presented the ethical fashion message to her during the time period under investigation. Once a range of ethical fashion messages had been located, it would be possible to analyse their nature in order to gain insight into any complexity in their delivery and the extent to which, if at all, the definition of ethical fashion varied. The findings of this textual analysis could facilitate engagement with the mainstream female consumer in order to gain insights to her reaction to the language of ethical fashion; to determine whether or not she is confused by the ethical fashion message and to consider her interpretation of the ethical fashion concept. It became clear that the research questions were conducive to an inductive, sequential approach to data collection and analysis.

Due to the lack of systematic research in this area, the aims of this exploratory investigation were realised through a grounded theory approach which is firmly rooted in the tradition of symbolic interactionism and emphasises a process of theory development and theory building. It is because of the emphasis on theory building that Spiggle (1994) advocates the application of this interpretive stance to the study of consumer behaviour. The following sections outline the methodological sequence of data collection and data analysis and how, in this first iteration of research activity, each stage in the research process informed the next, facilitated the emergence of a set of research tools and enabled ongoing triangulation of emergent data.

Defining the mainstream consumer

In order to gain entry to the research, the body of academic literature that is cited as providing a definition of the ethical consumer was consulted as the means of seeking a profile for the mainstream consumer

(Berkowitz & Lutterman, 1968; Anderson & Cunningham, 1972; Webster, 1975; Van Liere & Dunlap, 1981; Roberts, 1995). More recent definitions and constructs were drawn from the work of Dickson, 2005; Loureiro & Lotade, 2005 and Worcester & Dawkins, 2005, as outlined in Table one.

Author / Date	Title / Publication	Construct	Demographic Description	NRS Social Grade
Berkowitz & Lutterman (1968)	The Traditional Socially Responsible Personality, Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer 68, Vol.32, Issues 2, p.169	Social responsibility	Middle class, college level (and above) education, predominantly female	B
Anderson & Cunningham (1972)	The Socially Conscious Consumer, Journal of Marketing, Vol 36 (July 1972) pp.23-31	Socially conscious consumer	'a pre middle age adult of relatively high occupational attainment and socio-economic status'	A B
Webster (1975)	Determining the Characteristics of the Socially Conscious Consumer, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol 2, December 1975	Socially conscious consumer	Most likely female member of the upper-middle class counter-culture. Relatively high household income.	A
Van Liere & Dunlap (1980)	The Social Bases of Environmental Concern: A Review of Hypotheses, Explanations and Empirical Evidence, Public Opinion Quarterly, 44, 181 – 197	Environmental concern	Possibly most likely to be female, younger, well educated and politically liberal	B
Roberts (1995)	Profiling Levels of Socially Responsible Behaviour: A Cluster Analytical approach and its Implications for Marketing, Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice, Fall 95, Vol 3, Issue 4, p.84	Social responsibility	More likely to be female, above average income, College level education, professional occupation, married, home owner	A B
Loureiro & Lotade (2005)	Do fair trade and eco labels in coffee wake up the consumer conscience?, Ecological Economics, 129-138	Consumer conscience	More likely to be older female, higher income, higher levels of education,	A B
Worcester & Dawkins (2005)	Surveying Ethical and Environmental Attitudes, chapter in Ethical Consumer, Sage, London. Eds R Harrison, T Newholm & D Shaw	Characteristics of CSR activists (describe selves as ethical)	Age 35-54, ABC1, college level education	A B C1
Dickson (2005)	Profiling Apparel Label Users, chapter in Ethical Consumer, Sage, London. Eds R Harrison, T Newholm & D Shaw	Ethical consumer behaviour related to the exploitation of workers in the apparel industry	Age 41-60, female, unmarried, college level education, average income.	B C1

Table 1: Defining the Ethical Consumer

Using UK National Readership Survey (NRS) social grades, Mosaic and Acorn consumer profiles as the benchmark, a gap analysis technique was used to identify ‘who’ the typical ethical consumer is and is not. The highly motivated consumer is typically defined as having an A or B NRS profile. Through in-depth consideration of the academic and technical literature, the profile of the mainstream female consumer, and the sampling frame for the exploratory work, emerged as being aged 22-44 in the socio-economic group BC1

In keeping with the concept of theoretical sampling, this profile was used to inform the second stage of the research process; to ensure review of the most relevant media texts in order to locate ethical fashion messages that were presented to the defined group during the period 2006-2008.

Locating the ethical fashion message

The media based literature to be content analysed was also informed by NRS data and purposively selected for the research. As illustrated in Table two, the top four fashion magazines and tabloid newspapers i.e. those with the highest readership figures that target and are read by women with the sample profile were identified. In addition to the top four tabloid newspapers, it was considered appropriate to include in the sample the related Sunday newspapers and the most popular free newspaper in order to facilitate maximum access to any relevant articles that may have been read by females described in the sampling frame.

A newspaper database search of the sample titles published between 2006 and 2008 was conducted. Articles that were selected for the purpose of the research were those that made direct reference to ethical issues in relation to fashion in the title or content of the piece. Twenty-one articles related to ethical fashion were purposively selected from a representative sample of media texts. Table three lists the final sample. These articles were deemed to have the richest level of content with regard to the range of terms used to define ethical fashion. Those from The Metro were sourced via the newspaper’s own website but selected only if they had appeared in print. A desk-based search of the fashion magazines was conducted. Vogue magazine was omitted from the final sample due to the fact that Marie-Claire, which is very close to Vogue in readership figures, had published a special Eco-Edition which proved to be a richer source of data for the purpose of the research.

