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An exploration of millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR

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An exploration of Millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR

Daniel Thomas Woodason

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

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Revised June 2020

Candidate's declaration

I hereby declare that I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract:

Ethical rhetoric regarding the demographic attributed as Millennials, their characteristics and value priorities, is diverse (i.e. Becker Jr, 2012; Bucic et al., 2012; Cone, 2015; Deloitte, 2017; Greenberg, & Weber, 2008; McGlone et al., 2011; Neilsen, 2015; Paulin et al., 2014; Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010; Weber & Urick, 2017). This research explores their views and attitudes regarding social responsibility and ethical considerations relating to both corporate (CSR) and personal behaviour (CnSR). The aim being to offer beneficial insight, furthering research relating to a better understanding of the demographic that enables more effective, meaningful or relevant corporate CSR strategies and pertinent marketing communications targeted at them.

A heterogeneous ideology required an interpretivist approach and interviews were used to gain insights of eighteen Millennials: undergraduate students at a UK university Business School. Transcripts were thematically analysed to disclose their ethical / pro-environmental value priority that produced three themes: convenience & indifference, self-reasoning & justification, and distrust.

Value priority for both CSR and CnSR was low and the three themes uncovered findings pertinent to meeting the research aims. The sample indicated that the late-adolescent life stage they were experiencing was indicative of an undefined role in a responsible adult society; as acknowledged by Erikson as early as 1963 with conflict experienced - self-identity and peer approval needs vs those of society. This was reflected in a combination of factors including the influence of significant others (noted by Beckmann, 2007), a deflection of responsibility to act or reluctance to take responsibility for the consequences of the previous generation's misgivings, and an apathy or indifference to the topic in general. Moreover, their transitioning life-stage including temporary accommodation, friendship groups, identity formation and employment purpose was evident (Batemann & Phippen, 2016) as an antecedent to this and the alternate priorities that emanate from this situation. The findings concluded that empathy was evident, but action was more 'locally' focused such as on UK animal welfare rather than international (human) labour or socio-economic conditions. For marketing communications, the data revealed cynicism and scepticism was evident, relating to global brands, but more ominously, all forms of information. A topic that has been raised on occasion by previous authors (notably Quinby, 1999) and in reference to socially responsible behaviour has been acknowledged to negate responsibility to act, or assign blame elsewhere (Detert et al., 2008). The concept of pro-environmental corporate strategy to appeal to the demographic was found to be uncertain. Findings suggested some admiration may arise for a majority but added patronage was uncommitted.

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1.0 Introduction

Much has been written and discussed regarding the demographic referred to as Millennials that isn't always complimentary; including the attributed 'snowflake generation' in reference to a supposed hypersensitivity (see Lukianoff, and Haidt, 2015 and Nicholson, 2016). As a university lecturer and having worked with those between the ages 18-25 for most of my life I have found myself critical of such conclusions in being inconsistent to my own experience. My career has also involved marketing as a discipline, mainly within the private sector. Therefore, the combination of Millennials and marketing efficacy, coupled with the global topic of social responsibility for both parties was particularly interesting and suggested contributions were feasible for both theory and industry.

This thesis is therefore an exploration into the perspective and behaviours of a selection befitting the Millennial classification as to how social responsibility as a value priority manifests in their consciousness. With the reasoning that exploring their narrative will gain insights purposeful for further research enabling a better understanding of this cohort.

Corporate and Social Responsibility is clearly not a new phenomenon yet has sustained a significant rise in social consciousness over the past 20 years (Ngram Viewer, 2018 - Appendix 1). This popularity and discussion regarding the business case (i.e. Vaaland, Heide, and Grønhaug, 2008), along with how the Millennial demographic are significant in their 'coming of age' and integration into the work force (i.e. Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010) as significant consumers is critiqued. Furthermore, the turn of the century's ubiquity of the Internet's influence is acknowledged as relevant (i.e. Weber, 2015), especially for this cohort as an unavoidable part of their world. A technological cultural change that perhaps older generations have struggled to keep up with is however acknowledged as a medium for Millennials to enhance identity, community and self-fulfilment (Beirne and Howe, 2008). Managing this rapidly changing multi-media landscape, Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2010) penned as the Millennial's 'sixth sense', suggests having marketing communication implications, factored amongst the barrage of information aimed at consumers (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000). Areas of further consideration include their life-stage (Lipkin, 2010; Potter 2009), general

ethical consumption knowledge and with relevance, the impact of individual values (as per the works of Schwartz and Rokeach).

From initial readings around these topics and consumer perspectives (there was significantly more literature from a business angle), it was of personal importance that this research acknowledged any extremity of the participants (e.g. very ethical or no concern); as this was understood from the literature to be particularly influential to the research method and ultimate conclusions (i.e. Beckmann, 2007). Therefore, the approach in recruiting participants was to source individuals that didn't necessarily identify themselves as either 'pro-environmentalists' or those without inclination to consume or behave with any social responsibility - so 'a blank canvas'; how this was approached is explained in the Methodology chapter.

The most relevant theoretical position to gain an in-depth exploratory understanding suggested an inductive approach and interpretivist methodology (akin to Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The exploration inferred interviews or conversations were the best suited approach and as McNamee (2004, p7) proposed, conversations are a two-way dialogue; storytelling and subjective. With no hypothesis to test, the inductive nature to this research allowed the investigation to be led by the inquiry rather than a priori judgements (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p202; Manning, 1997). Furthermore, the subjective epistemology is transparent throughout with clarification of the entire process to the reader (the interpretivist approach being susceptible to multiple possibilities (von Glaserfeld, 2007, p14); this is further explained in the Methodology and Analysis chapters.

1.1 Why *Millennials* and corporate social responsibility?

As per the ethos of the DBA, the application to enhancing business knowledge is inherently pertinent; insight of the Millennial demographic and their views on social responsibility offers potentially useful outputs. Furthermore, social and environmental responsibility, ethical consumption and sustainability could be argued as a socially moral norm or 'moral domain' (Fransson and Gärling, 1999, pg374) and common understanding in 21st Century western countries with environmentalist scholars championing the threat of non-acknowledgement (e.g. Chan, 1999; Culiberg, 2013;

Kim, Oh, Yoon, and Shin, 2016). Whilst '*Act responsibly if you want to earn the trust of Millennial consumers*' is the headline of an article from Forbes dated 6th November 2018 (Forbes, 2018). The adoption and responsibility of organisations to embrace social responsibility is a multiplicitous landscape and the role of consumers as stakeholders is integral to both motivation and success. Appreciating this DBA journey started in 2011, the recent Forbes headline with connotations of 'business' requirements to supposedly adhere to the Millennial demographic's values is evidently still a topic of interest and an apparent gap in current research.

A cohort that has had numerous names attributed; Generation Y, Net Generation etc (Tyler, 2007) have seen their significance rise as they have matured. Although specifics appear undecided, born approximately between 1980 and 2000 they followed those referred to as Generation X and Baby Boomers before them. Their significance being that as a population equating to almost a quarter of the UK population and 1.8 billion worldwide (Financial Times, 2018) what does society require to understand regarding their mind-set as they integrate in to the 'adult world'? Previously depicted by Hume (2010) as representing 'the future of our society' (Heaney, 2006; Smola and Sutton, 2002) and 'the future consumers, the future workers and the future innovators' (McCrinkle, 2007), academia has placed considerable weighting on their emergence. Combined with a trend in delaying settling down and having children they behold a significant power as potential consumers (Buksa and Mitsis, 2011; Lazarevic, 2012).

As the Forbes headline suggests, for the past 10 years or more authors such as Hira (2007) and Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle, and Attmann (2010) have denoted that Millennials are inherently socially minded, even with a propensity for activism as required.

Understandably this would appear to resonate with industry and as Forbes infers, the requirement that CSR is prevalent within an organisation is mandatory to create advocates within the Millennial demographic. As mentioned, this did not particularly resonate with what I was experiencing first-hand. The more I read, the more it appeared that these types of headlines were making generalisations with stereotypes and the academic literature was similar (see Arsenault, 2004; Schwartz, 2008; Henderson, 2010). With relevance, (although not specific to this demographic), McEachern (2015) discusses a selection of international brands recent attempts (e.g. Nestle, Mars, Cadbury's) and efforts regarding 'limited' Fairtrade initiatives. She

highlights questioning from the consumer participants along with repercussions (negative publicity) from less than 100% organisational compliance, including tax avoidance.

The business case for CSR implementation has been widely covered (and discussed later) with the emphasis on the industry perspective. The key, positive highlights being; customer affiliation, a belief of authenticity (brand image) and purchase intention (CIM, 2008; Liu and Zhou, 2009) - that are understandably aspirational business attributes. CSR statistics purporting to '90% of Millennials would switch brands' (Cone, 2015) and Nielsen's (2015) consumer analytics claiming that organisations that resonate with Millennials through CSR investment are remunerated with loyalty and enlarged market share. Generally, this generation have been believed to *value* CSR significantly insofar that it dictates their consumption choices and earns brand affinity (e.g. Noble, Haytko, and Phillips, 2009). Termed 'Generation We' by Greenberg and Weber (2008) they are believed to be non-cynical and civic minded; where environmental, social and cultural issues are also key factors according to Hume (2010). Yet, my first-hand experiences suggested that this wasn't a prevalent generation wide attribute or perspective with a less empathetic outlook more prevalent.

Literature that did support this included Schweitzer and Lyons, (2010) who suggested that they were the demographic who 'want it all and want it now' inferring impatience and a constant desire for consumption. Similarly, Deloitte (2017) the multinational professional services network, published Millennial research including a chart showing a decrease to 31% being concerned with the environment. These findings therefore proposed a decline yet offered no explanation as to the reasons *why*, a potential avenue for exploration. Similarly, and concurring with Gurău (2012) and Lazarevic's (2012) that if a brand treats Millennials as a homogenous group for any marketing decisions, it was destined to fail (also with acknowledgement to Weber and Urick's research (2017)).

It could also be considered that the Millennial context, although externally perceivably as the 'same world' we all live in, could perhaps be viewed as a life with resentment of their predecessors (i.e. Pomeroy and Johnson 2009; Skarmeas and Leonidou 2013). Financially restricted and burdened by previous generations who appear relatively

unscathed by the economic and environmental impacts of their actions; yet now pass on the responsibilities as a legacy (supported by BBC News, 2010A, Hoey, 2008, Pierce, 2007). A perspective that appeared to require further enquiry as to see if this was still pertinent to any socially responsible decline.

1.1.1 Consumer social responsibility

The topic of 'CnSR', consumer social responsibility is evidently relevant here. As Jones (1991) inferred nearly 30 years ago, as consumers, we consider our ethical options in relation to a specific context, accessible knowledge and a priori influences or *normative social factors*, (Shaw and Clarke, 1999). Understanding the Millennial's perspectives is therefore important if the decisions organisations make are to authentically resonate with CSR related strategy or marketing communication. Additionally, Zollo, Yoon, Rialti, and Ciappei (2018, pg695) have recently surmised that *'despite such noteworthy efforts (by marketing scholars), little is known about the antecedents of ethical decision making'*, referring generically to consumers - an area for exploration. Furthermore, generational differences require acknowledging, the role of the family (Hsieh, Chiu, & Lin, 2006), their peers (Lueg and Finney, 2007; Pate and Adams, 2013; Smith, 2011) and online media; particularly social media or celebrity influencers that appear notoriously difficult for older generations to comprehend (McCormick, 2016; Noble, Haytko, and Phillips, 2009) and the role these parties play in the 21st century behaviour of adolescents.

Therein, an area of research interest is the propensity of brand image and/or peer advocacy as a potential conflict to socially responsible decision making for this age group; with respect, identity issues that have been previously raised by Crane and Matton (2010). In support, Bateman and Phippen's (2016) more recent offering that personal identity was more a priority than any ethical obligations for Millennials; proposing ego or vanity as two more, less-than-complementary characteristics. Thus, the individual decision making, and conscious reasoning required complying with a societal norm vs individual or group priority is feasibly an inevitable conflict for some; and interesting to explore. Consequently, self-identity (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014) is inherent to the discussion where potential dichotomy for the individual's morality may manifest consciously or otherwise, this then predisposes the acknowledged 'attitude-behaviour gap' (e.g. Cherry and Caldwell, 2013; Yoon, Kim, and Baek, 2016). Indeed,

previous moral identity studies looked at late adolescents (Aquino and Reed, 2002; 2003) where positive correlations between it and *observed food donations* and *self-report volunteerism* were acknowledged. However, akin to the complexity of Millennial generalisation this could cautiously be attributed to Carlo and Randall's (2002) 'public motivation' and self-worth connotations.

Moreover, in perhaps a questionable approach, Hume (2010) recommends that sustainability is presented as a 'cool' option to appeal to this cohort and their social responsibility. Therefore, within this research, their individual voices offer an opportunity to hear *their* perspective of how social responsibility plays any part in their behaviour, perspectives and value priority therein. This public face of empathy or morality and concern that perhaps fails to manifest into 'everyday' consumption or behaviour significantly holds methodological implications regarding judgement, bias or restriction (see Beckmann, 2007); this is explored in the Methodology chapter.

1.2 Value priority as an antecedent to ethical behaviour

The term *Values* is used to describe individual or personal standards of what is valuable or important to an individual.

Studies exploring socially responsible perspectives, intentions and behaviour have been varied with a propensity to use Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (1991) (see Shaw, Shiu, and Clarke, 2000). Ajzen's theory is where an individual's attitude towards a behaviour coupled with their subjective norm and perceived control contribute to the intention (Fransson and Gärling, 1999). It is also considered that deontological (right or wrong) or consequentialist (the best outcome for all) deliberations are at play (Bateman and Phippen, 2016). However, it has been regularly noted that an individual's values are significantly antecedents of social or environmentally responsible behaviour (e.g. Van Liere and Dunlap, 1978; Stern, Dietz, and Kalof, 1993; Seligman, Syme, and Gilchrist, 1994); and furthermore '*value priorities play an important role for these evaluations*' (Fransson and Gärling, 1999, pg369). The term 'value priority' is used here in relation to how the participants perceive or construct their ethical and/or socially responsible behaviour; particularly in relation to alternate values that they hold. This is an area, specifically focusing on Millennials, that appears

absent in the recent literature. In support, Allport (1961) strongly suggested, value priorities being the 'dominating force in life' (pg543), holding significant importance for our understanding of both attitudinal and behavioural decision making of the individual. Sustained by both Rokeach (1972) and Schwartz (1992) as the relative importance any particular value has in guiding the individual's selection or evaluation of behaviour and choice (reinforced by Beyer, 1981; Viswanathan and Jain, 2013 and also inferred by Ajzen, 1985).

The highly respected and quoted Shalom Schwartz regularly cited the relevance of values in his behavioural discussions (see Schwartz, 1996). He noted that the more indecisive the value, the less predictable the behaviour (supported by Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Wichardt, and Walkowitz, 2013), supporting the 'priority' relevance of this research. Bardi and Schwartz (2003) additionally stressed that the individual's situational context and strong normative pressures can additionally prove highly influential in decision making. Supported by Maio, Olson, Allen, and Bernard (2001) it appears to be pertinent to how much cognitive support the value maintains in the context for the individual (Maio and Olson, 1998).

With open acknowledgement and continuation from the respected work of Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, and Thomson's (2005) '*An exploration of values in ethical consumer decision making*'; this research looks to an alternate audience, enquiry perspective and methodological approach. Shaw et al. (2005, pg187) approached participants who '*were specially selected*' and '*had stated an interest in ethical issues*', this research focuses on Millennials with no explicit affiliation to ethical or socially responsible tendencies. The undergraduate student participants were initially recruited by requesting a discussion on global brands. Similarly, in-depth interviews/conversations were the sole method of data collection in this research, acknowledged to be relevant to the social sciences where understanding of human nature is required (Fontana and Frey, 1994). This is in contrast to Shaw et al.'s (2005) approach; focus group > Schwartz's '56 values questionnaire' > individual interview process.

Therefore, this research has the ability to uncover the 'why' in relation to the drop in pro-social priority for this demographic (Deloitte, 2017) in addition to potentially useful reasoning as to their behaviour. The research can also uncover areas of

congruence or incongruence in relation to organisational efforts regarding social responsibility and any ramifications therein that could influence CSR strategy. Furthermore, the exploration will look to hear their voice in relation to the topic; their opinions, their enthusiasm and their concerns, at this time in their lives - with the intention of understanding them better and enhancing knowledge of their specific demographic.

1.3 The research title and approach

From peer discussion it is apparently commonplace for any research thesis to start as one thing and end another. My experience has found that the end title result; 'An exploration of Millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR' is pretty much as it began.

The previous discussion has proposed how society has outlined its perspective of the Millennial termed generation and this research opportunity offered the chance for this thesis to explore *their* realities and perceptions regarding the social responsibility topic. Justification to propose originality of this work stemmed from the methodological approach that I wanted to take that wasn't forthcoming in the current literature. Firstly, the participants were to be 'neutral'. As questionable as this statement is, this is in reference that the views of enthusiastic pro-environmentalists (akin to Shaw et al., 2005 mentioned earlier) or in contrast, those without concern, were not the preference. My focus was to obtain a 'snapshot' of Millennials - accepting the other selection bias that could be argued, explained in full within the Methodology chapter. Secondly, I found resonance to Beckmann (2007) who offered a wide-ranging overview of CSR interpretation from a consumer perspective research into methodologies presented a tripartite analysis insofar; 'opinion polls' reflect a high level of interest, 'quasi/experimental' methodologies offer generally inconclusive findings with 'qualitative' research tending to propose disinterest or scepticism (2007, pg31). Favouring a subjectivist personal mind-set, my initial position was that interviews and the qualitative approach were best suited to the 'exploration' title. The fact that Quinby's (1999) research (along with Odou and de Pechpeyrou, 2011; Chylinski and Chu, 2010; Bertilsson, 2015), coupled with my personal experience with the

demographic suggested that disinterest and/or scepticism could indeed be evident and explored if prevalent. This would perhaps therefore question the headlines such as that from Forbes (2018) mentioned earlier that I had been witnessing continually. As with the homogenous, subjective narratives explored with each individual it was always the intention to uncover their value priority, antecedents or personal reasoning as to their perspectives on social responsibility (and CSR). This in-turn would hopefully offer findings and conclusions to warrant further, perhaps topic specific research and inquiry.

Therefore, the following perspective is to view the participants from an interpretivist position, considering each conversation as an individual moment in time and acknowledged as such. My philosophical framework does not seek any 'external' reality but is inquisitive as to the individuals' interpretation of the subject matter constructs. Loyal to the interpretivist perspective, I accept my narrative as transparently subjective in that it should be interpreted contextually to this study's parameters alone.

Objective ontology - Subjective epistemology

1.4 Aim

The aim of this research is to offer new knowledge that would be beneficial to furthering research relating to CSR environmental strategy and marketing communication to the demographic group referred to as Millennials. The research will explore a selection of the demographic's opinions and value priorities relating to consumption and behaviour with a focus on CSR perceptions and personal social responsibility. In acknowledgement of the research's contribution to knowledge, the intention is to explore 'if', and indeed the reasons 'why' the topic is or isn't a priority for them.

Dismissing a homogenous ideology infers an interpretivist approach and interview/conversations will be used to gain insights of the participants; undergraduate students at a UK university Business School. Transcripts will be thematically analysed to disclose themes, allowing analysis, discussion and ultimately conclusions.

The conversations will be in-part, stimulated by using globally recognised brands to discuss the participant's connection or thoughts about them; with the concept to look for affiliation and conflict along with any reasons or explanations that may emerge. Through dialogue, the intention is to reveal perspectives of their own (CnSR), and the brands' socially responsible actions. It is not expected that the participants' knowledge of the brands' CSR commitment to be extensive, if at all, but that is potentially interesting.

The output and value of the thesis is to challenge perceptions of homogeneous generalisations relating to the demographic regarding their socially responsible attitude, behaviour and value priority. Therein, the intention is to contribute to future CSR positioned marketing communication strategies to be more effective, meaningful or relevant.

1.5 Objectives

1. To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their *consumer social responsibility* (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority.
2. To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics.
3. To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation.
4. To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.

1.6 What is the purpose of this research?

It is intended that the outputs from this research is beneficial for both academic and industry use (as per the DBA). It is clearly acknowledged that the findings only represent conclusions made from this data set and the parameters herein yet offering

the feasibility of specific future inquiry. The overarching results will therefore have many CSR business related considerations specific to this demographic, these may include;

- could CSR business initiatives require re-considering due to consumers' attitude to prosocial behaviour
- could corporate emphasis on using CSR to create advocacy be misplaced
- could CSR communication be better delivered
- could the generalisation of Millennials be detrimental to understanding them and therein resulting in ineffective marketing communications
- could their life-stage be significant as to how they perceive CSR related rhetoric
- could findings be beneficial for CSR / CnSR related pedagogy

1.7 How is this thesis structured?

The chapters commence with a review of the literature that combines established academia with current publications and industry commentators as applicable. The topic of social responsibility and particularly Millennials is inherently evolving, and it was deemed necessary that those other than published academics had a voice in these discussions.

Accepting that the parameters of the **Literature Review** are self-stipulated, the selection was deemed purposeful to critically compare and contrast related perspectives. The literature review is split into 4 sections;

- 1) CSR - business purpose; identity and perspective to stakeholders
- 2) Ethics - the consumer view; the role of marketing and further considerations
- 3) Millennials - attributed appropriations; ethics and consumption
- 4) Values - as an antecedent to behaviour and contributing areas of discussion

Each section is summarised to accumulate the *key issue* discussion points and potential gaps in knowledge that are relevant as they contribute significantly to the interview topics'; as areas for inquiry rather than literally.

The next chapter is the **Methodology**, a personal challenge to ascertain what was appropriate to discuss as a new researcher at this level. Conscious of misappropriation of terminology, yet initially determined to self-classify, this journey became reflective insofar as asking previously unquestioned philosophical perspectives as to my thoughts on reality and knowledge. Having established myself as an ontological realist, the epistemological subjectivity of my interpretation regarding knowledge opened the doors to many classifications; that were evidently blurred from single, agreed upon definitions. As a result, interpretivism was deemed appropriate with the utilisation of thematic analysis through a hermeneutic lens. With transparency, the participant selection and interview process are explained in detail.

The **Analysis** chapter follows; it begins with looking at the narratives to ascertain their value priority towards the topic. With relevance, further analysis looks at *why* this is, with the explanation of how the interview transcription utilised thematic analysis. This transpired into three themes and is assisted with the aid of diagrams; elaborated with participant narrative examples to illustrate the constructs and discourse interpretation in detail. The three themes are identified with relevance as;

- 1) Convenience and indifference
- 2) Self-reasoning and justification
- 3) Distrust

The chapter is concluded to highlight the key outputs.

Following the Analysis is the **Discussion** chapter. Here the value priority and three themes are critiqued in regard to the literature review and any further relevant secondary research information to add context and relevance. Parallels are drawn where comparable findings correlate but also those that contradict are discussed as to the reasons therein.

Reflections are made at the end of each section that stand alone from the 3 themes yet support the value priority discussion as significant outputs from this research.

And finally, the **Conclusion** chapter reviews the research journey and purpose, states what was found and why it matters in context to previous literature or industry narrative. The findings and limitations are summarised along with the practical applications or implications of the research for both academic and industry audiences,

true to the DBA output. Recommendations for future research are suggested and the thesis ends with reflections being discussed for the personal perspective and closure.

2.0 Literature review

2.0.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the topics that connect to the research inquiry and is split into 4 corresponding sections. The content explores articles, books, industry perspectives and media coverage relating to the relevant areas. Accepting the enormity of conducting such a review it is acknowledged that whilst every effort has been made to be inclusive for debate, some sources may have eluded me.

The 4 sections of the review are as follows;

2.1) CSR - business purpose; identity and perspective to stakeholders

This covers the history and business perspective regarding its relevance to the wider society (2.1.2 + 2.1.3). Key issues develop during the discussion, relating to the ramifications of how CSR impacts on organisational (2.1.4) and consumer identity (2.1.5). This leads on to how consumers perceive CSR initiatives and business association (2.1.6), culminating with consumer characteristics inferring that scepticism and cynicism are feasibly prevalent (2.1.7). This section focuses on the business perspective.

2.2) Ethics - the consumer view; the role of marketing and further considerations

The concept of ethics is debated opening with the consumer perspective (2.2.2), that leads into the marketing communication implications (2.2.3) in understanding this relationship (2.2.4 + 2.2.5). Significant discussion regarding the corporate-consumer 'fit' (2.2.6) follows that in-turn opens critique and comparison to Social Judgement Theory endeavouring to explore connections to the consumer's moral position (2.2.7). Offering a breadth of understanding, the review continues by looking at reasons for non-engagement in ethical behaviour (2.2.8) and concludes the section by considering the role that an individual's peers have on their ethical consumption and behaviour (2.2.9).

2.3) Millennials - attributed appropriations; ethics and consumption

With direct relevance to this research, the participant demographic follows to allow the reader insight into the context and current knowledge available. The critique then looks at how Millennials perceive CSR marketing communications (2.3.2) before exploring commentary regarding their consumption (2.3.3) and relationship with brands (2.3.4). This section then revisits the ethical discussion but with pertinence to the Millennial demographic, exploring their attitude to related issues (2.3.5).

2.4) Values - as an antecedent to behaviour and contributing areas of discussion

The final section looks in depth at the topic of (and around) values in recognition to the extant literature available as a field of study. It begins with an exploration of connected terminology to ascertain relevance to this research (2.4.2 + 2.4.3), it then covers empathy and altruism (2.4.4) as indicators of benevolent value characteristics. Individualism, collectivism, social pressure and consequence (2.4.5) then offer insight to understanding before a critique and review of specific, value research including the work of prominent authors (2.4.6). The links between values and other personal qualities and attributes including needs, habits, norms, beliefs and attitudes follows (2.4.7) and then into their connection to behaviour (2.4.8). The section then revisits the identity discussion with the role of values (2.4.9) and culminates with the morality of cynicism (2.4.10) offering debate and exploration that looks to benefit this research.

Each section has a preface and is summarised and is compiled to allow the reader to follow the path of exploration that enabled this research to be sufficiently knowledgeable before commencing the primary research. The literature surveyed, although vast, offers an insight into the justification of debate and proposes many explanations; thus, the following selected examples are deemed pertinent for discussion in clarifying an understanding for the purpose of this study. Therein, 'Key Issues' are presented in the summaries that highlight areas of exploration from gaps or areas of further research from the literature critique.

The chapter commences by gaining a foundation context to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), its relevance with marketing communications and connection to consumers.

2.1 CSR - Business purpose; identity and perspective to stakeholders

2.1.1 Preface

This section is an overview of narrative concerning Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and connections to the consumer. It sets out to understand the history, semantics and intentions regarding the topic from the organisational perspective and the interpretation and meanings associated to the consumer. The discussion highlights the reasons behind CSR mandates and how this has implications for consumer congruence. Marketing and communications being the conduit of this relationship are deliberated from both perspectives, which include discourse relating to both organisational and personal identity. Therefore, key areas of marketing discourse dissection can be found in 2.1.4 Marketing CSR: The Organisation and Identity / 2.1.5 Marketing CSR: The Organisation, the Consumer and Identity sections and into 2.1.6 CSR and the Consumer: A Complex Picture. This discussion leads to suggest that the CSR 'customer fit' is troublesome and convoluted, establishing investigation for further study. The research draws from a range of epistemological assumptions in order to ascertain a broad understanding of the topic in established literature and alternate reputable sources.

2.1.2 What is CSR? History and development

Corporate Social Responsibility is a widely regarded global industry term that has been subject to much analysis and interpretation across sectors and territories.

CSR interpretations have been accepted and dissected by many academic e.g. Fitch, (1976), with 37 definitions by Dahlsrud, (2008) and a critical perspective by Prieto-Carrón, Lund-Thomsen, Chan, Muro, and Bhushan, (2006). And industry professionals

from the Committee for Economic Development, (1971), to the United Nations (UNIDO, 2019); who have all attempted to ascertain an exact definition, central to a core understanding that it involves the voluntary efforts of organisations to improve a community. One single accepted definition however is implausible through interpretation (and/or application) with so many connotations.

Researching connections to what is known today, and bypassing any corporate philanthropy that could be traced back to the 19th century, Carroll (1999) wrote a seminal article that traced the (primarily North American) roots of the topic back to the late 1930s where articles first began to question the responsibility of industrialists. 1953 heralded the 'Social Responsibilities of the Businessman' by Howard R. Bowen that would appear to highlight the domain in no uncertain terms. In this, Bowen quoted from a Fortune Magazine business survey from 1946 where the editors commented about the role of business leaders and their 'responsibilities *beyond* the balance sheet' (italics added) that was acknowledged to be a common belief at the time in accordance with a contemporary readership poll (Carroll, 1999).

Davis in 1960 seemingly took a moral high ground when he published 'Can Business Afford to Ignore Social Responsibilities?' and suggested that it was more than 'appropriate' but 'even mandatory' that business should re-evaluate its role in society (p70). He also offers an early (C)SR elucidation as "*businessmen's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest*" (p70). In 1963 when McGuire proposed "*The idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations*" (McGuire, 1963 p144 cited in Carroll, 1999) he appeared to pull the key components together that are still attributed today.

Combined with industry, corporate practitioners and economic thinkers in America found a shared ideology in 1971 with the Committee for Economic Development (CED) and their 'Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations' publication where they stated that:

Business enterprises, in effect, are being asked to contribute more to the quality of American life than just supplying quantities of goods and services.

(CED, 1971, p16)

This seemed to find resonance and compliance that for businesses to thrive then the rationale of business leaders and managers would have to fall into line with that of the public *and* the wider society's new found thinking.

From a definition standpoint, the inclusion of any efforts (in excess of legal or governmental necessity) we find Davis' classification in 1973 with the corporations' *"consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm... social responsibility begins where the law ends"* (p312). To return to simple philanthropy would offer a perceivably 'innocent' and perhaps non-cynical perspective; if not for the rise of the business case (discussed imminently) and further explanation into reasons for and against partaking. Progressing onwards, Jones in 1980 proposed that *"Corporate social responsibility is the notion that corporations have an obligation to constituent groups in society other than stockholders and beyond that prescribed by law and union contract"* (Jones, 1980, p59) taking the emphasis from 'stockholders' to 'stakeholders' this now combined all component parts and to tie the concepts together. With an accepted variance across the literature, these factors having generally stood the test of time for the subsequent 35+ years.

Simple changes in discourse and semantics have honed the vocabulary and emphasis; i.e. Fitch in 1976 (p38) heavily accented the responsibility on the organisation, *"Corporate social responsibility is defined as the serious attempt to solve social problems caused wholly or in part by the corporation"*. Frederick's classic paper from 1994 looked to revise the literature and stressed his terminology to include *'business corporations have an obligation to work for social betterment'* (Frederick, 1994, p151). This suggested a definitive societal push on the moral pressures for enforcing ethical company policy. More recently, Sprinkle and Maines (2010, p446) abridge the semantics succinctly into a feasibly more emphasised morally upstanding tone, but nevertheless non-fully committal eight words, *"CSR represents voluntary firm endeavors which benefit society"*. This perceivably leaves itself open for critique in its minimalism but may stand the test of time with acceptance that (C)SR is considered 'whatever it needs to be' for organisations, governments, individuals, sectors or communities alike. This discussion inevitably raises, beyond any moral perspective, the

question 'why?' would any capitalist (or otherwise) organisations invest resources beyond their core purpose or legal obligation.

2.1.3 The CSR business case and shareholders

Vaaland, Heide, & Grønhaug openly acknowledge the business case with their definition of CSR as, “*management of stakeholder concern for responsible and irresponsible acts related to environmental, ethical, and social phenomena in a way that creates corporate benefit*” (2008, p931). Yet a feasibly cynical view is that CSR ideology, of a beneficial business nature, paradoxically proposes that 'Corporate Social Responsibility' in itself is an oxymoron (Mostovicz, Kakabadse, & Kakabadse, 2011) unless the 'social' is referring to the corporation itself. This however holds no reservation to the sheer quantity of literature covering CSR and the business case (with examples discussed herein). With the purpose of understanding the organisational perspective (before the consumer's in section 2), this looks to offer reasons, for and against, that are worthy of selection and deliberation.

As Leonidou and Leonidou (2009, p71) confirm, the emphasis and reason for CSR literature regarding 'Global market mechanisms' concerning consumers and stakeholders, came to prominence in the 2000s (supported by Ngram Viewer, 2018 - Appendix 1). They also traced and compared CSR related articles across both business and marketing journals and interestingly they were similarly matched up to the mid-90s when business articles doubled that of marketing and by the mid-2000s business featured articles had grown exponentially. It could be considered that Egri and Herman perhaps initiated this shifting paradigm amongst their peers in 2000, discussing leadership styles and the role of the 'green manager' in a North American context.

Academics and professionals have since comprehensively explored the key drivers for the business case 'commitment' to CSR objectives (e.g. Sprinkle & Maines, 2010; Trudel & Cotte, 2008; Weber, 2008). Fassin and Buelens (2011) succinctly review previous discourse as three responses;

1. Negative - 'we have to'
2. Positive - 'we want to' and
3. Pragmatic - 'it's in our interest to'

This can be elaborated into more explanatory motives from Sprinkle and Maines (2010) in their suitably titled 'The benefits and costs of Corporate Social Responsibility' simplified as;

1. Altruistic
2. Stakeholder window dressing
3. HR benefits
4. Customer motivation
5. Price reduction and
6. Risk management.

Suggesting the *context* of the individual organisation would appear to determine the motivation behind such investment of resources. Furthermore, individual reasoning and/or justification regarding the circumstances should in-turn be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat and should be incorporated into a strategic delivery, according to Piercy and Lane (2009). The notion of Porter's 5 forces and company strategic advantage (especially opportunities and innovation) is covered by many (e.g. Herrera, 2015; Eweje, 2011; Ramachandran, 2010; Liu & Zhou, 2009; Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009; Chattananon, Lawley, Trimetsoontorn, Supparerkchaisakul, & Leelayouthayothin, 2007) including Porter's own *Strategy and Society* published by the Harvard Business Review that proclaims,

Companies are called on to address hundreds of social issues, but only a few represent opportunities to make a real difference to society or to confer a competitive advantage

(Porter & Kramer, 2006, p13)

Furthermore, the notion of strategy and exploring 'strategic philanthropy' is discussed and dissected from various viewpoints via both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Ramachandran, 2010) that also make direct reference to Porter's business model. The paradoxical issue compiling literature reviews is the consideration of research situational analysis; the notion that the majority of CSR literature is 'restricted' by the dominant positivist research paradigm and moreover, each 'case study' has its own individual characteristics and circumstances, human or otherwise. Additionally, CSR case studies unsurprisingly cross many territories and sectors from Norwegian textiles (Blomgren, 2011) to UK music festivals (Roberts & Akhtar, 2012),

Trappist beer (Dickinson-Delaporte, Beverland, & Lindgreen, 2010) to tobacco in sub-Saharan Africa (Patel, Okechukwu, Collin, & Hughes, 2009) or more recently the global oil and gas industry (Berkowitz, Bucheli, & Dumez, 2017) and Malaysian public universities (Rahman, Castka, & Love, 2019). This reflects individual sector or business case scenarios, debatably unsuitable to use 'organisations' as a homogeneous term, but specific to each and their heterogeneous stakeholders; having been critiqued by Prieto-Carrón et al, (2006 p986) as the academic literature having a propensity for a *"one-sided view of CSR that emphasizes profit-making, win-win situations and consensus outcomes in multi-stakeholder arrangements"*. Interestingly, stakeholder theory itself was introduced by Freeman back in 1984 looking at business' morals and values. As Campbell (2007, p947) and Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell (2005) suggest, the way that a business operates is dictated to a large extent by the *'institutions within which they operate'*. Campbell also emphasised that the capitalist operating system is more macro than micro economic implying the significance of external stakeholders.

The concept of appeasing stakeholders and defined groups for focussed satisfaction and competitive advantage has been gaining popularity, with the primary stakeholders being employees, shareholders, consumers, and government or regulatory bodies (Arnold, 2017; Frynas, 2015; Dutta, Lawson, & Marcinko, 2012; Vaaland, Heide, & Grønhaug, 2008; Powell, 2011; Fukukawa, Balmer, & Gray, 2007; Maignan et al., 2005). Although relevance and concern for each group is without question variable, and clearly not all companies are equal or comparable. However, some make the assumption, like Hildebrand, Sen, and Bhattacharya (2011), who go so far to infer that stakeholders *are* as CSR inclined as the case study organisation in question. Thus, pro-business authors like Leap and Loughry (2004) propose that only by creating time and resources whilst nurturing an environment of forthcoming and responsive stakeholder relationships, can an organisation generate a *competitive advantage* in the realm of CSR. Yet in the past 15 20 years as the competition align *their* initiatives, accepted core CSR principles pertaining to any business case would appear to be the norm: *"it seems CSR is becoming less and less a concept that could achieve competitive advantage and more and more simply 'the way business is done in the 21st century'"* (Blomgren, 2011, p272 and citing Franklin, 2008), (and see Shen and Benson, 2016; Sheehy, 2015; Piercy and Lane, 2009; Weeks, 2006). They furthermore consider that

this correlation of common conformity appears to bolster both internal productivity (HR) and business to business relationships, be that economic, strategic or otherwise. Yet it would be naïve to consider this is now an industry norm; as Fassin and Buelens state, *“For some companies CSR is clearly strategic, for others, it is a cost to be minimized”* (2011, p592) where in a capitalist economy the traditional priority is to generate profit. This being a view perhaps originally published by Levitt in 1956 in his Harvard Business Review article entitled 'The dangers of social responsibility'. Stakeholder analysis that proposes power and priorities greater than those of the organisation itself (Maignan et al., 2005) can and should only be taken in context of that individual organisation and the (conscious or unconscious) hierarchy that it exists within. As Campbell (2007) explains *“basic economic factors, including the general financial condition of the firm, the health of the economy, and the level of competition that corporations face, are all likely to affect the degree to which corporations act in socially responsible ways”* (p948). To an extent this is probed by Ellis and Bastin (2011) with their study into CSR during the recent economic global recession where they picked up on corporate rhetoric in 2009 that the emphasis needs to be more on the business case and less on the ethics. They summarise the internal priorities in relation the external (economic) environment as;

The recession has re-legitimated the view that the role of business is to make a profit and survive. Where CSR is already engrained in a company's operations however the story is somewhat different, and the view is that the recession is not sufficient to challenge the traditional business model

(Ellis & Bastin, 2011, p302)

So, when times are hard, focus on profit, unless you've previously championed CSR agendas, then you have to stick to them. In support and subsequently, Flammer and Ioannou's study (2015) of U.S. companies' strategies through this period, proposed that those who indeed, maintained their CSR (albeit with the cost of redundancies) fared better as the economy recovered. This human economic / employment cost vs. business survival / success could however have implications to consumer perceptions of said organisations; feasibly an area of future investigation.

In acknowledgement of the external economic factors of the past 10-15 years and in review of the business case and the stakeholder theory therein, any CSR 'shared value'

(Balmer, Fukukawa, & Gray, 2007) that exists between the organisation and its stakeholders can best be described as transient or fluid. This is in consideration of evolving components (i.e. human resources, legalities, specific 'green' legislation, product development, competition alignment etc) but for progress, development and integrity, any committed initiatives must remain tangible and transparent (according to Kim & Ferguson, 2018; Rahman & Post, 2012; Bernstein, 2009); a transparency that requires communicating.

2.1.4 Marketing CSR: The organisation and identity

Progressing the discussion to the communication of such directives the discussion looks to marketing communications. Kotler and Levy's 'Broadening the Concept of Marketing' (1969 p10) began to first suggest that "*marketing is a pervasive societal activity*". Furthermore, that its purpose goes 'beyond the sale of commodities' where opportunities are available; referring to broader business association and economic or consumer connotations. Subsequent ethical marketing literature is largely explorations into the moral nature of marketing as an industry per se, until an overlap to more of a consumer focus as the key narrative (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2009). This is where ethical marketing discourse was often linked with the precursor 'cause related' as directed by Fitch (1976) where he explained that organisations should focus on the specifics and clarify CSR related issues before tackling them. Whichever 'cause' was central to each narrative, selected literature underlies a pragmatic approach necessitating, consciously or unspoken, economic benefits to the organisation or the familiar antecedent, 'the business case'.

Organisational implementation of CSR at any level is one aspect, communicating it is another and involves multiple considerations. As Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010) imply, CSR operations appear to generate positive stakeholder relationships but also improve corporate image with the issue being 'what' message needs to be heard by 'which' party as in due course "*corporate communications ultimately affect corporate reputation*", Hildebrand et al. (2011, p1356) reinforced by Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, and Larceneux (2011). Chung, Yu, Choi and Shin (2015) support this with further recommendation that '*firms should ensure that they proactively maximize their CSR*

budgets' (p546) due to their findings of increased consumer satisfaction regarding corporate image.

Intrinsic and extrinsic approaches are discussed (Parguel et al., 2011; Hildebrand et al., 2011) with transparency and sincerity as determining factors for organisational communications. However, clearly a problematic exercise as Lock and Seele (2016) highlighted with a review of 237 organisational CSR reports concluding they were 'mediocre' in content and quality, with the intonation that were simply not understandable as a whole. As per the previous business case discussion, the common theme is the level of consumer (or stakeholder) scepticism and negativity that is epitomised particularly in global corporations and reflected in Fassin and Beulens' 'Sincerity Index' (2011). This proposes a continuum for businesses' positioning regarding their CSR communication output from 'Idealism to Cynicism'. An interesting reference tool as a basis for analysis but unfortunately cannot fully demonstrate any significant representation, cross-organisations or cross-sector comparison through its inability to account for situational analysis or inherent organisational proportions (*stakeholder specificity* supported by Lock and Seele, 2016, p190). The notion that an organisation can reposition itself through marketing communications is nothing contentious and yet the concept of how CSR communications in particular can be perceived to hold value attune to eventual positive outcomes in stakeholders' mind-sets, reiterates Corporate Image (CI). CI being the efforts initiated by organisations to design or orchestrate the communications directed for stakeholder consumption (Leitch & Davenport, 2011). This proposes how the organisation *wishes* to be perceived, though not necessarily what the organisation actually *is*. Circumventing any cynical discussion at this point, such resources don't exist without organisational contribution and this manifestation is likely to require justification from shareholders. The quandary proposed as the shareholder accepting moral justification of monies spent on the initiatives and communication itself vs organisational/personal financial gain (Parguel et al., 2011).

In accordance to previously discussed organisational motives for engaging in CSR implementation, an aspect that relates to realisation (from a communications domain) is that of the 'CSR shield' (Zyglidopoulos, Georgiadis, Carroll, & Siegel, 2011, Vanhamme & Groben, 2009). This can be attributed to number 6 on Sprinkle and

Maines (2010) list, 'risk management'; the notion that 'talking about' CSR initiatives through the good times will bode well for any future misgivings either directly or through association that may arise in the 'bad times'. In their, what could be construed slightly disparaging article, Zyglidopoulos et al. draw attention to an organisation's susceptibility with "*since more visible firms are more vulnerable to crises, they tend to engage in CSR activities as a way of building positive reputation capital for when a crisis arises*" (2010, p2). Reinforcing this somewhat, is Eweje's (2011) interpretative study of southern hemisphere CEOs, believing that their CSR agendas (essentially adopted in the organisational culture) mitigate their companies' societal impact. Mitigation perhaps construed as tactics (Leitch & Davenport, 2011), regarding unethical mind-sets and the use of front organisations to disguise or detract the corporations' 'hidden' misgivings. The persona of highly vocal 'front organisations' holding environmental specialism offers a perceived neutrality to achieve the host corporation's objectives (i.e. a 'neutral' research front organisation announcing the benefits or safety of GM crop production). This therefore could be seen as a catalyst to change community perception or perhaps more ominously, governmental policy. A similar argument questionably proposes; corporate reputation can exhibit *strategic ambiguity* to allow misinterpretations of messages to coexist (Dickinson-Delaporte et al., 2010). This tactical concept suggests disparities between intrinsic and extrinsic organisational values that may create cognitive confusion although not necessarily distrust or rebuttal.

Although, by being too broad or chasing multiple objectives, organisations risk the issue of CSR rhetoric being misconstrued and being questioned as to what is said versus what is done (Bernstien, 2009, Hildebrand et al., 2011). Whatever is 'said or done', the 'disclosure-performance gap' proposed by Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes, and Häusler (2012) is not always a case for ~~cynical~~ sceptical pessimists but quite often a legitimate case of a break down in organisational internal communications, incongruent to operational objectives. These authors have consecutively proposed that communications are required to focus, make relevant, and substantiate the messages *before* transmitting (Parguel et al., 2011) a failing that could result in the 'said or done' ambiguity. Debatably innocent or otherwise, it is documented that upon discovery of such inconsistency it can lead to a lack of faith amongst stakeholders and damaging of a brand's identity (Leitch & Davenport, 2011);

a case in which academics have attempted to address (e.g. van de Ven, 2008). Bernstein (2009) talks widely of corporate communication dissonance in what could be considered an often-capricious article and states the notion is endemic in society with reference to banking along with other sector examples. Indeed, financial sector CSR disclosure inconsistencies still appear to be unresolved nearly a decade later (Platonova, Asutay, Dixon & Mohammad, 2018). Such dissonance or questionable authenticity represents a moral value debate with stakeholders that requires individual consideration; allowing for different factors with each case expecting multiple interpretations and contradictions (Dickinson-Delaporte et al., 2010, p1868) as applicable.


To note, much has been covered around the topic relating to specific stakeholder perceptions including: supply chain (e.g. Mamic, 2005; Maloni, 2006), investors (e.g. Hockerts, 2004; Guenster, Bauer, Derwall, & Koedijk, 2010) and communities (e.g. De Chiara, 2011; Muller, 2006). And interestingly, with pertinence to this study, Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) proposed '*are consumers even aware of CSR implementation?*' suggesting a potential lack of awareness or understanding and more recently D'Acunto, Tuan, Dalli, Viglia and Okumus (2019) proposing '*do they care?*'; discussions that may come as frustration to some organisations' marketing departments, or a relief to others.

2.1.5 Marketing CSR: The organisation, *the consumer* and identity

Beckmann (2007) offers a comprehensive overview of consumer CSR interpretation and introduces a somewhat sceptical approach to consumer research methodologies in constructing comparable analysis into the topic. Beckmann postulates a tripartite analysis that; 'opinion polls' reflect a high level of interest, 'quasi/experimental' methodologies offer generally inconclusive findings and 'qualitative' research leans towards disinterest or scepticism of CSR (2007 p31). A quandary reinforced by others (e.g. Hovemann, Breitbarth, & Walzel, 2011), and with a slightly cynical deduction Beckmann posits that an organisation simply needs to choose its method to determine its conclusions (ibid).

Accepting the integrity of an academic's research output as being directed by their ontological and epistemological paradigm, their participant sample will undoubtedly have countless factors that require considering. Insofar as acknowledging that individuals' cultural views will also affect CSR metacognition, Carroll (2004) and more literally Fukukawa et al. (2007, p4) propose that cultures develop a “*process of ethical identity formation and management*” that they term ‘ethicalization’. The impact of both methodological and cultural approaches requires recognition that the literature attempts to facilitate for both organisation and individual consideration.