Newspapers / Women's Magazine	% of Total Circulation	Readership Estimated % ABC1 Adults	Readership Estimated % Women
Top 4 Daily Newspapers			
The Sun	16.0	10.9	13.9
Daily Mail	10.3	12.1	10.6
Daily Mirror/Record	9.6	7.0	8.5
Daily Mirror	7.3	5.3	6.4
Related Sunday Newspapers			
News of the World	15.9	11.4	15.0
The Mail on Sunday	11.4	13.5	11.4
Top Free Newspaper			
The Metro	6.8	7.8	5.7
Women's Monthly Periodicals (Top 4 fashion magazines)			
Cosmopolitan	3.4	4.2	5.9
Glamour	2.5	3.1	4.6
Vogue	2.5	3.2	4.2
Marie-Claire	2.3	2.9	4.1

Table 2: Summary of NRS Readership Estimates Newspapers & Women's Magazines 2008

Media	Title	Edition	Article Title
Newspaper	The Daily Mail	18 May 2006	'Ali's trendy Edun line may be just too green for America' by Liz Todd
Newspaper	The Daily Mail	5 June 2006	'Eco Chic' By Shoshna Goldberg
Newspaper	The Daily Mail	13 November 2006	'Guilt-free fashion?' by Andrea Thompson
Newspaper	The Daily Mail	7 September 2007	'Bamboo bras and he 30 other 'must haves' for the environmentally friendly fashion victim' Author unknown
Newspaper	The Mail on Sunday	22 April 2007	'Moral Fibres' by Josh Sims
Newspaper	The Mail on Sunday	22 April 2007	'The dirty truth about Dave's green trainers' By Simon Parry
Newspaper	The Sun	11 September 2006	'Is Green the New Black?' by Erica Davies
Newspaper	The Sun	17 October 2006	'Sun Spot' Author Unknown
Newspaper	The Sun	12 March 2007	'Crikey' by Neil Syson
Newspaper	The Sun	28 April 2007	'Eco bag 'oon' by Kathryn Lister
Newspaper	The Sun	07 July 2008	'Are You the Eco Chic-est?' by Toni Jones
Newspaper	The News of the World	22 June 2008	'Penneys from hell' by Dan McDougall & Emma McMenamy
Newspaper	The News of the World	12 June 2008	'If it's Green, its here' by Caroline Morahan
Newspaper	The Mirror	23 June 2008	'Is ethical shopping a luxury we can afford?; exclusive Primark caught using child labour' by Damien Fletcher
Newspaper	Metro	6 February 2007	'Good causes sweep NY fashion week' Author unknown
Newspaper	Metro	5 December 2008	'Primark Workers 'earn 7p an hour' Author unknown
Fashion Magazine	Cosmopolitan	April 2008	'BBC launch eco-fabulous fashion mag' by Bridget March
Fashion Magazine	Glamour	April 2008	'Green Goddess' Author unknown
Fashion Magazine	Marie Claire	June 2008 (Eco Edition)	'The Shops' pages Authors unknown
Fashion Magazine	Marie Claire	June 2008 (Eco Edition)	'Mary Queen of Green' by Mary Portas
Fashion Magazine	Marie Claire	June 2008 (Eco Edition)	'Fashion Challenge' by E Sibbles, H Pool, J Dyson

Table 3: Final Sample of Newspapers, Magazines and Relevant Articles

The sampling of relevant media articles enabled entry to the next stage in the research process. Each article would be analysed in order to determine the nature and language of the ethical fashion message presented to the mainstream consumer during the peak in media communication.

Describing the ethical fashion message

The sample articles were subjected to a process of qualitative content analysis. The value of this method to this exploratory study is its close affinity with the theoretical perspectives of symbolic interactionism; its focus upon the search for meaning, the situations in which meaning emerges and the importance of interaction for the communications process (Altheide, 1996).

Content analysis was conducted within a framework of grounded theory coding informed by Charmaz (2004) and Glaser (1998) and recorded using NVivo 8 (QRS, 2009). A thorough analysis of the ethical fashion message delivered through the sample was made possible via the process of *initial coding* followed by *focused coding* and finally *theoretical coding*. This particular approach to the coding exercise was implemented in order to facilitate maximum capture of diversity in the communication of ethical fashion.

Initial coding required that each article was analysed sentence by sentence in order to break the data into its component parts. Through this process, each sentence was closely considered and constantly compared to others in order to determine the tacit assumptions embedded within it. This enabled the categorisation of the sentence in terms of its meaning in relation to a definition of ethical fashion. Initial codes can be read as *ethical fashion is...or ethical fashion is related to*. Outcomes varied widely with some sentences imbued with multiple meanings and so located within a number of codes. At the point of saturation, the initial codes were

reviewed and the most significant codes, shown in Appendix one, progressed to second level coding.

Focused coding explains the initial codes and leads to a further categorisation of data which serves to make the implicit, explicit through the emergence of meaning. This second level coding was used to move beyond the definitions of ethical fashion towards an interpretation of the implied meaning of ethical fashion that was embedded within each segment of data. Focused codes, also shown in Appendix one, can be read as *ethical fashion is...or ethical fashion means*.

Upon completion of initial and focused coding, the initial code with the greatest number of focused codes (ethical fashion) was taken to the stage of theoretical coding. The purpose of theoretical coding is to specify possible relationships between focused codes and lend form to the meaning expressed through them. Glaser's (1998) concept of the coding family "representation" was applied in the review of the focused codes to guide the emergence of preliminary hypotheses regarding the meaning of ethical fashion. Theoretical codes can be read as *this group of codes represent*. This final stage in the coding process enabled the development of insight regarding the complexity of the ethical fashion message, how the nuances of meaning overlap, how this overlap may give rise to confusion in the communications process and how this may limit consumer interaction.