Regarding the organisational standpoint, the well published John Balmer proposed the 6-pointed star of corporate marketing in 2006 in his working paper ‘Comprehending corporate marketing and the corporate marketing mix’. The six notions being (2006 p9):

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| • Character | – ‘What we indubitably are’ | (Corporate identity) |  |
| • Communication | – ‘What we say we are’ | | |
| • Constituencies | – ‘Whom we seek to serve’ | | |
| • Covenant | – ‘What is promised and expected’ | | |
| • Conceptualisations | – ‘What we are seen to be’ | | |
| • Culture | – ‘What we feel we are’ | (Organisational identity) | |

Although orchestrated from a corporate perspective, Blamer's 'star' can feasibly be applied to an individual's persona by re-interpreting Constituencies ‘Whom we seek to serve’ as ‘Who we interact with’. Balmer uses sub-headings in relation to two of the six points; Character being ‘Corporate identity’ (CI) and Culture being ‘Organisational identity’ which in translation to the individual's realm could be interpreted as: for corporate read ‘collective identity’ and organisational read ‘self-identity’ as offered by Cherrier (2007).

Using the six headings to analyse both the organisation and the consumer, feasibly offers analysis into how CSR communication messages are construed and the reasons behind such interpretation, relating to identity. Moreover, it should be accepted the existence of a ‘corporate identity mix’ that consists of not only the communications but also semiotics, behaviour and actions (Van Riel & Balmer 1997) of an organisation, as contributing factors to how they are ultimately perceived. Powell (2011) and more directly Hovemann et al (2011) clarify that it is a clear business prerogative for

corporate communication to bolster CSR as a way to positively convey a corporate culture / values or organisational identity. If we accept Podnar and Golob's (2007, p336) elucidation that CSR is best embraced throughout an organisational culture; they claim that it should thus be "*clearly communicated, to reflect in the corporate reputation and corporate brand*". Whether this is strategic, intuitive or emergent (Blombäck & Ramirez-Pasillas, 2012) is variable and no doubt questionable, but nevertheless bares impact in identity forming. Yet, what is suggested to be essential in a successful, unifying CI-CSR initiative is the onus on the founder or the senior positions; their values that in turn 'legitimise' social responsibility as the organisational culture (Tourky, Kitchen & Shaalan, 2019).

And with respect that significant quantities of CSR rhetoric is *clearly communicated* online, Rolland and Bazzoni (2009) studied the *virtual world* of corporate communications and found that a rise in website narrative was apparent and that organisations were using the medium to convey their identity and positioning to defined stakeholders and society alike. Del Bosco (2017) in turn, supported this finding insofar that online CSR reporting was seen to have risen in the subsequent eight years, although with some caveats as to some organisations that appear to have plateaued with their efforts. Utilising Topalian's 1984 (cited in Melewar, 2005, p9) definition of corporate identity as '*the set of meanings by which a company allows itself to be known and through which it allows people to describe, remember and relate to it*' resonates clear association to reputation, and furthermore a 'relational phenomenon' (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011, p519) for the consumer. It is suggested an organisation's reputation is built on an individual's historical empirical interpretation (Shauki, 2011); a 'strategic necessity' that Rolland and Bazzoni (2009, p259) postulate the online world is suitably capable of delivering or contributing to. They continue that it is perceived as an unambiguous channel with immediate impact that strengthens proactive communications between parties (ibid). Tsai (2008) had previously dissected this in arguing that online communications have previously been operational rather than strategic, and therefore not embracing full corporate capability. Tsai's (2008) identity study draws from psychologist viewpoints to suggest that the creation of corporate identity is a subjectively constructed process based on narrative:

Narratives integrate disparate elements of human experience into a more-or-less coherent whole, so we live in the narratives we construct. Creatively and actively constructed, narratives make sense out of our life and provide meaning to what we see and do, and then they become our identity.

(Tsai, 2008 p622-3)

This is arguably a perpetual, evolutionary process of cognitive metamorphosis; open to suggestion and influence that is influenced by external forces and at a corporate level by the strategic direction of an organisation in a conscious and pragmatic manner (reinforced by Leitch & Davenport, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2009). Tsai goes on to propose, the identity forming text (or narrative) of the organisations *can* be deliberated and calculated to the 'perfection' or idealism of the institution. He continues that it is capable of gratifying brand objectives and strategic stakeholder positioning but when the text is made public the interpretation of said narrative is open to 'conceptualisation' via subjective interpretation. Consumers' elucidation of content to context is a variable said to be accepted in the transition of the 'active translator' according to Frandsen and Johansen (2011); suggesting where any perceived complexity of message clarification in the domain of CSR discourse, feasibly hinders and impedes the narrative interpretation and therein, perception of said organisation.

Frandsen and Johansen (2011) conclude that the corporate rhetoric is inevitably an episodic development over time that is susceptible to stakeholder narrative (re)construction. Therefore, this feasibly relates back to Balmer, the starting point being the 'culture' (what we feel we are), through 'communication' (what we say we are) to arrive somewhere in the 'character' and the consumer interpretation of 'what we indubitably are'. Wang and Anderson (2011) propose a model looking at how corporations attribute a working process from this initial corporate philosophy and brand attitude, through consumer interpretation of CSR communications and finally to the possible intention to 'purchase' (or at least acceptance of the narrative). In their study they acknowledge that the interpretation is purely individual and any association or acceptance of corporate 'beliefs' related to the conviction and strength of argument is alongside any brand affiliation or preconception of identity or values. Moreover, if we recognize that 'acceptance' is a goal in CSR communications then Money (2010)

suggests paradoxically that the business *operations* have a greater impact than corporate reputation alone – what is done, rather than what is communicated; the ‘conceptualisation’ over the ‘covenant’ (Balmer, 2006).

With a prevalence of CSR literature and online coverage, this inter connectivity provides content for individual stakeholder understanding. In-turn this inspired Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri (2010) to find paradoxically that the more environmentally aware an individual was, the less likely their cognitive ability to absorb an institution’s CSR offering as transparent; further troubling the corporate communication departments.

Perhaps controversially, Powell (2011) offers the argument that stakeholder-organisation CSR identity relationships can indeed benefit from any incongruent dichotomies either through disassociation or ethical ‘fit’. Delgado-Ballester, Navarro, and Sicilia (2012, p34) reinforce this in their empirical brand communication study with ‘inconsistency causes arousal’ - a stimulus mismatch providing persuasive and/or effective cognition especially concerning complex eco orientated consumers. However, the recent campaign by men's toiletry brand Gillette (Proctor & Gamble) provoked a significant, primarily online, backlash when it appeared to associate a socially responsible campaign to the feminist #metoo movement and was branded with attributes of 'toxic masculinity' (Guardian, 2019).

Previously acknowledging this, Rolland and Bazzoni (2009 p254) suggested that the necessity of organisations to participate in CSR within the realm of the extrinsic stakeholder is inherently driven by the ‘outside in’ and that the external ultimately determines internal corporate activity. This suggests a quandary that bodes much debate and although essentially provocative can be deliberated as per each individual organisation to each individual consumer – inferring it is truly subjective.

2.1.6 CSR and the consumer: a complex picture

The 21st century brings with it a *localisation* of the global environment along with knowledge and understanding (subjective and interpretative as that may be) that there are new alternatives to what has gone before, supported by Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz (2009). This context opens a variety of angles to consider consumer relationships to

CSR, social responsibility, ethical issues, the environment, and sustainability along with how they might be understood.

Coupled with the 21st century ubiquity of the Internet and expansion of publicly available communications, it may offer sceptical reasoning as to the rise of said (corporate) ethical behaviour, with many authors tracing its recent development. For example, the Journal of Consumer Behaviour (Newholm & Shaw, 2007) conducted research into the literature of the late 20th century and noted key themes leading into the 21st century. This included an observation that there had been an escalation in Maslow's hierarchy relating to the topic. In summary, they suggested that there was a consensus in the narratives that the topic discussion was moving from the *basic needs* to that of *self-actualisation* and simply a more 'societally aware' shift in consumers' fulfilment.

For consumers, Internet marketing can foster the absorption, interpretation and dispensation of CSR communication; thus, a popular study topic that includes Groza, Pronschinske and Walker (2011) who explored consumer incongruence whilst dissecting ~~some~~ messages. This was particularly relevant to messages perceived as 'damage limitation' or 'reactive' as opposed to those perceived as proactive or with a strategic persuasion i.e. philanthropy. Groza et al. point to humanistic attribution theory and the reasons 'why' over the discussion of 'what' organisations actually do (2011, p640). They postulate that these factors then attribute to consumer decisions and reasoning placed on personal cognitive and identity or value priority dynamics. This relationship has been empirically dissected by many (e.g. Tata & Prasad, 2015; Vlachos & Vrechopoulos, 2012; Stanaland, Lwin, & Murphy 2011; Lee, Park, Rapert, & Newman, 2011) and as Curras-Perez (2009, p547) succinctly states the consumer-company affiliation as a: "*cognitive state of connection and proximity of the consumer to a company, generated through a subjective process of comparison between the individual's own personal identity and that of the organisation*". Leading on from this, Stanaland et al. (2011) broadly propose that consumers find CSR rhetoric appealing; although withholding the caveat of legitimacy theory and the situational context of socially constructed norms. Additionally, these parameters for consumer interpretation are accepted to be influenced by multiple external messages from both social and political persuasions that in-turn influence cognition (Shauki 2011). Indeed,

to truly understand consumption beyond demographics, factors such as their interests, their politics, their own influential 'others' along with their individual purchasing behaviours need to be explored (Beckmann 2007).

The complexity of consumer antecedents with pro-ethical actions can therefore be considered multi-faceted. Acknowledging, as a western society we generally 'live and learn' to develop and co-exist 'sustainably' with a comprehension of our actions having consequences (Dickinson & Carsky, 2005). Bénabou and Tirole (2009) explore a psychological and economic perspective in their study, a comparison of 'Individual and Corporate Social Responsibility'. Using the example of consumer 'anonymous' philanthropic donations they propose a revealing concept that suggests this gesture is minimal in comparison to 'public' philanthropic donations. An inconsistency perhaps to Balmer's 6-point-star: communication vs conceptualisation i.e. that although individuals often feel they are 'good people' (Bénabou & Tirole 2007) some are also quite happy to be acknowledged for it. A characteristic perhaps more attributed to personal ego enhancement than universal benevolence. Moreover, this is along with perceivable positively viewed consequences; praise, admiration, respect, even purchase incentive (if applicable). Altogether this is perceivably a skew on the broadly accepted belief that connects philanthropy/generosity with humility, a topic deliberated by Exline and Hill (2012).

To explore this, perceivably leads discussion into the moral or value qualities that influence social identity. Furthermore, one perspective being the investigation of consumers' affiliation to corporate or brand CSR initiatives and social identity theory, connected with company loyalty (Maignan & Ferrell 2004). This is where the propensity for consumer attachment to a brand or organisation is suggested to be built around the organisation's reputation and the trust bestowed; lending to a positive relationship of loyalty and patronage (Rivera, Bigne & Curras-Perez, 2019; Cha, Yi and Bagozzi, 2016; Kim, Hur, & Yeo, 2015; Stanaland et al., 2011). When rhetoric adheres to individual values then the inherent 'fit' is said to resound positively for the relationship (Schmeltz, 2017; Cha, Yi, & Bagozzi, 2016; Lee et al. 2011) – 'fit' being "*the extent to which the CSR activity is seen as being congruent with the lifestyle and values of the consumer*" (Lee et al. 2011 p3). Keller (2002 cited in Popoli 2011, p422) expands on the 'fit' symptomatically suggesting consumers experience many processes

including 'psychological, sociological and economic' progression or transition whilst deliberating. With this complexity supposed, it suggests justifying the plethora of market research invested. Moreover, (as mentioned previously from the corporate perspective in 2.1.4) the attributed positive publicly available affiliation, (vis-a-vis brand loyalty) pertains to an inner 'shield' for the consumer, used to *deflect* negative connotations (intrinsic or extrinsic) in defense of a self-enhancing identity (Fatma, Khan & Rahman, 2018; Ghauri, Park, Oh, Moon & Lee, 2015; Stanaland et al., 2011; Beckmann, 2007). Alternatively stated, consumers can use a reputable CSR affiliated company by association or affinity to reflect on their own socially responsible identity - be that superficially or otherwise.

From the individual to the masses and consumer heterogeneity accepted, information transference (global or local) can be easily classified as a problematic practice. Berry and McEachern (2005) suggest how the communication of environmental rhetoric is, although commendable can quite often leave consumers overwhelmed or confused; be that for semantic reasons, lack of brand congruence or sheer volume and / or conflicting messages. This is famously explored by Beck (1999) in World Risk Society where he refers to constantly evolving 'specialist' opinions and new attitudes changing contradictory viewpoints as a constant influx on an evolving interpretive landscape. With substantial evolutionary extrapolations of CSR terminology and interpretation, the notion of individual translation in research methodology could be considered temporal at best. Perpetuating the grand narrative of CSR cognisant consumers Cherrier embarks on an exploration in her collection of post-modern dissections on the topic arguing that *"the self is rendered free and autonomous from traditional values"* (Cherrier, 2007b, p321). A continuation of a concept influenced by Castells (1997), who suggested that the individual identity can only be constructed within the culturally and socially influenced external environment (or collective identity) and consequently never truly individually created. Therefore, arguably a proposition of individual identity, that although 'free' for individual interpretation is not alone in its social construction. This is reinforced by Gusfield, Larana, and Johnston (1994 cited in Cherrier, 2007b, p324) who posits that identity perpetuates not from *'overarching ideologies but rather pluralistic values and ideas with pragmatic orientations'*.

Thus, an individual identity that determines consumption traits (if not patterns) would also appear to be directly or indirectly influenced by one's peers or stakeholders; much like that of the extrinsic organisational identity discussed earlier (2.1.5) and unlikely to be solely formed by a one-to-one exchange with an organisation. Moreover, the consumption particularised in its execution, can be accepted to be influenced by the collective identity which perceivably has its own accountability to purchase 'responsibly' (although not universal e.g Wu & Yang, 2018); in parallel, a commitment believed to be shared by corporations (Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006). In context, green or sustainable products are prevalent on supermarket shelves and industry wholesalers alike; and a consumer (to some extent) is aware that their purchasing decision is not made in isolation and has consequence beyond the point of purchase (Harrison, Newholm, & Shaw, 2005), although debatably more for those classified as 'green consumers' than others (Barbarossa & De Pelsmacker, 2016). Therein Brisman (2009, p5) proposes the concept of individual eco-ideologies and that their concern "*is a subterfuge for the pursuit of self-interest*", suggesting, perhaps sceptically, a purchasing decision to perpetuate a pro-environmental self-identity augmentation rather an environmental concern.

In 2010 Black and Cherrier's hermeneutic study on self-confessed 'sustainable consumers' they deconstruct the discussion as a marketing faux pas. They explain, "*mothers, husbands or workers practice sustainability' as part of sustainable living rather than accept the identity of 'sustainable consumers'*" (p450). Their findings demonstrate the complexity of who the individual *is* compared to who they *desire to be*. And that it goes beyond the 5-personality trait Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle, repair and reinterpret into the perhaps, most powerful consumer green initiative 'reject'; the option of non-consumption (Wiedmann, Seegebarth, Hennigs, Pankalla & Kassubek, 2017; Vivanco, Kemp & van der Voet, 2016; Cherrier, Black, & Lee., 2010; Black & Cherrier, 2010; Lee & Fernandez, 2009; Cherrier, 2007b; Sandikci & Eckici, 2007). Non-consumption, voluntary simplicity or downsizing has been widely studied with suggested classification as a 'new social movement' (albeit proposed by Touraine back in 1981); a notion of independent social mobility defined to have a collective identity, goal and having definitive adversaries. A concept characterized to be centrally positioned around the identity more than the activity itself as studies have explored the over-indulgent nature of green lifestyle 'enforcement' to do little more than

'separate and segregate' consumers (Brisman 2009, p1). This suggests communication amongst the community that configures a narrative and 'attitudinal framework' to create the collective identity (Cherrier, 2007b, p324);

...the ethical consumer shares emotions, passions and lifestyles. Submerged networks enable these persons to express and share their evolving values and concerns which gradually lead them to construct new and evolving cultural codes and symbols to reconsider their lifestyle and identity through communion with others.

(Cherrier, 2007b, p332)

The discourse championed by the non-consumer primarily relates to a rejection of over consumption in the western world, not specifically anti-capitalist in ideal but the notion of quantity as status or reward; instead focusing values on society, common good, respect of others and humanity (ibid. p327). Accordingly, this isn't simply an issue compelled by recent governmental austerity measures, non-consumption and peer related viewpoints are apparently an issue for manual workers and politicians alike (Guardian, 2010; Black & Cherrier 2010). Brisman (2009) postulates how easy it is to associate wealth with waste, yet evidently it is argued that the less financially affluent also require to change their habits and lifestyles, to share or reduce consumption. Although for economic reasons the wealthy are feasibly more able or akin to 'pseudo altruistic' further sustainable purchasing i.e. organic fashion, fair trade foods, solar power, hybrid cars or a new bicycle.

The interest lies in what got these individuals to this point, or what pushed them along the 'consumer social responsibility spectrum'. Reasons for non-consumption extend far and wide; authors have digressed into a corporate political stance with once again heterogeneous explorations. Sanikci and Ekici (2008) suggests the non-consumption of Coca-Cola products in Turkey relates to concerns over 'globalization, anti-nationalism and religious extremism' and in contrast Shaw (2009) studied rural communities in Scotland whose reasons for non-consumption were not necessarily a denunciation of capitalist ideology but were influenced heavily by macro manipulation of micro environments. Similarly, with the rise of smartphone apps, Eli, Dolan, Schneider and Ulijaszek's (2016) study looked at how a virtually connected *community* mobilised to boycott non-ethical organisations. These views can be considered collective identities

though exercised individually, Cherrier's (2010) stance appears to have been influenced by Fromm (1978), *'To have or to be? A blueprint for mankind'*, a self-reflective examination into the notion of 'being rather than having'. This correlates to Dutta et al.'s (2012) earlier suggestion that CSR implementing companies are operating at Maslow's higher level of 'self-esteem and actualisation', contemplating perhaps consumers are too. Dutta et al. being in subsequent support for the previously discussed findings of Newholm and Shaw (2007). Fromm's early supposition offers the very notion of eco-survival in a world of consumerism and self-centered belief in material possessions – the very antithesis of the capitalist framework and traditional model for economic growth. In support, with further exploration (nigh on 30 years later than Fromm) Black and Cherrier (2010) conclude that consumers may well reject 'superfluous' consumption but not to the detriment of their own gratification, be that by alternative arrangement or self-fulfilling psychological justification (e.g. the necessity of owning a vehicle and choosing an environmentally friendly, hybrid car). For marketers, they advocate focussing on positive attributes; product benefit, price assimilation, availability and value (supported by Bhattacharya et al., 2009). These being positive perspectives over the corporate deflection of guilt or 'sick baby' appeal - *'something is wrong that you care about, we can address this, together we can make right!'*, thus many socially aware yet avid consumers *'feel that they do not have to compromise'* (Black & Cherrier, 2010, p451).

2.1.7 The consumer: scepticism, cynicism and the role of marketing communications

Therefore, the intricacies of the corporate CSR raison d'être in correlation to consumer affiliation proposes a myriad of complexities to navigate. The dichotomies, incongruence to identity and general misgivings of both consumers and organisations appears to foster a lack of belief or trust.

However, one approach suggested by Maon, Lindgreen and Swaen (2009), summarises that a continuous stakeholder dialogue reduces consumer scepticism, yet Illia, Romenti, Rodríguez-Cánovas, Murtarelli and Carroll (2017 p41) add that organisations should locate an "optimal level of self-disclosure ... avoiding promotional activities" as a requirement. In return, supposedly maximising business returns (supported by Du,

2010). As the literature has suggested, acceptance of CSR communication is not a given, sporadically or otherwise. The Fassin and Beulens' (2011) 'hypocrisy-sincerity continuum' (mentioned earlier in 2.1.4) analyses corporate perception and prerogatives in ranking 'Idealism to Cynicism'; which openly perceives expectation, identity and delivery - albeit from a capitalist perspective. Primarily, private sector organisations are undoubtedly held to account by consumers regarding a "*Cynicism towards multinational companies is based on a belief that a corporation cannot be altruistic without expecting a return on investment*" (Lee & Fernandez, 2009, p175). The companies' motivation is undoubtedly an issue (Dunn & Harness, 2018; Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009; Pirsch, Gupta, & Grau, 2007) and that scepticism exists especially where they appear to be optimising opportunities from 'low hanging fruit' or easily obtainable goals (Dutta et al., 2012, p1). This is seen inevitably as greenwashing i.e. regarding; youth see Schmeltz (2012), strategic marketing see Piercy and Lane (2009), and the supply chain see Sarkis, Zhu, and Lai (2011). As with the evolution of semantics and discourse, Siano, Vollero, Conte and Amabile's (2017) article looking at the Volkswagen diesel scandal in turn introduced 'deceptive manipulation' as a new classification of irresponsible corporate behaviour. Not discouraged, research has ~~been~~ proffered that those that don't consciously appear to be opting for the easier option in their communication initiatives, encourage loyalty and in-turn are rewarded by the lowering of consumer scepticism (Bachmann, & Ingenhoff, 2016; Pirsch et al., 2007). A concept that is not readily accepted across all industries; especially with consumer preconceptions of certain sectors i.e. fossil fuels, tobacco, and banking, highlighted by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) and reinforced by Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2008).

This posits that marketing communication is problematic where consumer scepticism and cynicism is concerned, advertising being the most troublesome, with consumers favouring press releases, 3rd party announcements (including prizes or awards) and corporate website rhetoric (Gruber, Kaliauer & Schlegelmilch, 2017; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2008; Forehand & Grier, 2003) Reiterated and clarified by Pomeroy and Johnson in their conclusion that advertising discourse will inevitably "*weaken message persuasibility*" (2009 p298). This said, the inevitability of development and future directions via corporate marketing communications is acknowledged as worthy, Vaccaro states (2010, p497) "*information disclosure is considered necessary to guarantee corporate social accountability and, in turn, to get customers' trust*". Elving,

Golob, Podnar, Ellerup-Nielsen and Thomson (2015) furthermore add that strategic CSR communications can serve four purposes; informative, persuasive, aspirational or participatory. Thus, *proactive* information divulgence regarding the organisation's CSR commitments is believed to reduce scepticism (Bachmann, & Ingenhoff, 2016; Pomeroy, 2009). Augmented concern is indicative however with consumer interpretation of the implementation considered (Lii & Lee, 2012) and indeed holds significance to the length of the company's integration of CSR (Vanhamme & Grobbsen, 2008) and authenticity (Dunn & Harness, 2018) especially when trying to negate undesirable publicity. Here cynicism is an example of dissonance between a company's rhetoric and actions (Ven, 2008; Forehand & Grier, 2003) in essence 'Institutional or promotional' (Pirsch et al., 2007) and a perceived mechanism for the organisation's operational sector and that of its outward CSR 'promotional' activities (Fassin & Buelens, 2011; Wagner et al., 2009).