Initial Code	Focused Codes	Theoretical Codes	Q Statement
Ethical Fashion	Challenging Behaving morally Managing reputation Committing Being complex	Complexity	Buying a £7 dress means the same as buying a battery farmed chicken If T Shirt has an organic label, this means that the printing ink or dye is also ecologically safe "Ethical" means eco, organic, fair and sustainable
	Compromising Being anti fast fashion Being undesirable Being unfashionable	Compromise	"Sustainable clothing" means compromising on style Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I'm happy to compromise on style
	Confusing Proving difficult for retailers Committing Being undesirable Being unfashionable Relating to animal rights	Confusion	"Ethical clothing" means that it is 100% ethically produced Green means the same as eco friendly and organic In fashion and clothing, the word "organic" is only be used in relation to cotton "Eco-Clothes" means the same as "Ethical Clothes" "Ethical fashion" is all about organic cotton and eco denim "Ethical" just means organic The word "Ethical" in fashion is people related "Sustainable" means the same as 'green'
	Being desirable A growing area in fashion Providing a retailer opportunity Being unaffordable Being undesirable Being unfashionable Being a luxury Expressing own principles Being not just a 'fad' Being stylish	Desirability	"Ethical fashion" means rather unappealing clothes Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I'm happy to compromise on style "Ethical clothing" means that it is 100% ethically produced "Ethical fashion" means that manufacturing companies overseas are treated fairly "Look behind the label" means that I can ask where clothes have been produced and if the workers have been paid fairly Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy
	Being organic Recycling Using natural materials Considering of carbon footprint Producing chemical free products Being eco friendly Being concerned about the environmental Sustaining the environment Being green	Environment	"Organic clothes" means that they are made from cotton grown without chemicals or pesticides "Organic clothes" means that they are made from cotton grown without chemicals or pesticides and dyes using natural and environmentally safe dyes The abbreviation / prefix "Eco" means something is earth related
	Social conscience Relating to human rights Relating to production Relating to working practices Formally accrediting production process	Fairness	"Ethical fashion" means that manufacturing companies overseas are treated fairly "Fairtrade" is just about fair pay
	Being vintage Recycling	Re-use	"Recycled" in fashion means 2 nd hand clothing "Recycled" in fashion could mean its made from recycled materials such as plastic
	Expressing social conscience Considering social development Thinking about social sustainability Being responsibility	Social Conscience	"Look behind the label" means that I can ask where clothes have been produced and if the workers have been paid fairly Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy "Fairtrade" means that lives can be changed by my purchase
	Expressing social conscience Considering social development Thinking about social sustainability	Sustainability	"Sustainable clothing" means compromising on style "Sustainable" means the same as 'green'

Table 4: Summary of the coding process and Q statements

Given that it was the interpretations made by the mainstream consumer rather than the interpretations made by the researcher that was fundamental to achieving the aims of this exploration, consideration had to be given to how to use the findings of the content analysis as a tool in the process of seeking the interpretations of research participants.

Further engagement with the methodological literature led the researcher to Q Methodology. Q Method could be employed to reconcile the researchers interpretation of meaning with the participants' situated meaning and ensure reflexivity and consideration of bias in the research process. The process of theoretical coding enabled the researcher to revisit the initial codes to identify sentences from the media articles that embodied the concept of complexity, compromise etc. These sentences were used to establish a set of Q statements that would be used to examine the consumer's interpretation of the message and in so doing, triangulate findings. Table 4 provides a summary of the complete coding process, demonstrates the emergence of the theoretical codes and presents the sentences that were used to facilitate the use of Q Method.

Developing the research tools

Q Methodology

Q Methodology, or Q Method, is a method for the study of subjectivity and is usually used as a tool to structure in-depth interviews that seek to establish the breadth of subjective view on a given subject (Kalof, 1997; Van Excel & de Graaf, 2005; Webler, Danielson & Tuler, 2009) The discrete stages of the method are described in Table five below. This preliminary exploration did not subject findings to factor analysis. Interpretations were considered through a process of qualitative content analysis.

Q Stage	Q Definition	From Content Analysis to Q Method
1.The concourse	the collection of all possible statements the [sources] can make about the subject	the data produced through the process of initial coding of the articles found in sample media texts
2.The Q set or Q sample of Q statements	the sample of statements drawn from the concourse to be presented to respondents	the sample of statements drawn from the concourse that 'describe' theoretical codes and can be presented to participants in order to gain insights to their interpretation of them
3.The P set	the set of respondents	The focus group participants
4.Condition of instruction	A guide for sorting the Q sample	The guide for sorting the Q sample
5.Q sorting	the procedure of respondent interaction within the Q set	The activity of sorting the statements by the participants
6.Analysis of interpretation	the correlation matrix of all Q sorts is calculated and subject to factor analysis	The correlation matrix of all Q sorts is calculated and subject to factor analysis

Table 5: Components/Stages of Q-Method (McKeown & Thomas 1988)

Q Method has been used to investigate patterns of opinion among groups of people on many issues but its use in the area of environmental studies is rapidly expanding due to its value in trying to understand how the public interprets and structures environmental issues (Kalof, (1997). Subjectivity, in the lexicon of Q methodology means nothing more than 'a person's communication of his or her point of view' (Brown,1986, p58). As such, subjectivity is always anchored in the person's internal frame of reference. Self-referent subjectivity of this sort is said, by proponents of Q, to be 'pure behaviour' (Brown 1980, p46) and is at issue any time an individual makes the remark 'It seems to me...' or 'In my opinion...' Q Method was considered appropriate to this study because it is self referential; people doing the Q Sort are expected to respond to statements using 'internal yardsticks'.

An advantage of Q method over other forms of discourse analysis is that participants' responses can be directly compared in a consistent manner since everyone is responding to the same set of statements. Participants sort statements according to how they fit into their beliefs and understanding. Q sorting supports the grounded theory approach to the research and facilitates preliminary theory testing and the process of theory building. Participants give meaning to the statements by sorting them according to what is most or least like their point of view. Perspectives that emerge are generalisations of attitudes held by individuals. As such, they permit direct comparisons of attitudes irrespective of the number of people who subscribe to them.

Word association

To fulfill the aims of this study, it was critical that the findings expose the mainstream consumers' construction of the ethical fashion concept. The fundamental purpose of the investigation was to gain meaningful insight into cultural contexts that may influence receptivity to the ethical fashion message and the factors of experience and lifestyle that may differentiate meanings between participants.

During the process of media content analysis, it was found that certain words occurred repeatedly in descriptions of ethical fashion; *organic, conscious consumer, eco, ethical fashion, eco-chic, recycled, green, environmental, sustainable, eco-fashion, ethically conscious, Fairtrade*. It was decided that these would be useful in guiding a word association exercise within a focus group setting to facilitate exploration of participants’ thoughts, feelings, experiences and understanding of the terms used in the sample media communications.

This enabling technique (Will, Eadie & MacAskill, 1996) was used to guide participants in their reflection. The word association exercise and the Q-sort formed the basis of a semi-structured discussion that was used in an attempt to reveal the cultural experiences that inform individual participants’ understanding of the language of ethical fashion.

The Focus Group

The focus group was deemed an appropriate method for the final stage of data collection for two reasons: a) this method has been used successfully in the study of ethical purchasing behavior (Amyx et al, 1994; Thompson, 1995; Follows & Jobber, 2000) and b) to facilitate the exploratory nature of the research and provide a medium for the generation of rich consumer insight (Fern, 1982).

Table six describes the small number of participants that were conveniently sampled in order to fully represent the demographic span of the sampling frame.

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Education	Employment	Newspapers / Magazines read	NRS Social Grade
A	44	Cohabiting 1 child	College	Intermediate Level Manager	Local Newspaper, The Guardian, The Metro, Red, Cosmopolitan	B
B	38	Single 0 children	School	Junior Level Manager	No newspapers Elle, Marie-Claire	C1
C	32	Single 0 children	University	Intermediate Level Manager	The Guardian, The Mail on Sunday, No magazines	B
D	29	Married 0 children	College	Junior Level Administrator	Local Newspaper, The Sun, News of the World, Heat	C1
E	24	Single 0 children	School	Junior Level Administrator	The Star, News of the World, Heat	C1

Table 6: Participant Profiles

The focus group session consisted of three parts; 1) the Q sort, 2) word association / meaning exercise 3) semi structured discussion.

1) *Q Sort*: The Q method condition of instruction operationalised the hypothetical constructs that emerged from the process of content analysis. Instructions required that the participants systematically rank-order the Q set according to those that are ‘most characteristic of my viewpoint’ to those that are ‘most uncharacteristic of my viewpoint’. Each member of the group carried out the Q sort independently and then reformed as a group to participate in semi structured discussion.

The results of the Q sorts summarised in Table seven, illustrate that four of the five participants understood and agreed that being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that they understand the impact of what they buy. The fifth participant agreed with this but elected to state that she agreed most that ethical meant eco, organic fair and sustainable. Results of the Q sorts demonstrated that despite an appreciation of the broad concept of ethical consciousness, each participant had a different understanding of the terms presented in the statements. The statements selected as being least characteristic of their viewpoints illustrate variance in understanding of the term ethical and to some extent, attitudes towards cheap clothing. It must be noted that during the Q sort, it became apparent that respondents were finding it difficult to undertake the process with any degree of certainty. There were some indications that levels of understanding varied according to age and level of education.

2) *Word Association*: In addition to use in the preparation for Q methodology, the initial codes were used to determine a list of repeatedly occurring words and terms used to define ethical fashion that could be presented to and discussed with the participant group to determine each individual’s interpretation of them

and to determine what was associated with their use. To avoid peer contamination, each participant recorded her own responses onto a pro-forma supplied by the researcher.

Q SORT RESULTS	A: age 44 Cohabiting / 1 child College level Education Intermediate level Manager	B: age 38 Single School Level Education Junior level Manager	C: age 33 Single University level Education Intermediate level Manager	D: age 29 Married College level Education Junior level Administrator	E: age 24 Single School Level Education Junior level Administrator
MOST like I think	Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy	Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy	Ethical means eco, organic, fair and sustainable	Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy	Being an ethically conscious fashion consumer means that I understand the impact of what I buy
LEAST like I think	Buying a £7 dress means the same as buying a battery farmed chicken	Ethical just means organic	Ethical fashion means rather unappealing clothes	Ethical clothing means it is 100% ethically produced	Ethical means eco, organic, fair and sustainable

Table 7: Summary of Q Sort results

The results of the word association exercise are shown in Appendix two. It emerged that the general perception of the participants was that eco fashion or ethical fashion was associated with unfashionable garments and generally with an undesirable 'look'. Certain terms such as Fairtrade, organic, environmental, green and the broad concepts of sustainability and ethical consciousness were very well understood but mainly in association with the purchase of food products or household utility services. The same words, when used with direct reference to fashion were less understood but participants were able to some extent transfer their knowledge and make sense of the terms in relation to clothing. It emerged from analysis of responses that differences in understanding could be attributed to some extent, to age and life stage.

3) *Semi structured discussion* explored the results of the Q Sort, the associations and meaning of the words used to communicate ethical fashion products and explored the social interactions or experiences that had led to the attachment of these associations and meanings by the individual participant.

In the focus group discussion, all participants confirmed that they had learned some of what they knew through reading articles in various newspapers and magazines however the overwhelming assumption was that most of their knowledge was gained during the process of shopping for food in their preferred supermarket.

The following comments summarise the responses given when asked where or through which everyday activities, participants came to learn the meaning of the terms presented to them in the word association exercise.

E: You just pick it up from talk and media...you know, carbon footprint, shopping bags in Asda, they're everywhere. This is everywhere, when you're recycling glass, plastics, in supermarkets.

A: It's about choices when I shop isn't it? They [ethical products & services] are advertised, they are talked about, again, generally in media...but not just in media actually, in everyday conversation as well I'd say now actually, I'd say its mainstream. It's not just something you hear on the news, these words are very much part of our lives now I'd say.

C: Through media articles, reading a bit more like Naomi Klein...all that sort of stuff.

B: Brands I suppose, on labels, you know... coffee jars, chocolate and that when I'm shopping.

D: Building, my husband's job means he talks using some of these words, but I suppose mainly when I'm shopping.

Appendix two suggests that all of the terms presented to participants are familiar and are generally understood but focus group discussion suggests that perhaps these terms do not always translate into meaning when used in relation to fashion and clothing.

D: For me the word ethical really has little meaning to me but being a conscious consumer means I understand the impact of what I buy...I understand what being conscious means but ethical...I'm not sure. I've never heard of the terms ethical fashion or eco fashion ...separately yes but never together. Is eco short for ecological here?

B: I know a bit from reading labels, and from the media...you know...those [recent] television programmes.

A: You know I don't think I've ever heard of eco fashion really.

These comments when considered alongside Appendix two, summarise some of the problems associated with the concept of ethical fashion and perhaps, the research process used to guide this exploration.

Discussion

The literature identified a number of issues related to the concept of ethical fashion. Within the last ten years, consumer spending on all ethical goods has increased almost threefold (The Co-operative Bank, 2009, p.4; 2008, p.3; 2007, p.4) and despite the market for ethical fashion being relatively small, it continues to expand and is perceived by Government and industry to be a sector that is worthy of development and further growth (BSI, 2006; Fisher et al, 2009; Mintel, 2009). It is recognised however, that further growth is dependant upon the promotion of greater understanding of ethical issues related to clothing. Authors of both academic and industry-based literature agree that current practice in the communication of the ethical message is a key inhibitor to ethical clothing breaking through its niche (Beard, 2008; Thomas, 2008; Boston Consulting Group, 2009; Fisher et al, 2009; Mintel, 2009). A factor that may contribute to this situation is the evident gap in the literature that a) considers the ethical behaviours of the mainstream consumer as opposed to the highly motivated ethical consumer and b) considers the particular cultural contexts that influence mainstream consumer understanding of the ethical message. It is however interesting to note in Table one, the arrival, from 2005, of social category C1 in the profiling of the ethical consumer; a possible indicator of the shift towards greater mainstream awareness of ethical issues.