Discontent consumers and their heterogeneous characteristics especially relating to the 'evolving' nature of CSR and its implications have inevitably perpetuated 'the myth of the ethical consumer' (Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). For all of society's well-meaning, environmental awareness and social inclusion Devinney et al. propose the 'Economic rationalist'; the argument by which the associated social cause has no direct attribution to the consumer, not affecting them any more than the economic implication at the point of purchase, or '*cash point conservatism*' (ibid). In the context of governmental austerity measures this has possibly never been more relevant, corporations can perhaps be consoled with Forehand and Grier (2003, p355) that scepticism is either an '*enduring trait or temporary state*'. In that it resonates highly with human evolution and pseudo-linear changes in learning and understanding. This may not be 'simply' in the macro world of knowledge consumption, but as mentioned earlier (2.1.2) in the very transient cognition of CSR semantics (Carroll, 1999) and their meanings to the individual.

2.1.8 Section 1 summary

The following offers the reader an overview of the key areas of discussion thus far, highlighting the gaps in knowledge and theory that have been raised. Numerous areas

have been critiqued with pertinence to this research offering foundational knowledge and with significance, areas of inquiry. The key discussion points deliberated in the early stages of this review (2.1.1-2.1.3) included the misunderstandings of what constitutes CSR, and the antecedents and external perceptions of the reasons why organisations partake in CSR.

2.1.4 then introduced the role of marketing communications in influencing the external stakeholder. With Dickinson-Delaporte et al., (2010) proposing *strategic ambiguity* to allow misinterpretations of CSR messages to create a possible confusion although not distrust. The discussion phased into 2.1.5 with Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) suggesting '*are consumers even aware of CSR implementation?*' and further D'Acunzio et al. (2019) proposing '*do they care?*'. The work of Rolland and Bazzoni (2009) and Del Bosco (2017) looked at organisational online CSR narrative; prevalence and trends, suggesting it was generally, widely available. With Wang and Anderson (2011) connecting this to brand identity values and therein subjective consumer interpretation; a cognitive process suggested to have its own vulnerabilities.

With relevance to the organisations' CSR perspective, in 2.1.6 Groza et al. (2011) proposed that the consumer is interested in 'why' over 'what' suggesting a questioning of motive or authenticity, as supported by Dunn and Harness, (2018). Furthermore, any perceived or desired ethically positive affiliation that the organisation may seek is essentially a subjective cognitive process where the individual evaluates identity comparisons to said company or brand (Curras-Perez, 2009). This alluding to a 'fit' and congruent values or lifestyle attributes of the consumer (Schmeltz, 2017; Lee et al. 2011), suggesting brand affiliation or 'fit' being a concept that resonates to impressionable young Millennials. The socially responsible 'fit' perhaps indicative of a positive reflection on the consumer that in turn could suitably be explored if indeed an antecedent to enhancing social identity (Fatma, Khan & Rahman, 2018; Stanaland et al., 2011) or perhaps a more 'genuine', values based ethical concern.

From 2.1.7 'The myth of the ethical consumer' proposed by Devinney et al. back in 2010 offers opportunity to explore, support or contest, where 'cash point conservatism' requires contemporary consideration; perhaps in conflict to the consciousness of the consumer regarding the consequences of their choices (Harrison, Newholm, & Shaw, 2005). The context of the young Millennial's social environment,

peer groups or influential others (Beckmann 2007), social and political persuasions (Shauki 2011), all having significance has been raised adding to the complexity of investigation. Therein, the heterogeneity of this research's approach requires recognition of the multifarious, and feasibly conflicting communications Millennials are subject to. Furthermore, this volume and possible misinterpretation (Berry & McEachern, 2005), along with contradicting views of 'specialist opinions' (Beck, 1999) add complexity that can only have escalated since these authors published.

If this is the situation, the quandary being for organisations is around CSR cynicism "*based on a belief that a corporation cannot be altruistic without expecting a return on investment*" (Lee & Fernandez, 2009, p175). Whereas, Maon, Lindgreen and Swaen (2009) proposed that continuous stakeholder dialogue reduces consumer scepticism, supported by *proactive* CSR information (also believed to reduce scepticism (Bachmann, & Ingenhoff, 2016; Pomeroy, 2009)), proposing 'how much information is too much?'

Therein, the *key issues* within 2.1 that support the direction of this research include whether consumers are even aware of CSR implementation and furthermore, how much do they care. If there is consumer awareness of CSR implementation it isn't necessarily given to be positive with the potential of consumer disinterest.

The possibility of brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' may be applicable with the demographic, with ramifications to explore respective identity implications. The perception of incongruent marketing communications could also be relevant (if evident) to the discussions of consumer indifference, cynicism or scepticism.

This section looked at what CSR is and why it exists, including discussion relevant to the business case. It therein clarified organisational purpose and the importance of marketing communication in conveying CSR values, efforts or campaigns to its' various stakeholders. With pertinence to this research, the consumer was introduced and how the two parties see social responsibility values as a contributor to identity.

In turn, the role of consumers regarding their antecedents to be socially responsible through consumption or otherwise can present a more holistic landscape of this

research (beyond CSR). Thus, the social responsibility and ethical behaviour of the consumer follows.

2.2 Ethics - the consumer view; the role of marketing communications and further considerations

2.2.1 Preface

This section of the literature review essentially explores the consumer in relation to social responsibility regarding ethical consumption and practices. It looks primarily at various authors' interpretation of the consumers' moral position and acknowledgement of corporate or social rhetoric relating to social responsibility, peer affiliation, consumption, behaviour, brand opinion, and purchasing. For clarification, the term 'ethics' is appropriated as '*the moral principles and standards that guide the behaviour of individuals or groups*' (Muncy & Vitell, 1992, p298) with further attributions to values in 2.4.3.

The discussion further explores the notion of a consumer's metacognition in relation to personal and shared identity significant to this research (in continuation to the business perspective offered previously throughout section 2.2). It seeks to explore whether intrinsic moral value priorities do or do not align to that of an affiliated brand or society norms when an individual interprets corporate and/or societal pro-ethical narrative.

As acknowledged by Lee et al. (2011) there is a lack of academic study from the view of the consumer as it primarily focuses on the business approach and implications of CSR communication and action. This section therefore focuses on exploring how the literature can inform suitable research for a more informed a consumer's perspective of CSR. It also critiques how research can perceive how CSR related marketing communication is interpreted by consumers when aligning to their own socially responsible moral positioning (or not). Notwithstanding, example terms within this domain include *green, environmental, sustainable* or the prefix *eco* (as noted by Brisman, 2009, p331).

To note, the significant gaps in knowledge or areas for new or further exploration relating the following discussion will again be summarised as the *key issues* at the end in 2.2.10.

2.2.2 The consumer's perspective

The intention of this research was to explore Millennial consumers' environmental consciousness and social responsibility mind-set that is outlined as having a concern (or value priority) regarding the ecological or social implications of their actions, particularly through consumption choices (similar to Kaynak & Eksi, 2011; Schwepker & Cornwell, 1991). Furthermore, being 'aware' and 'supportive' to do something about it (Dunlap & Jones, 2002); that in-turn dictates a series of metacognitive processing that includes the inference of appreciating consequences (Hansla, Gamble, Juliusson, & Gärling, 2008). Moreover, this can be seen to be akin to the proposed ~~CnSR~~, *Consumer Social Responsibility* of Devinney (CnSR), Auger, Eckhardt and Birtchnell (2004).

The concept that some consumers affiliate with ethical brands for quality reassurance, status, social capital or perceived individuality is acknowledged (e.g. Almeida, & Coelho, 2019; Rademacher, & Remus 2017; Low & Lamb Jr, 2000; Aaker & Keller, 1990). Moreover, literature alludes that we have an in-built propensity to purchase ethically, though this is perhaps based on questionable market research that asserts we would select a green option if prompted (as per Beckmann (2007) offered earlier in 2.1.5). The following discussion asks, to what extent does our socially 'duty bound' or deontological value disposition influence our decision to consume and act environmentally responsible. Furthermore, this is proposed as an individual empowerment; alluded to by O'Rourke (2012 p32) as an unmet necessity, a consumer-product or behaviour *shared* value proposition and subjective judgement that occurs perpetually.

The preceding literature in 2.1 inferred that there is significantly more consumer rhetoric than action and cited *cash point conservatism* (negation at the point of purchase) as often the culprit (Devinney et al., 2010). Interestingly, the idea that the (questionable) rise in ethical consumers coincides with a significant growth in green products and services is also discussed and debated across the text (e.g. Sudbury-Riley,

& Kohlbacher, 2016; Devinney et al., 2010; Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Moisander, 2007). The literature is however apparently lacking in discussing consumer discord, contrary to the 'fit' of Lee et al. (2011) or indeed 'disidentification' suggested as scope for further explanation by Maignan (2004, p17) although recently explored by Wolter, Brach, Cronin Jr and Bonn (2016). Disidentification identified as where the consumer's value priorities are misaligned to their perception of the organisation's.

To do this, the discussion evolves into the 'consumer-communication-brand connections' and the role marketing plays in this, laying foundation to further exploration of consumer intrinsic interpretation.

2.2.3 Marketing, ethics and the consumer relationship

Understanding the 'value' of consumers' interpretation of general marketing communications is a popular domain (e.g. Bowie, Buttle, Brookes, & Mariussen, 2016; Anker, Sparks, Moutinho, & Grönroos, 2015; Sheth & Parvatlyar, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Grönroos, 1990).

With pertinence, relationship marketing theory (RMT) was depicted as a 'paradigm shift' from the traditional organisation focussed marketing mix, primarily due to the insight that customer retention was central to continued purchase and advocacy (e.g. Ascarza, Neslin, Netzer, Anderson, Fader, Gupta, ... & Provost, 2018; Webster, 1992). RMT's acknowledged strength is that the communication from company to consumer isn't purely sales focussed but indoctrinated with alternate narrative that the consumer may find appealing or represents shared values. This bares correlation to social judgement theory, discussed later in 2.2.7.

The commitment and trust elements of RMT originally highlighted by Morgan and Hunt (1994), (and more recently supported by Bilgihan and Bujisic (2015)) explain how the exchange process associated through marketing creates 'partners' away from the 'us and them' mentality of short depersonalised transactions. With connotations of a 'shared identity' (Rather, 2018), it could be argued in support of the rise of organisations communicating online or via social media. With respect to Grönroos being published in 1994, it has to be noted that his belief in that RMT 'was a definable

future of marketing' he understandably makes no comment of the Internet or the World Wide Web (and possibilities therein). However, he does foresee a future where *'computer systems of a buyer and a materials provider are connected to each other in order to initiate and execute purchase decisions automatically'* (1994, p14).

Latterly, this was successfully predicted in Kozinet's (1999) discussion of RMT and the Internet and his prophecy of 'exponential growth'. Kozinet discusses what he calls 'e-tribes' explaining how marketers must see these opportunities. *'Loyal and mutually beneficial relationships can be built online with consumers'* and concludes that it *'(P)rovides channels for virtual community members to become your heralds and champions and you may well find them reciprocating in a 'virtually overwhelming' way'* (ibid. p264). What the Internet does conceivably enable in the 21st century (especially via social media) is for corporate rhetoric to infiltrate consumer's personal social spaces (Sajid, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Moreover, through orchestrated tone and delivery, content is placed directly within the sphere of consciousness whereupon narrative sits side-by-side that of friends and family. This therefore feasibly places conscious consumer cognition connecting brand affinity to that of their own (or peers) extrinsic identity with the additional propensity of advocacy (Killian, & McManus, 2015; Schau & Gilly, 2003, p399). Supporting this from an organisational perspective, the popularity of online marketing has continued to see incredible growth (Bughin & Chui, 2010; Riegner, 2007;) and recognised to have impacted significantly on traditional methods (Gerber, 2016). Acknowledging most social media platforms are free to be situated upon whilst offering paid for marketing opportunities, the IAB (Internet Advertising Bureau) stated that in 2012 Internet advertising spend surpassed television (the benchmark of prime advertising spends until then) by the region of £1bn (IABUK, 2013; Independent, 2013). This reinforcing that online had become the primary method of corporate communication. It is therefore acknowledged that the participants' view regarding online corporate rhetoric or commentary, is relevant for this research inquiry.

2.2.4 Consumer culture theory and sense making the communication relationship

Consumers and relationship marketing literature would now appear to be ubiquitous, extending to explore implications of longitudinal affiliations. To comprehend a more humanist understanding there appears resonance in *consumer culture theory*. Although not necessarily deemed a 'unified, grand theory' of academic rigour, consumer culture theory (CCT) is a collection of marketing orientated conjectures placing consumption habits amongst: situation, action and cultural meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005 p868).

What CCT provides is a perspective on consumers' culture that;

...denotes a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p869).

This befits this research as it pertains to cover the component aspects of tacit knowledge, individual sense making of (ethical) values and conceived corporate messages.

Although much is spoken within CCT of shared identity and cultural habitus (see Brei & Bohm, 2011), the reality also proffers that individuals operate in their own sphere of purchasing, perhaps dictated by personal reasoning; conscious or otherwise (Holt, 2002).

Holt's (2002) CCT positioned article presents a considerable debate supporting the shift in marketing paradigms and how communication techniques (from a brand perspective) have changed and will continue to change. He suggested in 2002, amidst the foundation stages of web 2.0, that we had entered a *post postmodern* era of rhetoric and value identification. Suggesting the original postmodern era born from the 1970s but ultimately the 1990s identified how marketers found connections to consumers by presenting "*brands as relevant and authentic cultural resources*" (Holt, 2002, p84). This perceived authenticity guided consumers to find congruence in brands who represented themselves more as 'friends' than 'father figures'. The dichotomy Holt finds with this is that as brands constantly seek to explore new ways to innovate this relationship the method begins to lose efficacy; as success breeds imitation, and imitation destroys authenticity through saturation. This infers that as consumers have become more aware and knowledgeable of the marketing methods displayed, they're

value assimilation of the corporate mentality behind the message is questioned and the notion of consumer culture has become more of something that is 'discussed' rather than 'lived' (ibid. p80)

Holt continues, "*postmodern brands lack an original point of view that they can claim as their own*" (2002, p87), thus jeopardising any social or shared identity connection that could align or aspire the consumer to them. If consumers see no added or shared value (by assimilation) then there would apparently be less inclination to connect or purchase for this reason. Moreover, when associating an ethical perspective, the alignment of values could feasibly be displaced, therefore suggesting the corporate rhetoric may be interpreted disingenuously. This is furthermore supported by Arnould and Thompson (2005) who propose that the idiographic meanings interpreted by the consumer could feasibly create cognitive dissonance or avoidance altogether.

In recognition of CCT influence within this research, two key concepts that it offers are: the field rather than the laboratory *and* the experiential socio-cultural. This supports an interpretative inclined methodology that explores the complex and transposable consumption environment befitting this enquiry (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005). See the following Methodology chapter 3.0 for further discussion.

2.2.5 Corporate ethical rhetoric and the consumer's perspective

So, accepting that marketing communication channels can infiltrate consumer awareness more readily in the 21st century and that there is acknowledgement that corporate narrative has a more diverse role to play, the focus turns back to CSR. Indeed, there is notably significant literature studying this connection between consumers and CSR communications (see Kim, 2019; Andreu, Casado-Díaz, & Mattila, 2015; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000; Murry & Vogel, 1997). These are however primarily focussed from the organisation's perspective.

For example, in 2000, Till and Nowak published a 'guidebook' for strategic corporate ethical considerations with a *concise* 13-point agenda (p480-481). This step-by-step compendium includes examples and offers a 'toolkit' for organisations to adhere to for their entry into the domain of social responsibility communications. In many respects this can be seen as an operational text offering guidance for organisations, but

nevertheless displays a deficiency in any suitable understanding of the consumers themselves within the text.

More recently, Raska and Shaw (2012, p40) suggest that organisations favour '*going green*' as a corporate strategy highlighting what they present as continued consumer popularity. They suggest that it is a conforming consensus in 21st century business to being successful. Moreover, as the earlier literature discussed (2.1.3), *the business case* accounts for the typical motive, cynically read as no great revelation over ideological philanthropy or altruism. Furthermore, Du et al. (2010, p10) summarise that the challenge for CSR communication strategies is to reduce consumer scepticism and '*convey favourable motives*'; a topic more recently debated by Guerreiro, Rita, and Trigueiros (2015) who briefly posit the significance of consequences and possible negative consumer reaction.

Strategically, 'structural' communication guidance is however suggested in fragmented recommendations including Ziek's (2009) call for '*virtuosity*' in corporate rhetoric to consumers. Although it is acknowledged his broad website study finds no sign of any *coherent* strategy in operation implying heterogeneity. Similarly, Colleoni's suggestion is for '*legitimacy*' in communications, in her (comparable) online research (2012). With acknowledgement, she does allude to a required understanding of the consumer in that the corporate communication agenda should be directly linked to stakeholder perceptions or expectations (ibid). This linkage however arguably raises debate, especially when considering the heterogeneity of the consumer and their value systems regarding personal ethics, cultural beliefs and behaviour (akin to Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In support and highlighting the *inconsistencies* of consumer behaviour, Broderick, Jogi, and Garry (2003 p203) explain how consumption cannot '*necessarily be triggered by situational or external forces*'. Whilst considering the infiltration of an individual's social media feeds this posits a feasible dilemma as to the effectiveness of corporate communication, especially when the value priorities or beliefs of the consumer are unconsidered. Furthermore, it is a deliberation that the consumers' perception of corporate ethics is inevitably a variable, contextual narrative, subjective and individual; considerable issues that both Colleoni and Ziek avoid. Moreover, when incorporating the context of the Internet's impact on consumer awareness, accepting availability of content, both quantity and speed of knowledge

are considerable factors that can influence consumer's cognitive decision-making in the 21st century (as predicted by Beck, 1999).

From an alternative perspective, relevant literature does investigate global brand *negative CSR publicity*, where organisations have had to recover consumer faith from incidents that have befallen them. For example, these include Coca-Cola's water use in India (Lambooy, 2011; Cherry & Sneirson, 2010; Gupta & Gupta, 2008; Burnett & Welford, 2007; Hills & Welford, 2005), BP's oil spill incidents (Balmer et al, 2007;) and the disclosure of Primark's use of child labour (Stern, 2009; Jones, Temperley, & Lima, 2009). These articles analyse and dissect the organisation's consumer 'dilemma' in which they are situated and the affiliation connotations therein. They look to unpack the negativity and specific issues, to resolve the situation, as highlighted by Palazzo and Scherer (2006). This 'unpacking' pertains to a perceivably credible and applicable comprehension to help *organisations* understand how to navigate future situations, although again, with minimal exploration of the consumer's interpretation.

Looking further into a consumer impact perspective, Jones et al. (2009) analysed the *reactive* communication strategy used by Primark following their 'sweat-shop' and child labour controversy in 2007-2008. The authors clarify how the company was voted by consumers 'the most unethical brand in 2005'. They continue, following a barrage of negative publicity culminating in a BBC Panorama TV exposé of unethical practices in their supply chain, the company made an interesting strategic corporate communication decision in attempting to negate the negative CSR publicity. Primark declined to respond to the recognized mass media channels and in-turn launched a bespoke micro site with accompanying online narrative aimed at empowering the loyal customer base, proffering that customers 'stand firm' as the organisation made the necessary changes. Jones et al. (2009) demonstrated by using the Internet and incorporating web 2.0 how Primark were able to decipher the consumer-corporate rhetoric in an effort to understand and mitigate these specific stakeholder perceptions. This suggested the demonstration of an organisation's valuing of their consumers' opinions, directly over that of media interpretation; feasibly avoiding sceptical PR connotations.

Jones et al. therefore acknowledge organisational reputation is at the mercy of the online community; sophisticated, sceptical and demanding, they suggest *transparency*,

engagement and *collaboration* as the recommended strategical pillars (2009, p928 & p930); terminology that is still recognised i.e. Lim and Greenwood (2017) or Woestenburg and Machado (2018). The key issue is that with the prevalence of web 2.0 *strategic* CSR communications should no longer be a unidirectional monologue, reinforcing the 21st century marketing relationship discussions earlier (2.2.5); they comment;

The prevailing transactional model based primarily upon business expediency, implicit paternalism and hard sell techniques is being replaced by a relational model based upon involvement (participation), co-ownership and reciprocity.

(Jones et al., 2009, p934)

With the marketing communications tool of social media being the prime example of multi-directional, reciprocal dialogue and showing no sign of abatement, Du et al. in support, enthuse that the medium "*encourage(s) informal yet credible communication channels*" (2010, p14). Continuing and inferring that the concept of a 'co-created brand' is perhaps becoming a 'reality' and therefore the opinion and values of the consumer are more crucial (supported previously by Prahalad and Ramaswamy, (2004); Payne, Storbacka, Frow and Knox (2009); and more recently Merz, Zarantonello, & Grappi, (2018)). In further exploration, Anixter suggests '*It's midnight, do you know where your brand is?*' (Anixter in Ind, 2003, p163), stipulating definitively that (online) brands *are* a co-creation by both stakeholders *and* the organisation. She humours that due to social media, the medium enables dialogue to continue even when the host has *retired for the evening*. From a strategic perspective, a holistic approach is also favoured by Anixter; where organisational direction befits the needs and interpretation of the external parties i.e. its consumers.

It could be considered therefore that there is literature that looks at suggested best practice or a perceived strategical approach to consumer / stakeholder directed communications. Although it is appreciative to understand the relevant landscape regarding size, scale, environment, sector and culture of both organisation and stakeholders; there is no generic 'one size fits all' for heterogeneous reasons. Consequently, the focus again turns to understanding the receiver, the consumer's perspective and insight into text relating to their cognitive appreciation and interpretation of this communication. Indeed, Broderick et al. (2003, p606) concur that

the consumer of the narrative is pivotal and that the perception of the ethical rhetoric must be situated within *their* values and terms, as opposed to any corporate strategic frame. A view also clearly supported in the conclusion of Pelozo and Shang's (2011) highly cited paper.

Interestingly, what arises from these exchanges are the power, subjectivity and knowledge considerations proposed by Caruana and Crane (2008) who discuss the debate alluding to marketing manipulation. Aligned again to consumer culture theory, the authors depict corporate communication as a powerful tool that has the ability to 'create' a desire to ethically consume (reinforced by Thompson & Arsel (2004) and with some pertinence but feasibly highly influential on social media by Zhu & Chen (2015)). This suggests a concept for this research inquiry, to explore consumer consideration of such power relationships and possible disharmony therein. Caruana and Crane imply that organisations need only locate consumers' wants and needs to fulfil the purchase intention (2009, p1499), also explored by Zhu and Chen (2015). Moreover, Caruana and Crane interestingly discount the thought of preconceived ethical consumer segmentation and propose a direct value connection between the communicator, the individual and their social responsibility;

This moves us away from the idea that corporations merely stimulate and facilitate responsibility choices in the marketplace for citizens towards an understanding of how they construct consumer responsibility as a meaningful social identity.

(Caruana & Crane, 2009, p1499)

2.2.6 The corporate-consumer fit

According to Haslam's interpretation of Tajfel (1978), Social Identity Theory (SIT) explores the connections to 'external' group membership from one's self-concept (Haslam, 2004).

In this context, SIT offers exploration into how ethical values (including those influenced by marketing rhetoric) can portray tendencies or goals that the consumer internalises (Haslam, 2004, p77). Whilst positioning a positive perspective in that the mirroring would be beneficial for the relationship and indeed purchase intention,

Becker-Olson and Hill (2005) suggest these messages provide a salient fit. They continue that the organisational identity then proposes congruent values maintained by the consumer (ibid); which is further extended by Schmeltz (2017) insofar as proposing the triple fit of CSR-consumer-company and the connotations therein. Conversely, Colleoni (2012) considers when the recipient of the message fails to make the connection to the corporate communications - when the 'fit' is mismatched, the association is jeopardised.

Haslam reinforces the debate in that communication is only truly effective in this 'positive' manner when this social category membership is perceived as mutual and that consumer perception must be deemed reciprocal for the communication to be 'qualified' (2004, p86), and further qualified by Schmeltz when considering the consumer's values (2017). This would certainly be observable via social media and brand affinity or advocacy i.e. an individual 'liking' a CSR related social media post. The benefits of a connection between the CSR 'positive' organisation and the socially responsible consumer proposed by Maignan and Ferrell (2004) are evident but it is also interestingly proposed that a 'disidentification' is feasible for those not behaving accordingly (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004), as mentioned earlier in 2.2.2. This could be interpreted as the exploration of an individual's moral position conflicting with corporate ethical rhetoric; when this *group* membership is no longer valid, and the congruent beliefs are broken as alluded to by Mejrri (2012). Furthermore, Marin, Ruiz and Rubio (2008) stipulate that the organisation should be knowledgeable of '*particular*' social identity constructs that are valued by the consumer to therefore focus communication and operate leverage. Conversely, if group membership is not apparent to the consumer then messages are considered coercive or manipulative and indicative of a negatively interpreted asymmetric power relationship (Haslam, 2004).

Although Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p80) construe that consumers look for stability in their 'sense of self' and thus find connection to organisations that marry such values over time, for organisations to complete successful associations with the 21st century consumer, relationships are (again) considered a 2-way exchange. Furthermore, these values are important to brand loyalty and consumer patronage, especially the salience of the intangible benefits of the organisation, but *only* when the fit occurs. In support, '*(M)arketing these intangible assets to their consumers, companies go beyond the*

conventional marketing mix' (Marin et al., 2008 p75). The rise of web 2.0 (circa 2002 onwards) has arguably illustrated this in allowing consumer-company narrative to flow omnidirectional. It's noted that this parity increases if a shared social identity is prominent (Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005; Haslam, 2004;).

Only when individuals define themselves in terms of common sense 'we-ness' will their motivation and attempts to communicate ultimately ensure a full transfer of information and meaning.

(Haslam, 2004, p98)

The 'we-ness' of social identity becoming an extrinsic entity can literally be observed upon social media. With web 2.0 being a *shared* social platform, *shared* amongst friends, families and communities this finds precedence in Tressider and Hirst (2012, p109) as they introduce 'habitus, distinction, identity and cultural capital'. They explain that "*consumption identifies to the rest of the world the type of person we are and identifies the groups, class or tribe we belong to*". They also extrapolate the notion of social and status *distinctions* as well as cohesion; how our consumption choices consider hierarchy in addition to *uniformity*.

Indeed, Brisman (2009) presents a convincingly researched article that enters the discussion looking at extrinsic identity *environmental-elitism*, making notable comparison to the philosophical perspective. Drawing from academic and popular media alike, he makes a comparison to the 'tour de force' of the SUV (suburban utility vehicle) in its identity-brazened persona. He continues that the SUV category of vehicle is unashamedly un-environmental, excessively large and to many, cost prohibitive. The rationale for Brisman's debate is that conversely yet strangely comparatively, the Toyota Prius arguably displays a similar '*identity-brazened persona*' albeit in a more contained package but instead of shouting 'get out of my way' it proffers to distinguish its owner as a bastion of *eco-uber-intelligence*; and equally a status symbol therein. Brisman (ibid p354) suggests that demand has encouraged an inflated retail price of the vehicle; that again draws some similarity to the SUV economic elite proprietor. Brisman's final point of note to resonate is the possibility of eco-elitism having become 'hip or cool' (p363).

Fashions and trends follow many patterns with the acknowledged hyperbola featuring innovators, early adopters, early majority etcetera proposes there be a combination of

identity discord entwined with an extrinsic *disassociation* to these 'hip or cool' *environmental elite*, the feasibility of fostering rejection to the product, organisation or service in question. Indeed, this is what appears to be lacking in representation throughout the literature, is consumer *non-compliance* to the 'positive' CSR rhetoric. Commonly, consequentialist arguments are the priority (e.g. Barnett, Cafaro and Newholm, 2005); for example, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) illustrate how an organisation may have connections to animal rights issues, conceivably being a common shared value to a consumer group that reportedly increases loyalty, advocacy, purchase intention etc. Authors such as Marin and Ruiz (2006, p249) hypothesise "(T)he greater the CSR associations perceived by the consumer, the greater the company's identity attractiveness for the consumer" or Ahearne, Bhattacharya and Gruen (2005, p577) "(T)he stronger the C-C (consumer – company) identification, the stronger the customer's exhibition of in-role behaviors supportive of the company" yet both avoid discussion relating to the contrary. Raising the questions, is it feasible for an alternative consumer group to feel alienated or disenfranchised from the same organisation because of *their* own value system, or feasible apathy perpetuated through perceived excessive delivery of marketing content?

Where it is alluded to, Lichtenstein, Drumwright and Braig (2004, p29) suggest, albeit within a non-committal summary, that a CSR initiative inconsistent with consumer values '*is unlikely to increase brand equity and may even harm it*'. Yet he chooses not to explore any further within his research. Press and Arnould (2011) furthermore describe 'dark' outcomes from their comparable research whilst summarising. They propose that the research is perhaps biased to the positives and that it should be acknowledged that all is not compliant in their findings. They also state 'honestly' whether a CSR initiative is indeed '*worth it*' (p663) and questioning the organisation's value proposition when considering consumers' values. Alvarado-Herrera, Bigné-Alcañiz, Currás-Pérez, and Aldás-Manzano (2017) consider this, whilst similarly stating that the consumer perspective is under researched. They add the concept of consumer value expectations in addition to satisfaction and the vulnerability of organisational CSR efforts to satisfy these, can arguably reinforce reluctance to engage.

2.2.7 Social judgement theory and the consumer's moral position

The discussion thus far has included the concept that organisations are feasibly choosing their ethical rhetoric with an intrinsic or extrinsic rationale to attract acknowledgment and reaction from their customers or stakeholders. This communication is understandably diverse but inherently seeks to reinforce or change attitudes of the receiver and their salience to the host. The notion that an individual responds to messages subjectively is a key interpretative epistemological debate, yet empirically researchers have attempted to subjugate this into a desirable format. To continue and explore where CSR marketing methods meet consumer ethical values, Social Judgement Theory (SJT) proffers an applicable consideration.

Born from the lens model of Egon Brunswik (Brunswik, 1952), SJT was proposed by Sherif and Hovland (1961) 10 years later, outlining a linear construct that individuals base their value assumptions on prior experiences and knowledge at the point of reception. SJT believes the receipt of new knowledge is categorised in line with accumulated information and therein determined (perceivably in parallel to their moral position and/or an *ethical knowledge bank*). In accordance with SJT these are categorised along a continuum from acceptance, through non-commitment, to rejection. Relating to CSR communication, their understanding of individuals' opinions empowers marketers to tap into the individual's values and align a connection of possible congruence. This could be an alliance or propensity for opinion change, new acceptance or simple acknowledgement (Sherif et al., 1965) but only if these values mirror the recipients (also briefly attributed by Rohit and Panda (2018)).

An overview of understanding how *marketing* benefits when consumers do accept the information, is notably acknowledged by Peracchio & Meyers-Levy (1987). But it is highlighted that this highly individual judgement has numerous contestable research considerations, centrally subjectivity, inaccuracy and consistency on both the part of the interviewer and interviewee (Dihl, 1987). Yet, this information offers great insight into the consumers' ethical value metacognition (or deontological perception).

Methodologically acknowledging Sherif and Cantril's contrast to numerical analysis, "*(S)ince there are as many different kinds of attitudes as there are stimulus situations or norms to which they are related, a rigid classification of attitudes becomes meaningless*" (Sherif & Cantril, 1946, p19).

In support of SJT, Morsing and Schultz (2006) discuss sense-making in their analysis and argument for two-way dialogue of corporate CSR communications. What they propose is that legitimacy and reputation can be improved by getting stakeholders involved longitudinally and developing their *sense-making* or *value-building* by creating empirical 'anchors' (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) that harness advocacy and co-creation of knowledge and understanding (Anixter in Ind, 2003). Relating SJT back to previous discussion (2.2.6), Kim et al. (2011) associate it to the notion of 'fit' and the compliance or non-compliance of an organisations cause-related marketing efforts to that of the consumers. Acknowledging the generic positivity of SJT, they do however hypothesise cognitive *non-compliance* can result in a 'negative evaluation' of the organisations activities and dissimilation with the consumer (ibid p1053). Furthermore, Mogaji and Danbury (2017) discuss SJT connotations in their research on consumer perceptions of UK banks and propose the individuals' *expectations* influence assimilation or rejection of CSR narratives.

Moreover, it is appreciated that comprehending the consumers' interpretative understanding from a marketers' perspective is inherently complex and in itself open to interpretation. What SJT does accept is that this interpretation does not lie without influence from tacit knowledge.

2.2.8 Antecedents for consumer non-ethical behaviour

To clarify, this study is not focussed on those *without* socially responsible tendencies, nor those of 100% committal. The study looks to explore how those who consume and behave 'moderately' ethically are affected by corporate or societal rhetoric and therein their behavioural decisions.

For partiality and continuing on from the concepts around an individual's moral position, four prominent views relating to 'non-ethical consumption' that deem noteworthy for consideration are;

1) Superior Stories

Proposed by Tilly (2006) these take precedent with Eckhardt, Belk and Devinney's (2010) study on ethical consumption avoidance. In this, the mandate of the individual

will ultimately be intrinsically constructed by a meta-narrative of how they justify actions of consumption at any given time. This in acknowledgement, supersedes the three dominant perspectives of: economic rationalisation (cost), institutional dependency (someone else's responsibility i.e. legal) and developmental realism (natural order) (ibid. p426). The 'superior story' allows the individual a deterministic approach that allows any or none of these three perspectives into influencing and taking priority of consumption choices at a given moment on any given day. Eckhardt et al. found that these narratives were prevalent in their 160-strong interviews of everyday consumers from around the globe.

It could be deduced that there is a connection between these theoretical narratives in acknowledging that this cognition rotates around the predetermined and/or tacit understanding. Furthermore, a question inferred by Lee and Fernandez (2009) is whether the lack of ethical consumption is *proactive* or *reactive* to propagate the 'superior story'. *Proactive* being the concept that the individual is *internally* pre-meditated in making a purchase decision; a deontological cognition being based on comparable value propositions formed by collated knowledge and opinion vis-à-vis the three perspectives explained before. This would appear to have strong connotations of SJT. *Reactive* being converse, in that the external, consequentialist, collective or cultural environment (regarding identity and ethical behaviour) impacts on individual consumption; which would find cohesion within the parameters of CCT.

2) Holistic

In a study by Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, and Gruber in 2011, they studied the ethical purchasing patterns in a small but diverse qualitative piece of research that drew them to conclude that there are *core*, *central* and *peripheral* factors to account for. *Core* factors are 'information', the knowledge available regarding the environmental issue and 'personal concern' how much the issue relates to the individual, clearly subjective and arguably less immune to external influence. The *central* factor is 'financial', affordability and justification of expense. The *peripheral* factors include 'company image' relating to corporate identity (discussed earlier in 2.1.5), 'credibility of the initiative' reliability of information vs scepticism and finally 'peer pressure' with the importance of cultural and relational influences. Thus, what Öberseder et al. deduce, is that there are multiple considerations to assess in attempting to understand the

'complexity of the evaluation process' that consumers partake in (2007 p457). Any of which feasibly allows the propensity of the 'intention-behaviour gap' to occur and subsequently non-ethical consumption.

3) Habitus

Believed to be introduced in its modern incarnation by Bourdieu in the late 1970s, Holt describes Bourdieu's habitus as '*an abstracted, transposable system of schema that both classifies the world and structures*' (1998 p4). What Holt highlights is the subjectivity of this, a complex interpretation of cultural, societal, historical and peer assumptions through 'understanding' where nothing is resolute. Acknowledging that it encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic connotations, habitus in this context considers the 'symbolic social hierarchy' that purchasing can create; how it can become prerequisite, consciously or otherwise at the point of purchase (Allen & Anderson, 1994). It therefore enables a membership or *as importantly* a distancing from recognised groups, fashion, cultures, tribes etc. – a '*social marker of who we are*' (ibid. p111). These '*Commodities are no longer defined by their function or use*' (Tressider & Hirst 2012, p110) reinforced by '*goods have symbolic meanings in all societies*' (Holt & Schor, 2000 in Brisman, 2009, p352), a belief that consumers feasibly find value through association and acknowledgment of peer approval. It is well documented that marketers create notions of consumers' cognition to 'want' over 'need', for example, McCracken (1986) conjugates how bottled water has become less of an everyday need to more of a *symbolic message* of who we are. In parallel "*individuals evaluate both the environmental and individual consequences with consuming a product*" (Follows & Jobber, 1999, p742) acknowledging this can be interpreted as an explicit sign of eco-consumption and identity ramifications.

Moreover, this can be elaborated by explaining how individuals find benefit from creating and accruing 'capital' from purchase, specifically 'social, cultural, economic or symbolic' capital (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Holt, 1998; Bourdieu, 1994). Ergo, in contrast, a consideration that the possibility of consumer *disassociation* having as much salience.

4) Rejection

A distinctively alternative discussion comes from Wilk (1997 in Fuat Firat, 1997, p183) who draws from a philosophical proposition that consumption is heavily dictated by

consumer rejection or dislike of alternatives. This differentiation is argued to be a rationalisation of an individual’s identity in establishing relationships with others (Durkheim, 1995). ‘*Dark emotions of fear, envy and even self-loathing*’ are mentioned by Wilk (ibid), which raise the debate into alternative psychological underpinning that is impacting on some consumption decisions. Wilk explores further with a 2x2 non-exclusive matrix model where consumers find identity through consumption/non-consumption groupings; like or dislike and inclusion or exclusion (p185) – see Figure 1. With statements from ‘We like X’ conversely to ‘They hate X’ Wilk illustrates how choices are not so straightforward as perhaps social identity would have us believe and that non-consumption “...is an effort to impose conscious will on the complex natural and social world’ (Wilk, 1997 ibid p193) but he does not propose that any are more prevalent than the other.

	INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
LIKE	“We like red beans”	“They like black beans”
DISLIKE	‘We hate black beans”	“They hate red beans”

Figure 1 Social relations and preference (with example)
(Wilk, 1997, p185)

Feasibly, and perhaps at an extremity, this framework finds cohesion in Portwood-Stacer’s anarchist character study (2012). It presents a view from the other end of the spectrum where (anti-) consumers are identifying with rejection of societal capitalist norms and sharing identity through their choices. Understandably, it does not glorify or advocate the practice and highlights individuals who although associated with a sub-culture are appreciatively still ‘consumers’ *but* from within their own constructed lens of morality. This in-turn proposes a conflicting dichotomy amongst the (shared) social group especially where values of authenticity are incoherent (ibid. p102). Portwood-

Stacer goes on to conclude how *'anti-consumption practices are full of significance that goes beyond their immediate material effects'*, and that this is where more research is required (ibid. p102).

It should therefore be considered that in an everyday purchasing environment there could be an inherent character trait that some consumers perceive the moral obligation of society (or organisation) as a force to rebel against. Furthermore, Bly, Gwozdz and Reisch (2015 p129) stated 'consumption as sustainability's antithesis' discussing how some sub-groups see their perspective of reusing or reimagining clothing as preference to environmentally branded fashion alternatives. Thus, perceivably in an individual's mind, *their* moral position sits happily within *their* own value systems and that *they* shall consume or not consume how they please.

What has now been discussed describes a series of findings, theoretical directions and perspectives to steer investigation within the data collection and analysis. Looking primarily from the consumer's perspective, it has endeavoured to explore the complexities of cognitive appreciation of value systems in relation to corporate or socially responsible rhetoric. In summary, it has considered the consumer's perception of intrinsic moral principals in contrast to a 'comparable' other as a way of exploring a combination of deontological and consequentialist rationalisation in a contemporary *'peer reviewed', social media preoccupied environment*.

2.2.9 Acknowledgement of peers' moral priorities

Significantly dating back to 1954, Festinger's reputed analysis of Social Comparison has created many hypotheses regarding the cognitive analysis of how individuals are compelled to evaluate and inter-relate their intrinsic values (e.g. Heider, 2013; Tajfel, 2010; Wood, 1989; Wills, 1981). In what can be affiliated as an exploration of a consumer's attitudes and choices, whilst considering the individual's perspective vis-à-vis their peers.

Alluding to the subjectivity of the theory, Sherif categorically stated (as quoted earlier in 2.2.7) in significant research published pre-Festinger that *"a rigid classification of attitudes becomes meaningless"* (Sherif, 1946, p19). Festinger deliberates this

subjectivity and posits that in essence it centres around two key elements 'opinions and abilities'. This is a notable attribution reaffirmed by Monin (2007, p54) when he considers these factors in regard to ethical issues, as "*it's not obvious which category morality falls into*".

When an individual believes that there is parity with a peer and their values or merits are equal to another's, then Festinger claims that there is a state of 'social quiescence' (1954 p125). It is when the discrepancies occur that he hypothesises that changes transpire; Festinger states that they cause an individual to either '*move closer to others*' or attempt to '*bring them closer to oneself*' (p126). Moreover, he latterly states that "*(W)hen a discrepancy exists with respect to opinions or abilities there will be tendencies to cease comparing oneself with those in the group who are different from oneself*". Moreover, in alignment to Heider's (1958) Balance Theory where connections and disconnections are significant to one's self-concept, this is an imperative area of investigation particularly relating to consumer-company relationships in the social media 21st century world. Interestingly Festinger does not discuss that there is the option of dissonance or for the individual to 'leave' the affiliation altogether but does imply that the individuals' social comparisons will inevitably cease to be made.

It is acknowledged that discrepant opinions are received with unease or uncertainty by the individual, especially when morally judged so by the attributed peer or organisation and these opinions are considered a superior grounding, be that positive or negative by Monin (2007 p56). Notably, he stipulates that when the 'other's' higher moral ground is perceived positively then the individual will be inspired to improve (ibid) yet he too, offers no discussion in the opposite. Moreover, Monin also implicates research methodologies and the feasible defensiveness that the individual may encounter when under questioning and feelings of belittlement (feasibly an incongruent power relationship).

These 'resentment' factors that Monin explores are aligned to Smith (2000) and his analysis deliberating the centrality of the comparison on either the ability, opinion *or* that of the authority of the other. This concept that the *others* are passing moral judgement on oneself is the home of the unease and feasibly resentment; a 'moral reproach' that *can* infer behavioural change (Monin 2007 p60). Furthermore, it is perceivable the individuals' defensiveness is to question the other's position of

authority as either a) a critical friend and/or b) scepticism (see Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Parguel et al., 2011; Pomeroy & Johnson 2009; Soper 2007).

This assimilates to the consequences that have materialised in Festinger's suggestion that the relationship can result in hostility, derogation and unpleasant circumstances (1954, p129, supported by Alicke (2000)). Relating to the corporate /societal ethical debate, it could be argued that some individuals find dissonance in 'being told how they should make consumption choices' based on what is feasibly an intrinsic deontological, rather than an extrinsic consequentialist, decision. This infers methodological considerations and as Monin concludes in deliberating the status of social stratification (2007 p64):

When faced with a moral other, participants admired him as long as the moral other did not make them look bad, or had the opportunity to look down upon their morality.

2.2.10 Section 2 summary

Topics covered in this section of the literature review have looked at sense-making and the consumers' decision making when faced with corporate or social pro-ethical rhetoric. Acknowledging that Lee et al. (2011) proposed that there are fewer academic studies from the consumer view compared to the business perspective; supported by Alvarado-Herrera et al. (2017).

The discussion has looked at socially responsible consumer behavioural choices and the possible reasons therein, particularly the role that identity and peer association contribute in this.

In section 2.2.2 the review highlighted *key issues* relating to the consideration consumers may (or may not) have when behaviours have environmental, ethical or social implications. This is in extension of previous studies including Kaynak and Eksi (2011) and Schepker and Cornwell, (1991); and with direct pertinence to the work of Devinney et al. (2004) and their proposal of CnSR, *Consumer Social Responsibility*.

The concept of positive association to organisations was introduced yet the narrative highlighted how research was lacking to explore perceivable 'disidentification',

suggested for further explanation by Maignan (2004) with acknowledgement to the work of Wolter et al. (2016).

The discussion explored how 21st century marketing readily infiltrates consumer spaces online (2.2.3), (e.g. Sajid, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008) and considered how consumers consciously or unconsciously absorb this information alongside that from their peers, particularly on social media (Killian, & McManus, 2015; Schau & Gilly, 2003, p399). Furthermore, this was related to how individuals may or may not develop affiliation or advocacy (acknowledging Killian, & McManus, 2015; Schau & Gilly, 2003) offering scope for exploration.

2.2.4 considered Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) suggesting the importance of the cultural habitus at any given time (see Brei & Bohm, 2011), whilst acknowledging that the individual will ultimately make their own 'personal' decisions at any given occasion (Holt, 2002). Further CCT relevance to consumer-brand shared identity assisted the discussion, particularly as Holt proposed the challenge of originality or authenticity for organisations to offer any distinct or appealing value offerings. In addition, Arnould and Thompson (2005) theorised that feasible consumer misinterpretation could impact negatively on any attempts of consumer assimilation to the organisational cause.

2.2.5 then proposed that CSR communication strategies have been acknowledged as problematic or challenging (Du et al., 2010) particularly when considering consumer scepticism (Guerreiro et al., 2015) and the negative correlation therein (Press & Arnould, 2011; Lichtenstein et al., 2004). An understanding that the receiver, or the consumer may require a greater understanding and appreciation to comprehend communications more effectively was also discussed (Colleoni, 2012). Broderick et al. (2003) and Pelozo and Shang (2011) stated that it was essential for organisational rhetoric to be congruent with consumer values or beliefs with and that had implications for CSR marketing communications efficacy. Furthermore, questioning the efforts invested, Press and Arnold posited whether CSR activities are actually 'worth it' (2011 p663).

In addition, 2.2.6 discussed the complexity of social identity alongside ethical obligations - inherently a unique process built over an individual's lifetime that is prone to constant self-questioning and placing within context to any given deliberation. Whilst it is evident that the academic focus solely on the consumer perspective

relating to CSR is considerably less (Lee et al., 2011) than the business perspective, it is suggested that the caveat being that unless a generalised, homogeneous view of a consumer demographic is acceptable, any CSR-consumer research methodology is again, acknowledged as 'challenging'. In correlation to the consumer's conscious, or unconscious affiliation to organisational affiliated CSR initiatives Lee et al. (2011) and others explore the ethical 'fit' for the individual, particularly the compliance or non-compliance of an organisations cause-related marketing efforts to that of the consumers (Kim et al., 2011). As Marin and Ruiz (2006) proposed, the greater the connection, the more beneficial future association, advocacy and/or purchase intention (supported by Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005).

In further efforts to explore and understand the consumer-focused relationship, 2.2.7 debated Social Judgement Theory (SJT) and its attributes. This theory states that consumers base their value assumptions on previous experiences and knowledge at the point of engagement (see Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Kim et al. (2011) further proposed that an individual's cognitive *non-compliance* in accepting CSR rhetoric can result in a 'negative evaluation' of organisational efforts. In addition, Mogaji and Danbury (2017) proposed that an individuals' organisation *expectations* will influence assimilation or rejection of CSR narratives, inferring tacit knowledge or interpretations of prior interaction.

To explore the reasoning behind why consumers don't partake in ethical consumption choices or behaviour, 2.2.8 explored the existing literature. Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, and Gruber (2011) offered an insightful and straightforward theory that *core, central* and *peripheral* factors are relevant areas of inquiry. The 'information', knowledge and 'personal concern' of the individual; the 'financial', affordability and justification of expense; the 'company image' and 'credibility' (or indeed, authenticity (Dunn & Harness, 2018); and finally, the influence of 'peer pressure' with the consideration of cultural and interpersonal stimuli. Additionally, habitus was critiqued with the proposition that consumption within an individual's social domain symbolises more than 'need' insofar that '*goods have symbolic meanings in all societies*' (Holt & Schor, 2000 in Brisman, 2009, p352), inferring a value through association of consumption choices and acknowledgment of peer approval. Appreciatively, this has connotations to all consumption choices, ethical or otherwise.