The findings of the content analysis demonstrate that the ethical fashion message delivered through mainstream print media during the period 2006 – 2008 varied greatly in its delivery. Findings concur with those of Berry & McEachern (2006) and Thomas (2008) and contribute to the debate by demonstrating the range of topics that were presented to the consumer as a definition of ethical fashion during the height of the communications effort. In an attempt to extend the work of Thomas (2008), Appendix one and Table four show the extent to which the meanings of ethical fashion overlap and potentially contradict each other. Indeed, it is not surprising that the mainstream consumer has not been engaged (Fisher et al, 2009; Mintel, 2009), findings go some way to suggest that the BSI's 'enablers' became, during this period, unintentional 'blockers' (BSI, 2006) to the development of the sector. Given the media's propensity to criticise rather than collaborate with fashion retailers in matters related to ethical practice, it may be that retailers have been reluctant to engage with the media to resolve these 'blockers'. It may also be proving difficult for fashion retailers to openly enter the ethical debate for fear of further clouding a complex issue.

Focus group discussion provided some validation of the industry-based literature in that the participant group was exposed to ethical messages in many facets of their everyday life and did deem the issues being presented to them as very important (Mintel, 2008). Indeed one participant used the term 'mainstream' to describe the places where she was confronted by or she engaged with ethical messages. Through the focus group activity, it became apparent that the level of mainstream consumer understanding of the ethical fashion message was determined to some extent by age and life-stage. It was interesting to note that all participants, regardless of demographic profile, recognised and fully understood the meaning of ethical consciousness but

often struggled to connect this to clothing.

Findings suggest that despite the fact that mainstream media was influential in the development of understanding, all participants claimed to learn the language of ethical communications whilst engaged in the process shopping in the supermarket. All terms considered in the focus group discussion and presented in Appendix two, were associated mainly with food and household products. The supermarket environment and “the regular food-shop” appear to play a critical role in mainstream consumer learning and maybe the key to reinforcement and retention of the ethical message via the process of browsing. In terms of the influence of cultural context upon the construction of meaning, all participants claimed to make ethically conscious decisions in the purchase of food so it would seem reasonable to assume their readiness to receive and correctly interpret the ethical fashion message. However, it proved difficult for participants to transfer this knowledge or decision making to the purchase of clothes, an interesting observation given current developments in the practice of garment labelling. This finding suggests that the development of in-store and on-product communication is critical to the engagement of the mainstream consumer but raises the question of how fashion retailers might encourage the consumer to transfer their learning from the purchase of food, household products and utility services; particularly when the language used in relation to ethical fashion is complicated by multiple definitions and multifarious nuance in meaning.

With regard to communications practice, the exploratory research presented in this paper goes some way to indicate that within the ethical fashion sector, there does seem to have been a focus upon the construction of ‘inside-out’ messages (Proctor & Kitchen, 2002) and that the sector’s ‘influencers’ do not share between themselves a language of ethical fashion nor do they share in a cultural code with their audience and potential consumers. It would appear that fashion retailers have much to learn from consideration of the broader debate regarding the mainstreaming of ethical products and the engagement of the wider public in matters related to sustainability.

Conclusions and Implications

It is recognised that the findings of this study are limited by the review of ethical fashion communications within a very specific period of time and engagement of a small consumer sample. This study was exploratory in nature, adopted an interpretive stance and was designed to involve of a small number of participants; it was intended to advance insights and theoretical sensitivity to better understand the communications problem rather than generalise findings to a broader population of mainstream consumers.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes to the emerging body of literature that discusses the communication of ethical fashion and helps to shift the focus of research from the highly motivated ethical consumer to a body of consumers that are more representative of the British public.

This exploration of the ethical fashion message and how it is received facilitated the review of a range of research methods and was successful in developing insights into the diversity in perception and potential for confusion in relation to the ethical fashion concept. Results indicate that Q method is a useful tool in managing the reflexivity of the researcher and when used conjunction with semi structured discussion, in describing a population of viewpoints. The collection of viewpoints and insights to mainstream consumer mindsets will prove critical to the next phase of research, it is recognised however that there is scope for further development of the Q sample prior to the second iteration of research activity.

The findings of this study will inform further engagement with academic literature in the mainstreaming of ethical products followed by a body of broader qualitative work. This work will begin with an extension of focus group activity followed by in-store observations to gain insight to the nature of the ethical fashion message that is currently presented via in-store and on-product communication. The findings of these new iterations of sequential work will inform engagement with fashion retailers with the aim of developing insights that will inform a route map for the successful marketing of ethical fashion products.