In continuation of societal or particularly peer consideration, 2.2.9 introduced Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison discussions, in recognition that incongruent ethical or moral opinions can be interpreted with unease or displeasure when the individual perceives that their values are in question.

From philosophical and theoretical perspectives, the discussion has arguably highlighted the deontological and consequentialist debate when it comes to an individuals' behaviour. The moral or ethical obligations of deontology as predetermined antecedents in a consumer's mind appear to determine choice or limit opportunity before consumption or purchase (Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, & Malpass, 2005b; Shaw & Shui, 2002). Additionally, the notion of consequence of any consumption decision (outcomes, causal effects of a particular choice, and/or the consideration of peer approval) can also prove a burden of ethical responsibility for a consumer (Hansla, Gamble, Juliusson, & Gärling, 2008).

Therein, the pertinent, *key issues* that this section of the literature review raises are regarding how, and in what way, does the consumer consider social responsibility when making purchasing or behavioural decisions. It has also been recognised that with the abundance and proliferation of 21st century marketing communications (particularly via social media), the inherent role of online ethical communications could be significant in consumer decision making. Furthermore, the consideration that any incongruency of the message could impact on the relevance of CSR activities or communications on the consumer. Notwithstanding, if previous organisational reputation or a consumer's prior experience can impact on CSR affiliation or how they perceive CSR communication.

This section of the literature has looked at ethical decision making from a 'generic' consumer's perspective, the next section focuses on the Millennial demographic.

2.3 Millennials - attributed appropriations; ethics, consumption and the role of marketing communications

2.3.1 Preface

Millennials, attributing to approx. 1.8 billion of the worldwide population (FT.com, 2018a; United Nations, 2014), sometimes referred to as Generation Y, 'Echo Boomers' or 'Net Generation' (Tyler, 2007), are segmented as those born in the latter period of the 20th century. The definitive time period is undecided; 1979-2001 (McGlone, Spain & McGlone, 2011), 1981-2000 (Howe & Strauss, 1991, 2000), 1985 to 1999 (Pendergast, 2007), following their Baby Boomer and Generation X predecessors. This demographic who represent approx. 20-25% of the UK population (Office for National Statistics, 2014) account for a significant proportion of current and potential purchase power (Buksa & Mitsis, 2011; Lazarevic, 2012), are reportedly of an alternate mind-set to those before them and thus require a different understanding. Coupled with a social conscience and predisposition toward activism (according to Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle & Attmann 2010; Hira, 2007) their inherent default to technology for communication channels suggests the task of corporate socially responsible marketing as diverse as it is challenging.

With generation theorists suggesting that external environmental factors influence those born in certain time periods in lifestyle and consumption habits (Howe & Strauss, 2000) the popular practice of using these labels enables those disposed to segmentation to create hypothesis and patterns (Moore & Carpenter, 2008; Schewe & Noble, 2000). Not exclusive to criticism, particularly to homogeneous generalisation (e.g. Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles & Chia, 2009; McCrindle & Beard, 2008), authors suggest alternate considerations should be taken into account i.e. life stage theory. Erikson (1963) believed that the maturing individual faces 'crises' throughout their 'eight stages' of growth, considered of a psychosocial nature, they are the conflict of the psychological needs vs those of society. These are believed by Erikson to form the individual's basic virtues, shaping future crisis resolution, or indeed ethical behaviours. Furthermore, this is reinforced by the 'defining moments' discussed by Meredith and Schewe (1994) and Ryder (1965); catalytic events that are suggested to stay with the individual long into adulthood. Moreover, beginning to understand Millennials requires an open mind and cautious approach due the irregularities and contradictions of published articles (e.g. Smith & Nichols, 2015; Phillips, 2007). However, the desired advantages for understanding them, from the *distanced and separated* marketer, has

had the propensity for generalised articles to make oversimplifications or describe stereotypes in order to justify their readership or own worth through (predominantly, but not exclusively) less academic channels (See Henderson, 2010; Schwartz, 2008; Arsenault, 2004; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001;).

Millennials are living in a society that is acknowledged to be a financially tougher environment than that of their parents; indeed, created by their predecessors who would appear to have come through relatively comfortably leaving behind the challenges, scandal and deficit of a Government and societal legacy (BBC News, 2010A, Hoey, 2008, Pierce, 2007). Not solely the global 2009 recession, but student debt, rising house prices and environmental repair expenses are all fiscal responsibilities of (today's and) tomorrow's UK tax payers which could suggest justification for any resentment or cynicism for their attitude to being told how to behave, act or spend by their elders. In contrast, studies into Millennials within the workplace offer insight into the employer's perspective relating to engagement, motivation and integration.

Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) suggest they characterize a generation who 'want it all' and 'want it now' advocating associations to ideologies of materialism and idealism. But then, Coleman (2010), Hoey (2008) & Cassie (2006) suggest paradoxically to the external financial environment and what others may think of them. Millennials within employment are apparently less motivated by fiscal rewards and are accordingly more enthused by 'added value' remuneration such as stimulation, diversity, collaboration, compensation or options on flexibility, including a favourable work/life balance (Holt, 2012). PeopleManagement (2009) reinforce this insight, from an HR perspective into their perceived values, with the addition of requirements to bestow responsibility, be treated honestly, and fairly. Therein, organisational actions are also accountable to the employed Millennial, the Cone Millennial Cause Study (Cone, 2008) stated that 79% want to work for a company that *cares* and 69% would rather work elsewhere if this wasn't the case. Furthermore, Accor (cited in PeopleManagement, 2010) claim that 22% of under 30s are unfulfilled with their current employment. This they suggest is that Millennials are unfocussed / uncommitted or more transient than their predecessors as per the generalising articles that perpetuate the concept such as Lipkin's 'Managing Generation Y' (2010). Lipkin's discussion debatably places Millennials into a contested, narrow minded perspective associating birth date to attitude, irrespectively relating to the individual's life-stage; as highlighted by Potter

(2009) and Wong, Gardiner, Lang & Coulon (2008). For marketers and communication specialists to place demographic traits that are failing to understand this generation's value priorities or *needs and wants*, would be detriment to any communication insights and understanding (see Tuomela, 2010; Geraci, 2004); an issue this research intends to explore.

Suitably, a more constructive direction is offered by Prensky (2005) entitled '*Engage me or enrage me*' that looks into a participative role that has been developed from an inherent use of technological advancements; that, incidentally, extends into the real world of educational and employment environments. Prensky acknowledges that there are; those who strive to excel, those that do enough to exist, and then a rising number of those who require engagement. He concludes, ~~in turn,~~ they offer loyalty and interaction as reward, with the caveat of demanding effort and relevance from the communicator. Prensky (ibid) points out the stereotypical short attention span of Millennials (supported by Weber, 2015) is not evident in game playing, internet browsing or social networking - channels that engage and enthuse this demographic are reimbursed with loyalty and skill development. This narrative was arguably supported by the BBC's investment of £150m in 2003 (European Commission, 2003) into the Virtual Learning Environment accessed through the BBC websites, feasibly pertinent to the sample generation's school years. In summary, this would also suggest that engagement is a strong motivator for connectivity, offering recompense for the recipient; be that a sense of development or simply a return on time invested.

Socio-cultural developments for today's 18-30-year olds have created users that have known little else other than instant accessibility to information, entertainment, friends, family and peers (Fromm & Garton, 2013; Twenge, 2006). Spero and Stone (2004) were early to note the emotional connection between Millennials and technology with the deduction that not every new product of advancement would change their world. They highlighted how WAP and MMS were technological disappointments though Millennials did embrace the simplicity of SMS standard text messaging that has since arguably defined a generation in a period of time. Furthermore, the arrival of major social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat et al. has changed communication indefinitely for this generation and beyond (e.g. Tagliamonte, 2016; Paulin, Ferguson, Schattke & Jost, 2014; Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011; Wright &

Hinson, 2008). Significantly, this technology is now portable, it's mobile and in the palm of the user's hand via their *ubiquitous* smartphones, making it engrained to lifestyle, and real-time information retrieval (Schmeltz, 2017; Weber, 2015). This inherent use and popularity of the Internet should therefore offer opportunity to engage more directly with an ethical and/or organisational narrative, if aimed correctly to the receiver (Castelló, Morsing & Schultz, 2013). However, the generalisation of this 'forever connected' group is attributed derogatively to the Japanese title for the demographic, '*nagara-zoku*' meaning '*the people who are always doing two things at once*' (Lyons, 2016). In contrast, a Neilson report (2009A), *How Teens Use Media* found relevant differences, even within Millennial age demographics; describing how teens are more susceptible to recalling online advertising than their elders, in contrast to the same adverts on traditional TV. The Neilson report also admits there is nothing unusual about this generation and simply recommended to monitor 'averages' regarding how technological use studies will be insightful not simply for economics but also for anthropological, social psychological and transient human geographical data collection.

2.3.2 CSR marketing communications and Millennials

Millennial focussed marketing and communication has seen many related studies (e.g. Serazio, 2015; Carter, 2010; O'Dell, 2010; Stein, 2007; Prensky, 2005) and due to their progression through adolescence into adulthood, studies will no doubt continue. Erickson (2009) presented an interesting comment in a Harvard Business Review article highlighting Millennials' *frustration* at their superiors' targeted marketing decision making, aimed at their demographic. Indeed, the concept of 'rethinking traditional processes' (Professor Peter Jones cited in Orion, 2007, echoed by Smith, 2011) is acknowledged as not uncommon but is suitable, although to be considered with caution.

Where marketing communications meets CSR meets the Millennials, Deloitte (2017, pg14) published their study of the demographic and stated that they feel "*a fair degree of accountability for many of the world's largest challenges, even though they feel their influence has limitations*" an apparent frustration, yet acknowledgment of the predicament they are involved with. This understanding of the Millennial's mind-set

could therefore be crucial to create bespoke communication without risking misinterpretation or rejection.

As discussed earlier (2.1.3), the concept of institutional corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not universal but is apparently now more-than-ever in the consciousness of Millennials who feel a responsibility (according to some authors, see CSR Wire, 2010; Jack, 2009; Podnar & Golob, 2007). Arguably, Millennials' formative years have witnessed globalisation, demographic multiplicity and endless technological advances more than any previous generation; perhaps allowing a propensity to be more socially aware (do Paço, Alves, Shiel & Filho, 2013; Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010).

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) cites the CSR benefits to brands including; customer loyalty, affiliation, authenticity and most importantly purchase (CIM, 2008, supported by Neilson, (2008) and Liu & Zhou, (2009)). Nielsen (2015) further support this with proclaiming brands that engage with the Millennial through sustainability initiatives are rewarded with loyalty and expanded market share. Indeed Cone's (2015) findings suggest over 90% of Millennials would *switch brands* to one associated with a cause. Customer loyalty has been studied and conceptualised by many (Aaker, 1997; Wood, 1991; Adkins, 1999; Darby, 1999 all cited by Liu & Zhou, 2009) and Liu & Zhou (2009) adapted a communication and loyalty model originally by Ball, Coelho and Machaś (2005) to illustrate the complexity of this attribute in relation to CSR. The model (Figure 2) clearly shows the relevance of CSR to reinforce organisational image and encourage stakeholder trust and loyalty.

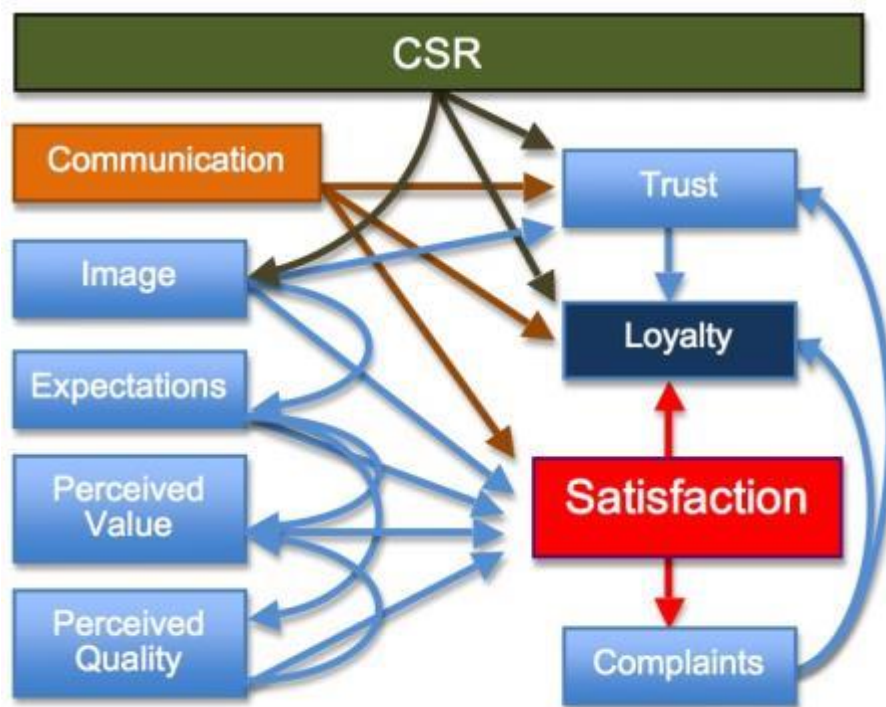


Figure 2 Interrelationships of CSR: communication, satisfaction and loyalty. Adapted from Liu and Zhou (2009, p797).

Although Schmeltz (2017) suggests online CSR communication is lacking, the concept of whistleblowers and leakages of 'sensitive' information is not uncommon. The rise in online knowledge transfer is now universally widespread; blogs, forums and social media disperse scandal, lies (& 'fake news'), wrongdoings and word-of-mouth hearsay faster than any previous medium of communication (e.g. Cone Communications & Echo, 2013; Fieseler, Fleck & Meckel, 2010; Keller, 2007). Millennials posting or blogging on social media and peer-to-peer platforms are actively instigating opinion and emotional responses, some stemming from CSR brand guardian disseminators (Smith, 2011), and especially social media influencers (Johnstone & Lindh, 2018); a consideration highly cherished by marketers (Smith, 2011; Fruk, 2010A; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Anatolevena, 2007) *when* it sits in their favour. Moreover, as mentioned with influence and persuasion, Millennials are believed to switch brand and affiliation regarding company CSR negative attributes (CSR Wire, 2010). This can manifest in many incarnations from switching purchases to considering future or current employment opportunities and commitments (ibid).

Academics and the online media have repeatedly connected Millennials 'high regard' of CSR, and the Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) have developed a socio-classification

for marketers and others to begin to understand the place that CSR holds in the *hearts and minds* of these consumers. Central to their consumer segmentation model is highlighting the LOHAS classifications (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) by identifying five U.S. consumer segments based on their values, their worldview and ultimately their lifestyle (NMI, 2017). LOHAS defines these five segmentations (in a US context) from the *most engaged* to the *unconcerned* or 'conventionals'. From their 60,000 strong surveys the groupings are recognisably evenly spread across the five groups. With the focus on attitude, intentions and behaviour, it is presented as useful categorisations, but perhaps arguably defined. The definition of *Drifters* as the second 'most green' of groups is described as the 'youngest segment' linking sustainability to being on 'trend' and affiliated to 'cool' brands, but as the title *Drifters* infers, not 100% committed to the cause.

However, from a marketer's perspective the LOHAS classification holds little benefit to a generation who may appear to have developed a post-modern attitude to marketing communications, especially advertising. A disregard and disillusioned perspective on the *hyperreality* of messages and imagery has led to a necessity for marketers to reconsider communication especially regarding CSR and its relevant messages, essentially to avoid scepticism (Lee, 2016; Moore, 2012; Rumbo, 2002). Pomeroy and Johnson (2009, p429) outline 3 core methods of an effective CSR communication strategy highlighting the need for a 'quality over quantity' of message, quality fulfilled by; precise topic information, specific CSR commitments and identifiable impact or evaluation. This can be translated into; 1) Tell us what the problem is, 2) Tell us what you're promising to do (inherently and genuinely) and, 3) Tell us what you've done and what's happened. This suggests pertinence, an openness and honesty trait relevant to the attributed characteristics of Millennials, supported by Lauritzen and Perks (2015, p185) where they clarified Millennials request that they "*prefer corporations to be explicit and engaging in their communication about their CSR activities through interaction and involvement strategies*".

In a consumer demographic accustomed to new media habits, coupled with perceived expectations of corporate responsibility running concurrent to social and governmental pressures to improve organisational sustainability agendas, Schmeltz (2017, p52) insists '*communication will have to change*'. Though, the post-modern

consumer can feasibly find ways of avoiding communication and brand rhetoric. The acknowledgement that brands must appreciate Millennials' perspective of them (Lodes & Buff, 2009) could otherwise result in undesirable outcomes. This could be if they have unsatisfied expectations, unauthentic / negative identity association or conflicting ideology with a brand's connected values or apparent global connotations (Lee & Fernandez, 2009). Hence, the organisation and marketer could reassess communication strategies regarding expectation levels. They can feasibly re-align association through affinity (to a cause for example) to re-establish an authenticity, but the re-configuration of a brand's principles or philosophy may well require *creativity* alongside honesty and transparency, to appeal directly to this generation (see Tench & Jones, 2015; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

For example; the broadcaster MTV, historically with its finger on the pulse of Millennials, apparently distanced itself from their own creative 'CSR' awareness campaign with the creation of a non-patronising fictional character 'Cherry Girl' (Campaign, 2009). With her own website, Facebook page and 60-second slots on satellite TV, she became a role model of MTV youth; a hedonic and idealistic lifestyle character complimented with a 'playful take on environmentalism' (Cherry Girl, 2010).

In contrast, McDonalds, another brand perhaps synonymous with the demographic, have a high online presence and actively communicate their sustainability efforts through various portals and blogs (Fieseler et al., 2010). Yet Boss (2016) proclaims Millennials are steering away from the global food chain as the brand no longer resonates to them; claiming that the 'feel good' factor has gone as their conscience commands the holistic experience be rewarding. Suggesting their 'creativity' of messages is insufficient and failing to resonate as intended.

Pepsi publicly pulled their Super Bowl adverts in a PR exercise to 'save \$20m' and launch their CSR project entitled 'Pepsi Refresh', an online philanthropic initiative to fund ideas and projects that improve communities (Gregory, 2010; PepsiCo, 2010). With categories from \$5k to \$250k and case studies including school projects, youth centres and music festivals it has a Millennial focus and *vibrant* persona. Supportively, Smith and Alcorn (1991, p21) argued 20 years previous that, "*the wave of the future isn't checkbook philanthropy. It is a marriage of corporate marketing and social responsibility*", echoed sometime later by Vaaland et al. (2008). Public scepticism, aired

through the ability to add comment to online 'impartial' news stories such, as the *Pepsi Pull Super Bowl Sponsorship* style pieces (e.g. Zmuda, 2009) are now commonplace. The Gregory / Time Magazine (2010) piece mentioned featured the user generated comment *'This article is part of their marketing campaign'* directly under the editorial; thus, there appears to be no escaping the voice of the cyber-cynic in spotting a marketer's 'creative' PR efforts (Pomering & Johnson, 2009; Liu & Zhou, 2009).

Tracking back, Coke demonstrated a well-received example of online information transference with their 2003 *'excessive water usage'* issues regarding a bottling factory in Kerala, India (Brown, 2003). An issue that had obviously negative online brand connotations and provoked Coke's environmental communications director Lisa Manley to latterly quote; *"we need to focus on doing before we focus on saying"* (Aldhous & McKenna, 2010) or as CIM (2001, p17) put it, *'walking the talk'*. Nowadays Coke's CSR mandate is easily publicly accessible; the 2014/15 Sustainability Review stretches to 68 pages and outlines their initiatives (CocaCola, 2017). Referring to their 'journey' on multiple occasions, their immense global investments in excess of \$82m are put into focus when acknowledged against Cokes operating annual revenue of almost \$32bn, putting their CSR 'commitment' in the region of quarter of 1% (CocaCola, 2009). This data is in line with the typical corporate allocation to CSR of less than 1% (Stepenak, 2010). In commendation of Coke's brightly presented, packed full of infographic report, an independent review panel (DNV GL Business Assurance Services UK Limited, commissioned by Coke) described its tone as *'generally neutral and, with no obvious and deliberate intent to unduly influence the reader'* (CocaCola, 2017, pg66). The report also highlighted Coke's introduction of a new / reformulated product in 2015 entitled 'Coke Life'. This is first mentioned in the report under the contemporary challenge of obesity in society within the response to the Q&A heading of *'How do you see the beverage industry addressing the issue of sugar and calories in diet?'* - Suitably they do acknowledge their role in addressing the problem that they propagated in part. To note, the 'Coke Life' product features in the participant conversations of this research.

Coke's association with the obesity epidemic is perhaps universally recognised (see, Gertner & Rifkin, 2017; Casazza, Fontaine, Astrup, Birch, ... & McIver, 2013; Hawkes, 2006; Young & Nestle, 2002) and therefore the global corporation's 'green' product

line was invariably met with caution, hesitance and disparaging comment;

- *Why the new 'Coca Cola Life' is bad news* - Jayde Lovell, Neuroscientist (Lovell, 2014)
- *So is this new 'Green' Coke all it's cracked to be? Critics warn low-sugar Coca-Cola Life is simply a marketing gimmick* - Madlen Davies, UK Newspaper Journalist (Davies, 2014)
- *Coca-Cola Life Is Green, Natural, and Not Good for You* - The Atlantic, online news site (Atlantic, 2014)

Indeed, Millennial favoured word-of-mouth (or mouse) regarding CSR initiatives has evoked a current low in customers' levels of trust regarding organisations, their marketing and their commitment to CSR (CIM, 2009 & Bernhart, 2009). An attribute Noble, Haytko and Phillips (2009) suggest this generation holds high in their brand affinity or consumption choices.

In summary, this demographic have had a diverse and often contradictory account of their ethically minded consumption behaviours, this is acknowledged as unclear (see Noble et al., 2009). Furthermore, a far-too-common approach in homogeneous suppositions is yet to clearly uncover their consciousness regarding CSR initiatives or cause-related rhetoric (Bucic, Harris & Arli, 2012). Alluding to 'traditional' marketing segmentation, Bateman and Phippen (2016, p78) appear to challenge further research;

Although the variables in the category act as a representation it is evident that the millennial consumer crosses socio-political boundaries and cannot successfully be defined by social class, age, gender or political party. The theory of intersectionality proves the difficulty in categorising consumers and tapping into their moral perspective, this suggests the lack of consumer ethical research is due to consumers becoming unidentifiable.

This would adhere to and link back to the opening of this discussion on Millennials where even the decisive years defining this demographic are uncertain, an exploratory comprehension relating to individual value priority would thus support exploring this demographics' thoughts and actions.

2.3.3 Millennials and consumption

Noble et al. (2009) proposed a model in an attempt to understand the consumption habits of the college/university Millennials exploring the antecedents of their behavioural choices:

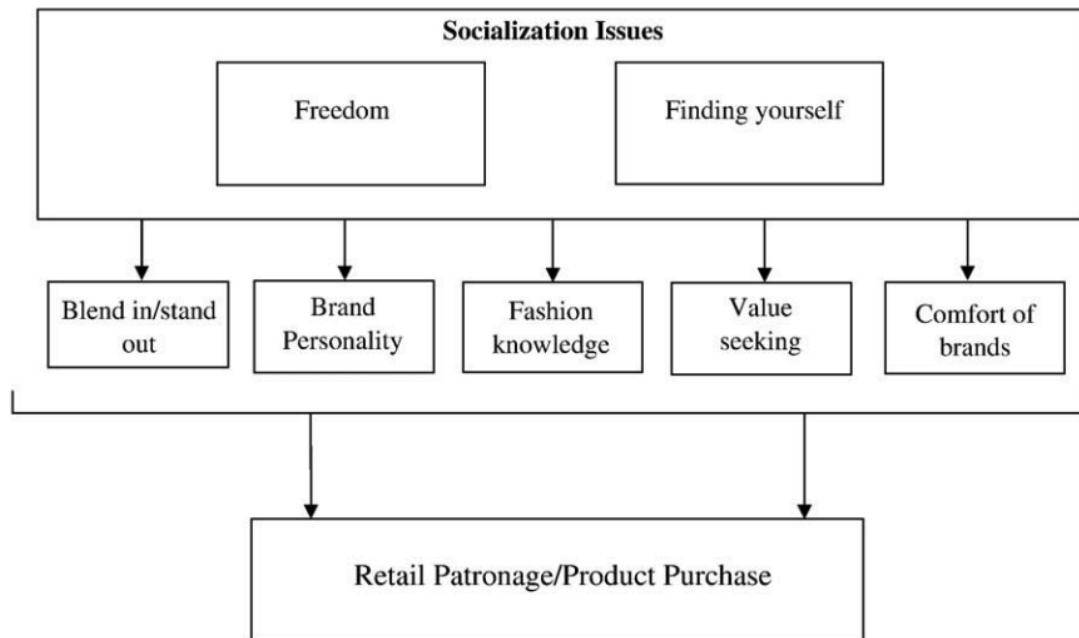


Figure 3 Conceptual model of purchasing motivations of college-aged Generation Y consumers. Noble et al. (2009, p619)

The initial stage of 'Socialization Issues' begins with *Freedom* with the concept linking back to Erikson's (1963) life-stage transition, 'Intimacy vs. Isolation' and 'Ego identity vs Role confusion' all pertinent to the propensity of those moving out of home. Where the individual appears to be reassessing their role in society and the impact they have upon it. The Ego vs Role phase infers the evolution from childhood, where morality is shaped, to adulthood where ethics are more apparent with consequentialist implications. They are free from their parents and they can choose to adhere or reject the purchasing patterns from the family home. *Finding yourself* runs concurrently to this new freedom where they battle with this revised status and attempt to understand how they as individuals settle into society and their responsibilities therein. Noble et al (ibid) refer to socialization theory throughout with this unknown new reality to the Millennials where conflict (for some) may arise as they try to forge their own identities through individual and independent consumption choices, perhaps conflicting with what they have always known as the norm.

Within the next tier it contains *Blend in/stand out* where the individual's ego determines how they see themselves and the consumption choices in question, befitting their relationship with their peers or associates (supported by Lueg and Finney, 2007, and Parment, 2013). This also holds reverence to two of Holbrook's (1999) eight values; *status* and *conformity*. *Brand personality* follows and the well documented power of brand association that the individual decides reflects upon their actual or ideal self-identity (i.e. Albert & Merunka, 2013; He, Li, & Harris, 2012; Bertilsson, 2009; Caplan, 2005; Aaker, 1997) *Fashion knowledge* is next and befits the individual subjectively. Noble et al. (2009) find from their research that all their respondents were suitably 'cognizant' to fashion trends and it was evident to them that this was a recognisable influence on their consumption (be that adherence or avoidance). Not mentioned or clarified by Noble et al., but never-the-less worthy of note, the connotation of fashion or 'on trend' does not necessarily need to be applied to the high street or current consumer blogs or editorial. Those who may consider their style *alternative* or of a 'sub-culture' also adhere to consumption patterns inherent to their applicable group (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Bennett, 1999) and should still be associated as applicable to this category. Moving on to *Value seeking* they discuss how '*consumers address cost / benefit trade-offs and investment / built-to-last issues*' (Noble et al., p623). Appreciating the financial limitations of the majority of this demographic, the authors discuss the contrast over individual choices where *the cheaper the better* is commonly contradicted by knowing that a more expensive product represents an asset of quality or personal (/shared) value with whatever benefit it may also bring i.e. status or group membership. Finally *Comfort of brands*, again offers a multiplicity of interpretation from Veblen's (2005) *conspicuous consumption*, to a more reserved approach but a belief that any extra financial investment constitutes a return in quality and uncertainty reduction from said, reputable brand (further brand discussions to follow).

Forbes, six years later in 2015, discussed what they considered significant findings from their survey of 1300 Millennials, with little revelation but offering points of discussion (Schawbel, 2015). Highlights include their lack of acknowledgement for advertising per se, regarding it as 'spin', with a preference for online reviews / blogs and a requirement for authenticity over content (perhaps indicative of the current post-fact / post-truth social enigma (Sismondo, 2017). Forbes (ibid) also stipulate how

the demographic want brands to engage with them (reflecting Prensky's (2005) earlier comment in 2.3.1), allowing them to co-create product development and stress an importance to sustainable or ethical business practice - where apparently, *it's no longer all about profit and corporate greed* (supported by the earlier work of Beirne and Howe, (2008)).

2.3.4 Millennials' relationships with brands

Millennials connection to brands has been touched upon already including the initiatives of Coke, Pepsi and MTV as examples. The Forbes (2015) discussion alludes to the prevalence of brand affinity within this group of consumers and the Noble et al. (2009) model featured it as a significant determining factor within consumption choice.

Authors' discussion of Millennial brand affinity is on first account inconclusive but upon reflection is somewhat determined by the publication date and evolving times (and arguably the ageing of the demographic). In 1995 Ritchie proclaimed that Generation X were more brand loyal when compared to this generation and Caplan (2005) stated that the products' affinity to the individual's own identity or lifestyle (actual or perceived) was the key and the brand itself was secondary. However, this overlapped with DeBard (2004) who declared that they are brand loyal if the product satisfied their needs; suggesting a pragmatic approach. Latterly, Beirne and Howe (2008) position that the brand can represent the concept of community that the individual associates (or strives to affiliate) with; so, not a distinct offering, but one that perhaps represents a shared identity and even suggesting *belonging* - infiltrating Maslow's hierarchy, pyramid of needs (1943). Pitta and Gurău (2012 p109) then deduced that multiple factors impacted on their brand affinity or approach, with the type of product or service, cultural context and the individual's spending power as important, relevant factors negating homogenous conclusions.

Pending the actual age of the Millennial in question, the development of the individual as a consumer is generally in a state of evolution throughout early adulthood and 'finding themselves' discussed earlier (2.3.4). Indeed, the combination of brand consciousness, public self-awareness *and* the fruition of self-identity (Eastman & Liu,

2012; Gurău, 2012) can be an environment of self-exploration, trial and error. As per Sirgy (1982), self-image and conscious brand choice for many is an extrinsic display of identity and internal characteristics. The notion being that the brand becomes the extension of the individual, strengthening self-esteem (internally) and self-concept (externally) have both been discussed (Sirgy, St James & Chebat, 2006; Aaker, 1997). Moreover, the greater the self-consciousness, the greater the necessity for the individual to positively engage in consumption / purchase of said brand that reinforces or maintains the desired self-image (Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss, 1975); publicly, this notably relates directly to clothing choice (Solomon & Schopler, 1982). Furthermore, those with high public self-consciousness are more likely to be concerned with social acceptance, avoiding rejection, and enhancing self-esteem (Lee & Burns, 1993). Indeed, social inclusion related directly to self-esteem (Leary, Tambor, Terdal & Downs, 1995) is a reflection of the individual's self-evaluation and has obvious connotations to behaviours therein, according to Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt & Schimel, (2004). Therefore, when self-esteem suffers, then the natural inclination is to adapt behaviours or consumption patterns to negate any negativity. Additionally, Millennials are prone to peer pressure and social inclusion or acceptance, Isaksen and Roper's (2012) study stressed the importance of this conformity within this generation.

The social conformity and self-esteem / self-concept notions of the Millennial's consumption habits can also be connected to one side of (the aforementioned) Veblen's *conspicuous consumption* (2005). Authors such as Tangsupwattana, & Liu (2017), Giovannini, Xu, & Thomas (2015), Griskevicius, Tybur & Van den Bergh (2010), Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibañez (2012), Brisman (2009) and to some extent Piron (2000) have all made the same connection. It is then feasible to expand on Tsai (2005) that such outward consumption displays and affinity to brands are conceivably efforts to create a more favourable social image and/or affinity to peers for some (supported by Piacentini & Mailer, 2004).

Therefore, an obvious goal for brands is to create an affinity to a younger demographic, developing a long-term consumer and striving for advocacy through word of mouth in the context of 21st century marketing (Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos, 2005). The *attitudinal loyalty* brands strive to create is an allegiance with the consumer

which then influences them to continually purchase regardless of either price or availability concerns (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007). Through an *emotional connection* it can furthermore create a relationship with the individual for a sustained, long-term period, again, regardless of elevated price differentiation (Hamilton, 2009). An emotional connection that could be fostered by a specific cause related brand affiliation. However, Lodes in 2010, establishes her findings by summarising that Millennials are *more* price focussed particularly in everyday consumption, only really displaying brand affinity with 'luxury' or higher priced purchases that require more engagement and cognition before consuming (Lodes, 2010).

In 2012 Lazarevic proposed a model to comprehend the demographics' progression into brand loyalty (2012, pg 61);

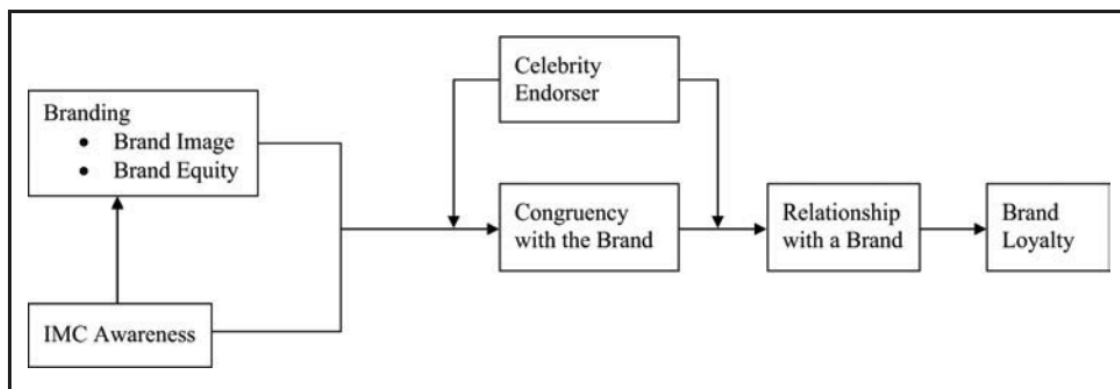


Figure 4 Brand loyalty model for generation Y consumers. Lazarevic (2012)

Beginning with *Brand Image*, Lazarevic explains how Millennials are more reliant on the associated relevance and perceived benefit of brand association than their predecessors (although somewhat debated by Pitta and Gurău (2012)). With values relating to class, style, differentiation and success, they look for brands that symbolise these qualities. Together with *Brand Equity*, that of the association of a superior product offering over its' competitors, places the overall perception in a positive frame.

The Integrated Marketing Campaign (*IMC*) element of the model is dissected to enforce the importance of consistency and authenticity to the audience, who would be quick to recognise discrepancies in any communications.

Moving on to *Congruency with the Brand*, Lazarevic (ibid) continues that the perceived fit of values, lifestyle and / or personality with the consumer is the next inherent stage,

supported by Mittal (2006), contested somewhat by Sciarrino and Roberts, P (2018) who posit that authenticity is paramount. Interestingly Lazarevic offers that one enabler to connect with the demographics' shared values '*...is through the brand supporting social causes important to the generation Y consumer. Generation Y consumers are very idealistic, optimistic and social-cause oriented...*' (2012, p52). *Celebrity Endorsement* is believed to enhance the efficacy and assurance of marketing efforts (ibid), by portraying a recognisable, more tangible image whose values could/should prove aspirational as the consumer affiliate to both them and concurrently, the brand (supported by McCormick, (2016)).

Finally, the *Relationship with the Brand* extends from the congruency, placed earlier in the model. In a contemporary, congested Millennial marketplace, brands endeavour to create an emotional connection to the consumer, preferably individually. Lazarevic (ibid) discusses the use of loyalty schemes being able to facilitate this or perhaps more pertinent, the developments in social media (Furlow, 2011) and direct e-marketing (Smith 2011) can also deliver on this element if executed correctly.

Other recent papers on the topic continue to vary considerably, with Sasmita and Suki's (2015) study into 200 Malaysian Millennials, claiming '*wider brand awareness via social media on smartphones*' being beneficial as a non-too-revelatory output.

Alternatively, Gurău (2012) offers a broader perspective and comprehensive review of the topic. What he offers, reads as a non-judgemental and open-minded study looking at the multi-faceted dimensions within this age group. His focus group approach concluded (in-line with Lazarevic's conclusion (2012)) that any brand marketing decisions to treat Millennials as a homogenous group was destined for failure.

2.3.5 Millennials' attitude to sustainability and ethical issues

Having discussed Millennial relationships to marketing, brands, general consumption and CSR rhetoric, the discussion invariably leads to exploring their attitude to ethical behaviour and opinion. Relating to Ajzen's 'Theory of Planned Behaviour' (1985), the three interlinked prerequisites are moral norms, internal ethics and personal values; Ajzen provides a worthy, and respected framework to commence exploring individual's ethical considerations.

Moral norms are the principle guidelines to which decisions 'ought' to be executed, usually socially formed and typically respectful of the local culture and laws (see Kohlberg, 1976). These 'principles' are believed to be substantial determinants of the individual's attitude and behaviour (supported by Sparks & Shepherd, (2002)) and indeed duty or culpability (Dean, Raats & Shepherd, 2012). *Internalised ethics* are considered the individual's issues or concerns regarding topics or situations that the individual then holds favour over right or wrong (Kurland, 1995). From an ethical consumer approach, these could be animal welfare, child labour, or organic farming for example. Finally, *personal values* have been described in 1951 as an implicit or explicit reference point that influences selections (Kluckhohn, 1951), explained concisely in 1973 as an "enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p5). Expanded latterly in 1990 stressing again, the preferred or desired end state through 'proper' conduct stemming from normative beliefs (Nystrom, 1990). In summary, personal values are understood to be engrained in our conscious / sub conscious as long-term determinants influencing our judgements or choices; and less prone to immediate societal or peer influenced decision making. An extended review and discussion on values features later in 2.4.

It is acknowledged that the individual will consider their own (ethical) decision-making in context to the specific situation, accepting the information / knowledge available and a priori influences (Jones, 1991). This *moral framing* in-turn may cause a dichotomy or indeed conflict upon point of purchase when competing against brand affiliation or self-identity congruence (Crane & Matton, 2010); perhaps more significant in the Millennial's context. In externalising this concept, the *perceived personal importance* (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001) infers the weighting the individual places this decision making in context to subjective responsibility vis-a-vis societal obligation (akin to Erikson's 'crises' (1963)).

From a literature perspective on Millennial ethical concern, opinion is apparently torn between the 'generation we' vs 'generation me' perspectives (Twenge, 2013; Arnett, 2013). 'Let's make the world a better place' is the sound bite in a chart by Becker Jnr (2012) attributed to Millennials' attitude in comparison to alternative generations. Considered a demographic more tolerant of a multi-cultural and diverse society than

their predecessors (National Chamber Foundation, 2012), Hume (2010) states that they are environmentally conscious; socially and culturally. Indeed, Greenberg and Weber (2008) giving reference to them as 'generation we' claimed that they are non-cynical and civic minded. However, in Bateman and Phippen's (2016) more recent study, their conclusion was that Millennials are more concerned with their own identity than broader ethical 'obligations', supporting their earlier claim that this generation *want it all* and *want it now* (Schweitzer and Lyons, 2010). They continued to evaluate from their findings that their focus group did not believe the obligation was solely theirs and professed the responsibility is offset to both the organisation along with legislation or governmental influence (ibid).

With reference to the world and global trade prevalence over the past twenty years it has led many to consider the undesirable nature of over-consumption; in part, due to low prices and high street or internet availability (Spaargaren & Oosterveer, 2010; Young, Hwang, McDonald & Oates, 2010; Sullivan & Heitmeyer, 2008). In support, the 'generation me' angle supports their partiality for materialism and image (Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson & Herzog, 2011; Gordinier, 2009), thus easy consumption would appear to befit the demographic characteristics. The dichotomy being as Hume (2010) concluded, that they have a high moral standard; even compassion towards sustainability practices but evidently their standpoint is not necessarily conducive to their actions. Hume's recommendations include a requirement for CSR related messages to appeal to their 'self-interest' and 'idealism', 'convenient' and 'cost effective' (ibid, p19), again pertaining to their self-identity fixation and even narcissistic tendencies (Westerman, Bergman, Bergman & Daly, 2012).

More positive qualities include that they are particular favourable to volunteering in the community than those before them (McGlone et al., 2011; Epstein & Howes, 2006). However, this attribute, sceptically comes with knowledge of their antecedents likely to be either a) populate their CV b) fulfil criterion of an educational course, or c) organisational pressure (ibid). They are thought liable to move on from an employer if their socially responsible allegiances have been unfulfilled and apparently nearly half Millennials consider CSR as a high priority regarding employment matters (Badenoch & Clark, 2009; Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2009). From an alternative viewpoint, Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman and Lance (2010) claim they are no more or less inclined to be

partial to employers who display social or cause related tendencies. Indeed, Twenge, Campbell and Freeman's (2012) latter study concluded some perceivably damning deductions for this demographic, stating in comparison to the Baby Boomer generation (p1054);

Millennials were less likely to have donated to charities, less likely to want a job worthwhile to society or that would help others, and less likely to agree they would eat differently if it meant more food for the starving. They were less likely to want to work in a social service organisation or become a social worker and were less likely to express empathy for outgroups.

Along with (p1060);

Saving the environment, an area purported to be of particular concern to young Millennials, instead showed one of the largest declines.

2.3.6 Section 3 summary

This section commenced (2.3.1) proposing that Millennials have a social conscience and tendency to react or engage (e.g. Hyllegard et al., 2010; Hira, 2007). The discussion progressed to consider their life-stage (Erikson, 1963) and the context of socio-crises or events that shape the individual's character and basic virtues - therein, context is pertinent, and contemporary socio-culture for this age group is accepted as complex and multifarious. They have immediate access to information and opinion via technology (Fromm & Garton, 2013; Twenge, 2006) from various stakeholders and this is a default factor in their lifestyle (Schmeltz, 2017; Weber, 2015).

Studies also revealed discrepancies, with Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) declaring they 'want it all and they want it now', yet Holt (2010) claiming they seek 'added value' over financial reward and Cone (2008) adding that 79% want to work for a company 'that cares'. It is therefore unclear how marketing communications can successfully resonate with this demographic and attempt to comprehend their value priorities (as inferred by Tuomela (2010) and Geraci (2004).

It is evident from the organisational perspective, brand engagement with sustainability initiatives can evoke Millennial loyalty and increased market share and even persuade a switching of affinity as favourable outcomes (Neilson, 2015; Cone, 2015). Thus, 2.3.2

explored the connotations of CSR marketing communications, although understanding Millennials' attitudes and opinions towards ethical consumption and behaviour is evidently problematic when it comes to any attempt at generalisation and scalability on the research front (particularly marketing segmentation, (Bateman & Phippen, 2016)). Indeed, Bateman and Phippen (2016) suggested that traditional marketing segmentation is outdated due to the complexity of variables and furthermore attempts to make generalisations of consumer's value priorities inferred low levels of trust (CIM, 2009; Bernhart, 2009). Gurău (2012) and Lazarevic (2012) also proposed generalisation as detriment to any communication success.

It could be said that as time has progressed, so have attitudes, with the example of the *Deloitte Millennial Survey* published in 2017 expressing 'surprisingly' that *the environment* had slipped from the top to the bottom of their short list of Millennial's concerns in three years. Deloitte go on to say that there is frustration amongst them that they can't influence change, accepting they feel some level of accountability.

The discussion therein looked at Millennials and consumption, with further critique to the pertinence of Erikson's (1963) life-stage theory and feasible connection to any demographic classification (generation X, baby boomers etc at this stage of their self-development) that proved worthy of exploration. Noble et al. (2009) add to this debate looking specifically at the college age consumer (US context), highlighting socialisation theory and again, the implications of self-discovery and self-identity battles with social norm acceptance or conflict for the individual. They also discussed brand association as incredibly pertinent and the importance of this to self-identity (see also; Albert & Merunka, 2013; He, Li, & Harris, 2012; Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurău, 2012; Bertilsson, 2009; Caplan, 2005; Aaker, 1997; Sirgy, 1982).

Adding complexity, as the demographic appear to have a disregard for traditional mediums, and advertising in particular, this could suggest the need for a reconsideration of brand communications (Forbes, 2015). Millennials are said to consider it 'spin' and allude to scepticism of the narrative indicative of the contemporary hyperbola of a 21st century 'post-truth' communication environment (Sismondo (2017).

The narrative then led into a deeper understanding of Millennials' relationships with brands in 2.3.4 highlighting a prevalence for brand affinity (Forbes, 2015). Beirne and Howe (2008) proposed how Millennials see brands as a representation of community

with connotations of extrinsic identity and acknowledging that Isaksen and Roper (2012) state the demographic are prone to peer pressure, wanting or needing social inclusion or acceptance.

Furthermore, Pitta and Gurău (2012) suggested multiple factors required consideration when marketing to Millennials; type of product or service, cultural context, and available finance as all being important.

The discussion continued to develop the relevance of brand association to the individual's identity. The self-esteem/self-concept connotations to Veblen's *conspicuous consumption* (2005) suggested that a more favourable social image (Tsai, 2005) was linked with brand affinity, and that this was more important for Millennials than their predecessors Lazarevic (2012).

As the discussion progressed to look at Millennials' attitude to sustainability and ethical issues (2.3.5) Greenberg and Weber's (2008) offered the attribution of 'generation we' suggesting a collectivist perspective. However, they have been subsequently appropriated as more individualistic with 'generation me' (Twenge, 2013; Arnett, 2013) with Weterman et al., (2005) proposing that, self-identity was more central to their concerns, suggesting characteristics of materialism and narcissism; reinforced by the *want it all* and *want it now* attribution of Schweitzer and Lyons, (2010) were evident in this generational cohort. Individualism and collectivism are discussed in more detail in 2.4.5.

Furthermore, Hume (2010) established that the pre-determined characteristic of any moral preference to sustainability of the demographic was not conducive to their actions and that according to Twenge et al.'s (2012, p1054) they 'were less likely to express empathy for outgroups'.

Therein, notable, *key issues* from this section for this research are around the characteristics of the Millennial and whether they are 'generation me' with evidence of individualism, or 'generation we' akin to collectivism and how may this affect their purchasing decisions or ethical behaviour. Also raised was the consideration that a perception of inability to significantly contribute to 'making better' inferred a tendency to pursue alternate priorities. Repeatedly stated was the importance of brand affiliation to the demographic regarding decision making, so pertinent for exploration

in the context and how finance and/or beneficial social image may take priority over ethical consumption at this stage in their life.

The next section explores the role of values in more depth and how an individual's morals, norms, ethics and personal values influence their decision to make ethical purchasing decisions.

2.4 Values - as an antecedent to behaviour and contributing areas of discussion

- *Morals* describes the goodness or badness, or right or wrong of actions
- *Ethics* describes a generally accepted set of moral principles
- *Values* describes individual or personal standards of what is valuable or important.