Appendices

Initial Codes	Focused Codes	Initial Codes	Focused Codes	Initial Codes	Focused Codes
Carbon footprint	Consumers 'doing their bit' Acting ethically Behaving ethically Recycling	Recycled	Producing beautiful products Addressing landfill issues Broadening range of uses Relating to eco style Being made of Fleece Being made of Polyester Reducing carbon footprint Re-using waste Sorting Being sustainable Being vintage	Green	Being chic Compromising on style Being conscious of the environment Wearing eco chic Being eco friendly Being an eco warrior Trading ethically Producing ethically Producing fashion with conscience Being organic Being sustainable Being untreated
Conscious consumers	Buying desirable products Acting ethically Behaving ethically Relating to human rights Behaving morally Relating to environmental sustainability Buying Fair Trade Thinking about green issues Behaving with social responsibility Wanting to know more	Saving the Planet	Avoiding environmental damage Choosing organic Choosing vintage Compromising one's image Consumer making good decisions Industry behaving ethically Making choices Making an ethical commitment Recycling	Organic	Compromising on style Confusing Being eco friendly Being environmentally beneficial Producing ethically Being a Fair trade product Being green A growing area in fashion Providing a retailer opportunity Possessing health benefits Limiting fashion options Being a luxury product Being made from cotton Being not only cotton Paying a premium Being plain Being socially beneficial Being stylish Being sustainable
Eco / Ecological	Formally accrediting production process Confusing Being desirable Behaving ethically Being fashionable Being glamorous Being green Being organic Being planet friendly Being recycled Relating to carbon footprint About manufacturing Behaving with a social conscience Relating to the environment Being stylish Buying from sustainable sources Being sweatshop free Being undesirable	Ethical Fashion	Challenging Compromising A growing area in fashion Behaving morally Providing a retailer opportunity Formally accrediting production process Relating to animal rights Being anti fast fashion Behaving ethically Managing reputation Producing chemical free products Committing Being complex Confusing Considering carbon footprint Being desirable Proving difficult for retailers Being eco friendly Being concerned about the environmental Sustaining the environment Being green Relating to human rights Being a luxury Using natural materials Not just a 'fad' Being organic Being recycled Relating to production Relating to working practices Being responsible Expressing own principles Expressing social conscience Considering social development Thinking about social sustainability Being stylish Being unaffordable Being undesirable Being unfashionable Being vintage	Sustainable	Being 100% organic Using eco friendly Being ecologically aware Behaving ethically Formally accrediting production process Being green Not having a negative impact Ensuring no environmental harm Using recycled materials Producing with social conscience
Environmental	Assuring anti pesticide Being aware Being bio degradable Being carbon neutral Being considerate of finite sources Being eco friendly Being an eco warrior Behaving ethically Being fashionable Being green Using natural dyes Being organic Managing waste Recycling Using cotton Respecting the environment Behaving with social responsibility Saving the planet Being stylish Being sustainable			Vintage	Decreasing carbon footprint Being eco Behaving ethically Being planet friendly Recycling Being stylish
Fair Trade	Addressing exploitation Formally accrediting standards Being complicated Confusing Satisfying consumers Respecting the environment Behaving ethically Producing fashion with conscience A growing area in fashion Helping producers of goods Using cotton Being limited in the support it provides Not being widely adopted Paying a premium Developing a responsible supply chain Retailers paying 'tip service' Socially responsible Being stylish Being widely available				

Appendix 1: Findings of Initial Coding & Focused Coding

Word Association / Meaning	A: age 44 Cohabiting / 1 child College level Education Intermediate level Manager	B: age 38 Single School Level Education Junior level Manager	C: age 33 Single University level Education Intermediate level Manager	D: age 29 Married College level Education Junior level Administrator	E: age 24 Single School Level Education Junior level Administrator
Organic	Association: Food	Vegetables	Cotton	Fresh	Health
	Meaning: Thoughtfully grown, no chemicals	No pesticides	Made without use of pesticides or genetic modification	Grown/sourced naturally	Healthy
Conscious Consumer	Association: Caring	Good	Organic	Aware	Think before you buy
	Meaning: Somebody who thinks about where / how the product came from	Care about where the things you buy come from	Someone who makes choices about purchasing based on factors such as ethics of product sourcing, organic materials, sustainability etc.	Aware of the repercussions of their actions	Aware of other products and prices
Eco	Association: Friendly	Friendly	Washing powder	Environment	Environment
	Meaning: Reduced negative impact on environment	Environment	Ecologically sound	Environment	Environmentally friendly
Ethical Fashion	Association: Hippy	Beige	Expensive	Bazaar	Culture
	Meaning: Clothes that have been manufactured under good conditions for purpose	Fashion from people who care about where the clothes have come from – no sweat shops	Clothing that hasn't involved animal cruelty, sweatshop labour etc	Don't know	What is 'correct' fashion for your culture (<i>national dress</i>)
Eco-Chic	Association: Hippy	Brown	People Tree	Hippy	Don't know
	Meaning: A fashion trend	Fashion that has no chemicals, natural dyes	A style / way of dressing selecting ethically sourced items and jewellery / accessories from Fair trade projects	Never heard of it before	Really don't know
Recycled	Association: Purpose	Rubbish	Plastic bags	Old	Environment
	Meaning: Something that is re-used	Re-using things, glass, plastic, paper.	Something that has previously existed as something else	Reusing	'Save our planet'
Green	Association: Ethics	Eco	Good	Grass	Colour
	Meaning: Environmentally sound / friendly	Care about the world we live in, recycle etc.	Environmentally sound	Environmentally friendly	Apart from colour means green / environment[all]
Environmental	Association: Health	Care	Green	Friendly	Save our planet
	Meaning: Surrounding the area we live in	As above - Care about the world we live in, recycle etc.	Taking impact on the global / local environment into account	Safe to use / not harmful	Environment , recycle products
Sustainable	Association: Long fields	Re-use	Wind farms	Sourced	Expensive
	Meaning: Something that lasts, reused not just thrown away	From a source that can be used again & again	Made in a way that doesn't deplete resources	Able to keep going without any further damage	Friendly Street (<i>Ecologically efficient building in local area</i>)
Eco Fashion	Association: Cotton	Hemp	Middle class	Ethnic	Self aware
	Meaning: Products that have been produced in line with eco thought	Fashion from companies using no dyes that are not 'green'	Brands such as People Tree who promote their organic/Fair trade/anti-sweatshop stance	Don't know	E.g. bringing new eco shopping bags into supermarkets
Ethically Conscious	Association: Caring person (in a skirt)	Environment	Expensive	Aware	(nothing written)
	Meaning: Someone who is concerned / active about the impact of manufacturing / growing in our environment	You care and have ethics	Being aware that one can make choices about purchasing items that are sustainable, created in healthy environments etc.	Not participating in anything you feel goes against your ethics	Conscious of culture
Fairtrade	Association: Coffee & Chocolate	Chocolate	Coffee	Africa	Paid fairly
	Meaning: Overseas assistance that can reduce hardship in a country	From a source that pays growers a proper wage	Western buyers sourcing from developing world suppliers and paying them a fair process for their products	The supplier gets a fair deal	The people that make product are fairly paid

Appendix 2: Findings of Word Association Exercise

References

Altheide, D.L. (1996) Qualitative Media Analysis Qualitative Research Methods Series 3, California, Sage Publications Ltd.

Amyx, D.A, DeJong, P.F Lin, X, Chakraborty, G. And Weiner, J.L, (1994) Influences of purchase intentions for ecologically safe products: an exploratory study, paper presented at the AMA (Winter) Educator's Conference, pp. 314-7

Anderson, W,T and Cunningham, W, H (1972) The Socially Conscious Consumer, Journal of Marketing, **Vol. 36**, (July 1972) pp.23-31

Beard, N (2008) The Branding of Ethical Fashion and the Consumer: A Luxury Niche or Mass-market Reality? Fashion Theory, **Vol.12**, Issue 4, pp. 447 –468

Berry H and McEachern M (2006) Informing Ethical Consumers. In: Harrison R, Newholm T, et al. (2006). The Ethical Consumer. London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Berkowitz, L and Lutterman, K,G (1968) The Traditional Socially Responsible Personality, Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer 68, **Vol.32**, Issues 2, p.169

Bevan (2008) fashion editor

Blood, Sweat & T-Shirts (2008), BBC Three, 29 May 21.00hrs, 5th June 21.00hrs, 12th June 21.00hrs, 19th June 21.00hrs.

Boston Consulting Group (2009) Capturing the Green Advantage for Consumer Companies. <http://www.bcg.com/documents/file15407.pdf> accessed March 2009

Brinton, J (2008)

Brown, S. R. (1980). Political subjectivity: applications of Q methodology in political science. New Haven:Yale University Press.

Brown, S. R. (1986). Q technique and method: principles and procedures. In: W.D. Berry and M. S. Lewis-Beck, ed. New tools for social scientists: advances and applications in research methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, pp. 57-76.

BSI (2006) Ethical Fashion: Stakeholder Workshop Report. Chiswick, London

Candy (2007) Fashion editor

Charmaz, K (2004) Constructing Grounded Theory, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

- Co-operative Bank (2007) The Ethical Consumerism Report 2007. The Co-operative Bank, Manchester
- Co-operative Bank (2008) The Ethical Consumerism Report 2008. The Co-operative Bank, Manchester
- Co-operative Bank (2009) The Ethical Consumerism Report 2009. The Co-operative Bank, Manchester
- Craik, L (2007) I love a good deal but I can't deal with Primark
- Davis E (2006)
- Dickson, M, A and Littrell, M. (1996), "Socially responsible behaviour: values and attitudes of the alternative trading organisation consumer", Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, **Vol. 1** No. 1, pp. 50-69.
- Dickson, M, A. (1999) US consumers' knowledge of and concern for apparel sweatshops. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management. **Vol. 3**, No. 1 pp44-55
- Dickson, M, A. (2000), Personal values, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes relating to intentions to purchase apparel from socially responsible businesses, Clothing and Textile Research Journal, **Vol. 18**, No. 1, pp. 19-30.
- Dickson, M, A. (2001), "Utility Of No Sweat Label for Apparel Consumers: Profiling Label Users and Predicting their Purchases, Journal of Consumer Affairs, **Vol. 35**, No 1, pp. 69-119.
- Dickson M, A. (2005). Identifying and Profiling Apparel Label Users In: Harrison R, Newholm T, et al. (2006). The Ethical Consumer. London, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Doherty & Tranchell, 2007
- Ewan, S. & Ewan, E. (1982) Channels of Desire. New York, McGraw-Hill
- Fern (1982)
- Fisher, T. Cooper, T. Woodward, S. Hiller A and Goworek H. (2008) Public Understanding of Sustainable Clothing: A report to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Defra. London.
- Fliske & Hartley (1978)
- Finn, A & Gronroos, C (2009) Rethinking Marketing Communication: From integrated marketing communication to relationship management. Journal of Marketing Communications, Vol 15, No 2-3, April – July 2009 p 179-195
- Follows, S.B, and Jobber, D. (2000) Environmentally responsible purchase behaviour: a test of a consumer model, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 43, Nos. 5/6, pp. 723-46
- Futerra (2007) Words that Sell. <http://www.futerra.co.uk/> accessed April 2008
- Glaser, B (1998)
- Goulding, C. (2002) Grounded Theory: A practical guide for management, business and market researchers. London, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hall, S. (1980) Encoding / Decoding in Culture, Media, Language. S Hall, D Hobson, A Lowe & P Willis eds. London, Hutchison, p 63-173
- Hirschman, E.C. & Thompson, C.J (1997) Why Media Matter: Toward a Richer Understanding of Consumers' Relationships with Advertising and Mass Media. Journal of Advertising. Vol XXVI, No 1, Spring 1997.
- Hiscott, G (2008) Free-range chicken sales rise after chefs attack 'cruel' farms
<http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/30913/Free-range-chicken-sales-rise-after-chefs-attack-cruel-farms>
- Iwanow, H. McEachern, M,G and Jeffrey, (2005). The influence of ethical trading policies on consumer apparel purchase decisions: A focus on The Gap Inc. International Journal of Distribution Management **33**(5): 371-387.
- Jucker 2002;
- Kalof, L. (1997) Understanding the Social Construction of Environmental Concern, Human Ecology Review, **Vol 4**, 1997/1998, No 2.
- Kanjii, 2008
- Kennedy, V (2007)
- Kitchen, P,J. and Schultz, D,E. (2001) Raising the Corporate Umbrella: Corporate Communications in the twenty-first Century. Palgrave Business Press
- Klein, N. (2001) No Logo, London, Flamingo
- Kolandai-Matchett, K. (2009) Mediated communication of 'sustainable consumption' in the alternative media: a case study exploring a message framing strategy. International Journal of Consumer Studies, **Vol. 3**, Issue 2, p113-125
- Kotler, P. Armstrong, G. Saunders, J. Wong, V. (1999) Principles of Marketing 2nd European Edn. Prentice Hall.
- LCF, (2008). Fashion & Sustainability: A Snapshot Analysis. Centre for Sustainable Fashion, London College of Fashion.
- Leal Filho, W. (2000) Dealing with the misconceptions on the concept of sustainability. International Journal of Sustainability in Higer Education, **Vol. 1**, Issue 1, p,9
- Loureiro, M, L and Lotade, J. (2005) Do fairtrade and eco-labels in coffee wakeup the consumer conscience? Ecological Economics, **Vol. 53**, p123-138
- Low, W and Davenport, E. (2006) Mainstreaming fairtrade: adoption, assimilation, appropriation. Journal of Strategic Marketing, **Vol. 14**, Issue 4, p.315-327
- McCracken, G. (1986), "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods," Journal of Consumer Research, **13** (June), 71-84,
- McCracken, G. (1987) Advertising: Meaning or Information? in Advances in Consumer Research, ed M Wallendorf & P Anderson, p121-4, **Vol 14**, Provo UT, Association for Consumer Research.
- McCracken, G. (1989) Culture & Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Goods and Activities, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- McVeigh, K (2007) Top fashion brands accused over failure to ensure living wage.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2007/sep/14/fashion.retail>
- Metro (2006) 'M&S boost for farmers' http://www.metro.co.uk/money/article.html?in_article_id=43333&in_page_id=36
- Metro (2008) Primark workers earn 7p an hour
http://www.metro.co.uk/news/article.html?Primark_workers_earn_7p_an_hour&in_article_id=434025&in_page_id=34
- Metro (2008) Retailers split over workers
http://www.metro.co.uk/news/article.html?Retailers_split_over_workers&in_article_id=306463&in_page_id=34
- Mick, D, and Buhl C, (1992), A meaning based model of advertising experiences. Journal of Consumer Research, **Vol.19**,

- December, pp.317-38
- Miller, M.C (1988) Boxed In: The culture of TV. Evanston IL, Northwestern University Press
- Mintel (2004) Attitudes towards Ethical Foods. Mintel International Group Limited, London.
- [Mintel \(2006\)](#)
- [Mintel \(2008\)](#)
- Mintel (2009) Ethical Clothing UK. Mintel International Group Limited, London.
- Morgan, L, R and Birtwistle, G. (2009) An investigation of young fashion consumers disposal habits, International Journal of Consumer Studies, **Vol. 33**, Issues 2, P 190-198
- Morley, D. (1980)a The Nationwide Audience, London, BFI.
- Morley, D. (1980)b Texts, Readers, Subjects Culture, Media, Language. S Hall, D Hobson, A Lowe & P Willis eds. London, Hutchison, p 63-173
- Ogles, R.M. (1987) Cultivation Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Current Research on Television Constructs of Social Reality. Mass Communication Review, No 14, p 43-53
- O'Guinn, T. Faber, R, J and Rice, M. (1985), "Popular Film and Television as Consumer Acculturation Agents: America 1900 to Present," in Historical Perspective in Consumer Research: National and International Perspectives, Chin Tiong Tan and Jagdish Sheth, eds, Singapore: National University of Singapore, 297-301 ,
- Panorama: Primark: On the Rack (2008), BBC 1, 23rd June , 21.00hrs
- [Pearson, A \(2008\)](#)
- Pickton, D. & Broderick, A. (2005) Integrated Marketing Communications, 2nd Ed. England, Pearson Education Ltd.
- [Portas, M. \(2008\) Marie-Claire](#)
- Proctor, T. and Kitchen, P. (2002) Communication in postmodern integrated marketing, Corporate Communications: An International Journal, **Vol. 7**, no 3, pp.144-154
- QRS**
- Richards, L. (2005) Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide. London, Sage Publications
- Roberts, J, A. (1995) Profiling Levels of Socially Responsible Behaviour: A Cluster Analytical approach and its Implications for Marketing, Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice, Fall 95, **Vol.3**, Issue 4, p.84
- Roberts, J, A. (1996) Will the real socially responsible consumer please step forward? Business Horizons, **39**, 79–83.
- Scott, L. (1994) The bridge from text to mind: Adapting reader-response theory to consumer research. Journal of Consumer Research, **Vol. 21**, December, pp.461-480
- Schiller, H.L. (1989) Culture Inc. New York, Oxford University Press
- Schramm, W. Roberts, D.F. (1971) The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, revised ed. Urbana Illinois, University of Illinois Press.
- [Schulman \(2008\) fashion editor](#)
- Schultz, D, E and Kitchen, P, J. (2000) Integrated Marketing Communications: A Global Approach, NTC Business Books, Chicago IL
- [Schultz \(2000\)](#)
- Shaw, D. and Duff, R. (2002) Ethics and Social Responsibility in Fashion and Clothing Choice, Proceedings of the EMAC Conference, Braga.
- Shaw, D. Newholm, T. Dickinson, R (2006) "Consumption as voting: an exploration of consumer empowerment" European Journal of Marketing **40**(9/10): 1049-1067.
- Shaw, D. and Tomolillo, D. (2004), "Undressing the ethical issues in fashion: a consumer perspective", in Bruce, M. (Ed.), International Retail Marketing: A Case Study Approach, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- [Siegle, L \(2007\)](#)
- [Spencer, M \(2008\)](#)
- Spiggle, S. (1994) Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Research, **Vol. 21**, December, pp.491-503
- Stern, B. (1996) Textual analysis in advertising research: Construction and destruction of meanings. Journal of Advertising, **Vol. 25**, No. 6, pp.66-73
- Tallontire A, R. E., Blowfield M (2001) Ethical Consumers and Ethical Trade - A Review of Current Literature. The Natural Resources Institute, The University of Greenwich.
- Turner, G (1992) British Cultural Studies: An Introduction, New York & London, Routledge
- Thompson, C.J (1995) A contextualist proposal for the conceptualization and study of marketing ethics, Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, **Vol. 14**, No. 2, pp. 177-91
- Thomas, S. (2008). "From "Green Blur" to Eco-fashion: Fashioning an Eco-lexicon." Fashion Theory **12**(4): 525-540.
- van Excel, N.J.A. & de Graaf, G. (2005) Q Methodology: A sneak preview [available from www.jobvanexel.nl] downloaded April 2009
- van Liere, K, D and Dunlap, R, E. (1980) The Social Bases of Environmental Concern: A Review of Hypotheses, Explanations and Empirical Evidence, Public Opinion Quarterly, **44**, 181 – 197
- Weaver, W. and Shannon, C.E (1963). The Mathematical Theory of Communication. University of Illinois Press.
- Webler, T. Danielson, S. & Tuler, S. (2009) Using Q Method to review social perspectives in environmental research. Greenfield MA, Social & environmental research Institute. Downloaded from www.seri-us.org/pubs/Oprimer/pdf July 2009
- Webster, F E. (1975) Determining the Characteristics of the Socially Conscious Consumer, Journal of Consumer Research, **Vol 2**, December 1975
- Will, V. Eadie, D and MacAskill, S. (1996) Projective and enabling techniques explored, Marketing Intelligence & Planning, **14/6**, p.38-43