Graham, Nosek, Haidt, Iyer, Koleva, and Ditto (2011)

2.4.1 Preface

The premise of this section seeks to explore the literature connecting consumer socially responsible behaviour, interest or concern to their core value priorities and what is important to them. It will consider ethics, morals, empathy and altruism looking at multiple perspectives whilst also considering the connected permutations regarding behaviour; needs, habits, norms, beliefs and attitudes. This ends with a perceivably daunting contemporary discussion pertaining to a growing academic conversation regarding the morality and propensity of cynicism and the understanding therein.

Previously this review has briefly discussed Social Identity Theory (2.2.6) and the individuals' own value constructs that when aligned create leverage in character formation and behaviour (Marin, 2008). Moreover, Heider's (1958) Balance Theory also hypothesised the importance of the self-concept to behavioural interconnections and affiliation. Ajzen's (1985) 'Theory of planned behaviour', has also been discussed regarding ethical behaviour, particularly with relevance to moral norms, internal ethics and personal values. Additionally, Social Judgement Theory stressed the acknowledgement of individuals' prior knowledge in decision making, highlighting the

deontological importance in the cognitive process. Arnould and Thompson (2005, p868) then externalised these theories with Consumer Culture Theory, empowering the 'lived culture and social resources' as a key influence in choice and behaviour. With the addition of Auger, Devinney and Louviere's (2007) discussion including the situation and context, it's evident that an individual's value priority and their impact require both intrinsic and extrinsic consideration.

2.4.2 Morals - good or bad, right or wrong

The discussion of morals is a significant factor when introducing the ethical value concept. An individual's perception of situations and choice is perceivably their personal comprehension of the morality of the predicament, (to be debated) as part of their value framework. Moral reasoning represents an initial concept including Kohlberg's (1969) Cognitive Development Theory of morality where he proffers that the understanding of moral principles essentially outlines the prompting of moral action. He extends that the maturation of this aptitude enables the individual to act or shape judgement in such situations. With maturation, salience develops and inherently the decision process by default becomes 'duty-bound' to the consistency of moral judgement for the individual. Indeed, there are two dimensions to comprehending moral reasoning; that offered by Kohlberg (1969) pertaining to *ethical (or justice)* regarding equality or fairness, and that presented by Eisenberg (1986) of *prosocial* moral reasoning where the conflict of personal needs / wants is prevalent to those of others (contextually void of guidelines; societal, legal etc).

Alternatively, moral *emotion* is posited in contrast to the cognitive foci mentioned previously. Eisenberg (1986), Batson (1998) then Hoffman (2000) discuss moral emotion whilst introducing empathy to the concept. They argue essentially that the 'cold' comprehension of moral principles connects at an introductory level but only when emotion is empowered by the individual that action is likely to take place. As Hoffman suggests, empathy provides the '*motive force*' (2000, p239) further discussion regarding empathy to follow in 2.4.4.

Similarly, two further perspectives are presented regarding morality; *moral objectivism* and *situational consideration*. Moral objectivism or moral universalism posits the

discussion around theoretical 'universal human truths' negating culture, community or context considerations (Hutchings, 2010). Whereas Bray (2010), who highlights that situation has been neglected in previous theories, states how with *situational consideration* individuals may distinguish alternate driving factors in decision making. Examples of this could include; fashion when choosing clothes (sweatshops or workers' rights), taste in food selection (organic or Fair Trade) or price when buying a car (emissions or fuel type). This could be particularly pertinent to 21st century Millennials and the 'now generation' platitude when decision making.

Along with situational factors, another neglected factor appears to be psychographical considerations within empirical and conceptual research upon ethical judgement making, (according to Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010)). This component they suggest, should consider elements such as a propensity for individualism or materialism within decision making. Psychographics also being a key element of contemporary marketing segmentation and consumer comprehension (see Wedel & Kamakura 2012; Mostafa, 2009; Vyncke 2002). Finally, it is however important to recognise and stress the subjectivity within the morality domain. It is thought that conceptualising morality should consider contextual social factors including the economy, the influence of religion, the labour situation, industrialisation and urbanisation for example (Ossowska, 1971). More challengingly, Ossowska, (1971) continues that perspectives between individuals with similar characteristics or demographics can be contrasting, that which is construed good by one, could be bad for another (or indifferent for a third). This alone would suggest the benefits of an interpretivist exploration of this paper.

2.4.3 Ethics - a generally accepted set of moral principles

Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) reviewed consumer ethics and ethical consumption by marketing ethics researchers and since the 1990s note considerable interest. Introducing consumer ethics as '*the moral principles and standards that guide the behaviour of individuals or groups as they obtain, use and dispose of goods and services*' (Muncy & Vitell, 1992, p298). Crane and Matten (2004, p290) then make the direct link to values and moral beliefs claiming that the individual makes a '*conscious*

and deliberate decision' based upon these constructs. Moreover, making the connection from consumer ethical behaviour to inherent values, Hunt and Vitell (1986) proposed that actions are guided by any number of *external* variables, stressing too, the deontological or consequentialist rationalisation. Significantly, in understanding ethical beliefs and their inherent values, knowledge is feasibly linked to behaviour patterns as Rallapalli, Vitell, Wiebe and Barnes (1994) reported that those of a stronger ethical disposition are more likely to behave coherently in contrast to the *risk taking* or *uncertainty* of unethical consumers.

Authors such as Muncy and Vitell (1992), Rawwas (1996) and Shaw and Shiu (2003) published acknowledged articles relating to judgements made relating to consumers' ethical decision making and values, yet Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) note that there is still a specific requirement for a better understanding of the role antecedents play in such a process. Additionally, and for consideration, Harrison et al. (2005, p2) state that choices are determined not just internally but also the impact (consequence) *'on the external world around them'*. Forte (2004) posits that individuals may perceive their locus of control as a determinant to choose. Those disposed to an *external* locus of control may identify the issue as out of their control (supporting the Deloitte (2017) Millennial frustration mentioned previously in 2.3.2), conversely those with an *internal* locus of control are more inclined to act more 'responsible'; regardless of any conflict arising in a social environment (Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991). This multitude of factors could be said to invariably relate to a strength of consciousness stemming from the individuals' core value(s) with ethical considerations and the outcomes desired; i.e. guilt, pride, reward, pleasure etc. (Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Smith, 2007).

2.4.4 Empathy and altruism - the propensity to care

The empowerment of emotional moral reasoning and the conscious nature of ethical decision-making moves focus to the literature linking emotion, specifically empathy, to the understanding of values (see Hoffman, 2000; Batson, 1998; Eisenberg, 1986).

Defining empathy as a *"response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition"* (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006, p647) or *"our ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling, and to respond to their*

thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion" (Baron-Cohen, 2012, p12)

research discusses the link between empathy and prosocial behaviour noted across all age groups (e.g. Batson, 2011; Eisenberg, Valiente & Champion, 2004; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Additionally, moral psychology literature suggests that empathy is salient to altruism, collaboration and pro-social behaviour (Batson & Ahmad, 2009). Yet as alluded to earlier, this concept requires consideration that the connection should not be proposed as universal but should contemplate a more holistic exploration to gain a better understanding of the individual (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Walker & Hennig, 1997). The business literature takes a similar viewpoint, as Cohen (2010) states that a more empathetic corporate leaning results in less unethical practice and more principle based moral reasoning, supported by Mencl and May (2009).

Whichever perspective, empathy is considered to have mutually affective and cognitive attributes for the individual (Hoffman 1984; Davis 1980) and (particularly) this internalisation of moral reasoning is the result of the consideration of other's well-being or welfare (Hoffman, 1987). Hoffman continues and conversely, 'lack of consideration' therefore involves the cognitive process of moral disengagement that alludes to unethical behaviour. Moreover, moral disengagement is also attributed to connections between cynicism, moral identity and unethical decision making (Detert, Trevino & Sweitzer, 2008). This suggests a more complex situation but nonetheless worthy of exploration. Indeed Bandura (1999) offers eight alternate perspectives for moral disengagement, summarising that it essentially is a cognitive mechanism used by individuals to bypass a self-regulatory process regarding unethical behaviour. The interrelationships to identity and cynicism are revisited later in 2.4.10.

The connection of empathy to a concern regarding valued others certainly has connotations to Schwartz's altruistic behaviour concept (1973) and norm-activation model of altruism (Schwartz, 1977). Moreover, Dietz (2005, p359) acknowledges that *'there is a consistent pattern of altruism emerging as a predictor of environmentalism'*. Further exploration of altruism in an environmental context and the value, empathy, concern of an 'other' has led authors to extrapolate the notion of 'other' into a tripartite classification. Stern, Dietz and Kalof (1993) describe these as egoistic, social and biospheric, supported by Schultz (2005). *Egoistic* centres on the individual themselves; environmental issues that impact on them i.e. pollution and ill health.

Social pertains to concern of environmental problems in their impact on others / all people. And *biospheric* infers that concern is for all living species, so in summary they all contain *elements* of environmental concern yet offer consideration to appreciate the breadth and pertinence for any individual. However, strength of argument particularly stems from linking pro-environmental attributes to the *social* and *biospheric* classifications (see De Groot & Steg, 2010; Nilsson, Von Borgstede & Biel, 2004; Honkanen & Verplanken, 2004; Nordlund & Garvill, 2003; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002; Stern, 2000; Schultz & Zelezny, 1998) and less so to *egoistic* tendencies, indeed negatively by Schultz and Zelezny (1998).

Moreover, Hardin's (1968) *social dilemma approach* is centred on the dichotomy of conflicting ego and social weighting within a situation requiring cooperative concern or outcome. And interestingly, there is evidence of conflict in perspectives as to the dominance of anthropocentric (ego and social) over nonanthropocentric (biospheric) parameters. Authors such as Norton (1991) and Light and Katz (1996) controversially argue that anything other than human is of instrumental value and simply a means to an end, yet this would appear to further the debate that an individual's concern or *lack of concern* for environmental issues is worthy of deliberation in the altruism, ethical value conversation.

Furthermore, there are apparent links from altruistic prosocial behaviours to social responsibility and ascription of responsibility; a responsibility or obligation for the needs and welfare of others (Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio & Piliavin, 1995; Batson, Bolen, Cross & Neuringer-Benefiel, 1986; Schwartz & Howard, 1984). Yet there is no apparent literature that would suggest that an individual is situated *solely* within the domain of any one of these three classifications, suggesting that perhaps the classification is contextual.

Similar to discussion earlier with morals (2.4.1) and ethics (2.4.3), Guagnano, Stern and Dietz (1995) having extended Schwartz's (1973) theories on altruistic values as a determinant of pro-environmental attitudes, conclude that this linkage should consider external or situational variables in its exploration. They determine that external factors can indeed inhibit (or enable) behaviour and therefore negate a priori prediction of behaviour.

2.4.5 Individualism, collectivism, social pressure and consequence

The notion of individuals' behaviour in situ to social or community structures raises the concept and consideration of the individual considering those around them during their choice making. The priority placed upon those goals, values or norms of the 'community', pending the individual's perspective is said to influence their beliefs and actions, according to Hofstede (1980). *Individualism* and *collectivism* as alternate paradigms therein allude to the consideration of *unity with others* that the individual may hold in any situation.

Triandis (1989) found that those of an individualistic disposition favoured freedom of choice, self-reliance, independence and were likely to have a competitive nature. They have a self-orientated perspective in contrast to those of collectivist character who display interdependence and a group-orientated philosophy. Collectivism is also said to encompass in-group harmony, cooperation, family security and low levels of competition (Triandis, 1995). Needless to say, these social outlooks led authors to research the links to pro-environmental behaviours and attitudes, e.g. recycling was related positively to collectivistic consumer beliefs, in contrast to a 'less important' priority for those considered individualistic (McCarty & Shrum, 2001); supported by parallel views on ecological commitments by Li (1997). In general authors tended to summarise that collectivism shows strong connection to environmental concerns, that in-turn led Kim and Choi (2005) and Kim (2011b) to explore the direct correlation to actual purchase behaviour. This correlation was shown to be substantiated but the strength of connection unreliably predictable, possibly due to negating the permutations, subjectivity and variables required when predicting behaviour, acknowledged by various authors (see Guagnano et al., 1995).

Collectivism or individualism as a cultural / community preference should also be acknowledged as susceptible to change over time. This study is focussed on a small group of Millennials as a cohort and observations based on their outlook; so, suffice to say, their perspectives and 'community spirit' / collectivist tendencies, or lack of, is a possible indicator to their environmental behaviours and values. It should be noted that external events and financial, cultural and political changes have been prevalent in their lifetime and as Cileli's (2000) millennium study found in Turkey; societal changes have increased a competitive and individualistic perspective for their young citizens.

Within society, it's noted that acting and behaving in a socially conscious manner has direct correlation to social norms and the perceived pressure that that encompasses for the individual (Ajzen, 1991); a social norm being the expectation of an individual regarding how they *should* behave within a shared situation (Schwartz, 1977).

Furthermore, the association of prosocial intention to norms has also been purported (see Kim, Lee & Kim, 2013; Matthies, Selge & Klöckner, 2012; Bamberg & Möser, 2007). Notably Ajzen (1998) believes this social pressure can be either *real* or *imagined* by the individual adhering to further subjectivity and interpretation of the situation.

Schwartz's (1977) original norm-activation model suggests that the likelihood of consequences and acknowledgment of personal responsibility connected to altruistic (or pro-environmental) actions *is* predictable. This he argues, is linked to the internalisation of the personal norm directly connected to the values ascribed to the welfare of others. In support, this model was linked to environmental behaviour (e.g. Widegren, 1998; Black, Stern & Elworth, 1985). Stern and Oskamp (1987) went further and attributed behaviour to how the individual ascertained the outcome when social norms conflict with personal norms. They attributed the conflict and feeling of guilt when the personal norm was violated vis-à-vis the emotion of pride with compliance. Again, they credit this (from Schwartz) to the perception of responsibility and consequence. They say that when responsibility and consequence are high for an individual then personal norms guide behaviour. Interestingly, a study by Hopper and Nielson (1991) demonstrated that social norms were secondary to that of personal norms whilst acknowledging the relevance of awareness of consequence also playing a significant role. Schwartz's (1977) framework has been used in a selection of environmental research domains including; recycling (Oskamp, Harrington, Edwards, Sherwood, Okuda & Swanson, 1991), energy usage (Black et al., 1985), behaviour (Fuhrer, 1995; Guagnano, 1995; Noe, Hull, & Wellman, 1982) and environmental protection (Stern, Dietz, & Black, 1985). Stern and colleagues have explored the concept further demonstrating the role norms and values play as factors determining behaviour for those with social-altruistic and/or biospheric leniency (Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993; Stern & Dietz, 1994). They conclude that those with an egoistic preference would behave in a manner beneficial for the self.

The external context is acknowledged by many; including social and personal norms' consideration of *consequence* being noted by Hopper and Neilson (1991). The concept of social acceptability may also impact situational behaviour (Newhouse, 1990), perhaps influenced by attitude, i.e. strong values and asserting them on others. Indeed, the propensity of recycling within a social group displayed correlation to that of an individual's behaviour (Oskamp et al., 1991) but feasibly, led by others (i.e. collectivism). Fransson and Gärling (1999) additionally believe this externalisation concerning social norms reflects on the individual's cognitive response to the *threat of punishment* or *promise of reward*. And furthermore, this consequentialist perspective is indicative of the salience to the values held and in turn, determining the propensity of the action (Thøgersen & Grunert-Beckman, 1997). Thøgersen & Grunert-Beckman (1997) also state that this can have a correlation to the desire of gaining further knowledge regarding the topic; inferring that if the individual does hold a salient value, they are more likely to engage, act or 'care'. Further studies defend this adding an individual's desire to understand the environmental consequences in relation to their values (see Kristiansen & Zanna, 1988; Seligman, Syme, & Gilchrist, 1994; Cvetkovich & Earle, 1994). Schultz and Zelezny (1999) proffer the consequence discussion back to the individual's perspective or position; egoists would demonstrate concern when the consequence affects the self, social-altruistic consequences would focus on others and biospherics consider the consequences on all living things. Essentially, Schwartz (2016) believes that individuals choose good or bad, engagement or avoidance, based on the perceived consequence for their personal values.

The importance that individuals place upon these consequences is therefore a subjective interpretation along with the context and alternatives in situ (Steg, Perlaviciute, Van der Werff, & Lurvink, 2014). However, when the consequences are not prevalent, the individual requires a deeper and more complex cognitive evaluation; although this process has led authors to suggest that when stronger personal norms are prevalent, it is more likely to predict behaviour (e.g., Schwartz, 1977; Schwartz & Howard, 1982).

2.4.6 Values and value priority

The term 'values' has been used thus far as a reference to an;

(e)nduring prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs that a specific mode of conduct (instrumental value) or end state of existence (terminal value) is preferred to another mode of conduct or end state

(Rokeach, 1973, p5)

Similar to Kluckhohn's definition in 1951 (p395) stating that;

a value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection form variable modes, means and ends of action.

It is widely acknowledged that Milton Rokeach is the primary author in the study of human values, emanating five decades ago (see Shaw, 2005). The 'Rokeach Value Survey' has been used by numerous authors in its original version and variations of for a variety topics. The relevance is the exploration that values motivate behaviour whilst competing, or adhering, with normative pressures (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003).

From Kluckhohn, it is evident that Rokeach expanded on the two significant characteristics of how they believed values require separating. The reference to *instrumental* and *terminal* by Rokeach (1973) divides his value survey list of 36 items equally between the two. Rokeach (1973, p5) explains; *instrumental values* refer to where an 'enduring prescriptive or proscriptive belief' of a specific 'mode of conduct' is preferable, whilst *terminal values* denote the preferred 'end state of existence'. It is considered that Kluckhohn's position was more functionalist (Lesthaeghe & Moors, 2000) emphasising the action whereas Rokeach posited that values offered *meaning* to the action. The key element here is that values are believed to transcend any specific situation and are the guiding force of an individual's course of action (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) and in relevance to this research, are perhaps the primary indicator towards an individual's propensity for socially responsible behaviour or CSR concern. Moreover, as Williams (1979, p16) found, values have been attributed to 'interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, goals, needs, aversions and attractions' *and* other factors. Comparatively supported by Marini (2000,

p2828) who stated that values are '*evaluative beliefs that synthesize affective and cognitive elements to orient people to the world in which they live*', reinforcing the research relevance herein.

The significance that authors state values as relatively stable through an individual's life (Feather, 1992) holds worth for researchers; albeit formed more conclusively from adolescence (Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004). They are believed to be co-created by societal norms, core psychological beliefs, along with an individual's sense of self (Feather, 1992); all indicative of the university age Millennial's life-stage character formation. Maio and Olson (1998) expand upon this by claiming values are a product of our social environment, an education of moral absolutes and at times representing internal emotion. In support Fransson and Gärling (1999) posit that the social environment encourages individuals to consider motivational concerns in their conscious nature; to verbalise and communicate them to others and therein attribute hierarchical importance (their value priority).

However, Maio and Olson (1998) cite caution as to their stability, along with Seligman and Katz (1996), they claim that the *situation* dictates their importance, acknowledging that values are internally ranked but the context can overpower and / or influence the action. This they allude to as perhaps a deficiency in reasoning, or support of the internalised value priority, again a factor to consider with the maturing of the Millennial / young adult demographic. Döring, Daniel and Knafo (2016) also suggest that significant life events or experiences can impact the stability of values, supported by studies on; immigration (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011), threat in adults (Verkasalo, Goodwin & Bezmenova, 2006) and adolescents (Daniel, Fortuna, Thrun, Cioban & Knafo, 2013). Therefore, it is noted that stability is not comprehensively believed to be resolute but can be susceptible to context, priority, or perceived change in valence.

Post Rokeach, the centrality of Schwartz's (1992) value study has been discussed as stemming from a human survival and evolutionary premise (inferred by Buss, 1986). Schwartz states that values are cognitive representations of *universal* human requirements; '*needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups*' (1992, p4); the universal aspect referring to 'all individuals and societies'. Moreover, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, p551) studied the literature up until that point (1987) and concluded that there are

five consistent attributes to the term value; (1) concepts or beliefs, (2) about desirable end states or behaviours, (3) able to transcend specific situations, (4) able to guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (5) ordered by relative importance. This was extended further with Schwartz's list (2015, p4) stating; (6) the relative importance of multiple values guides action.

Paradoxically, the relative importance of each held value for the individual was placed paramount to both Rokeach (1972) and Schwartz's Value Survey (1992). Shalom Schwartz developed Rokeach's list in the quest for universal values and created a table of 56 primary, (incorporating 21 of Rokeach's 36), that encapsulated 10 motivational types (see figure 5). The survey required participants to rate each of the full 56 values *as a guiding principle in their life* on a 9-point Likert scale from *supreme importance* to *opposed to my values* (Schwartz, 1992, p17). The data from the 56 statement responses in-turn represented the 10 motivational value types; this provided Schwartz a rating to display a value hierarchy or preference; whilst offering some accepted empirical validity to his method. What Schwartz (2016) concluded was that the relative priority an individual places upon an event or choice was evidently coherent to the behaviour likely to be portrayed (as per #3 *able to transcend specific situations*).

Schwartz's classification of universal value types has been tested across more than 40 countries and repeated or adapted by many researchers over the past 25+ years. He reasoned that values are motivational goals and consider the basic needs of humans; our biological needs as individuals, our need to coordinate with other humans in social collaboration and the need for group welfare; to flourish and survive. These needs he claims require translating into appropriate narrative for specific goals and social co-operation and/or interaction (Schwartz, 1994). The 10 motivational values being;

Value	Definition	Exemplary values / qualities
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources	Social power, authority, wealth
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Successful, capable, ambitious
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification	Pleasure, enjoying life

	for oneself	
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life	Daring, varied life, exciting life
Self-direction	Independent thought and action - choosing, creating, exploring	Creativity, curious, freedom
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of <i>all</i> people and for nature	Broad-minded, social justice, equality, protecting the environment
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	Helpful, honest, forgiving
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs	Humble, devout, accepting my portion in life
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others	Politeness, obedient, honouring parents and elders
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of the self	National security, social order, clean

Figure 5 *Motivational types of value* Adapted from Schwartz (1994, p22)

Schwartz's quest was to locate whether or not there were universal aspects to human values around the world, acknowledging that groups and individuals differ considerably in their relative importance of each. He states that his conclusions cover the '*basic or core values that people in all cultures recognize*' (Schwartz, 2015, p2). He wanted to demonstrate that not only could they be reduced to the 10 identified but also that his model would establish them within a *structure*; visualising the inter-relations, congruence or conflict between them. He constructed a circular theoretical model to demonstrate his findings and their similarities, congruence and dichotomies (Schwartz, 1992). Moreover, he asserts that both individuals and groups place varying importance to their values as priorities or *hierarchies*.

Schwartz (1992) splits the circular model into a two-dimensional opponent structure of four *higher order* value types. The first dimension contrasts *self-transcendence* (Universalism and Benevolence; transcending selfish concerns in favour of others and nature) with *self-enhancement* (Power, Achievement and to some extent Hedonism;

the motivation to enhance personal interest, feasibly negating others). The second dimension opposes *openness to change* (Stimulation, Self-direction and to some extent Hedonism; the desire to attain personal uncertain emotional and intellectual interests) with *conservation* (Security, Conformity and Tradition; to preserve the status quo and remove uncertainty). These four higher order value types have proved salient with studies since, including those connecting values to pro-environmental behaviours and attitudes. For example, Karp (1996) attributed *self-transcendent* values positively to self-reported environmental behaviour to broad societal environmental concerns, supported by Schwartz, Sagiv and Boehnke (2000). In comparison Stern, Kalof, Dietz and Guagnano (1995) correlated *self-enhancement* negatively to environmental attitudes and self-reported behaviour, reinforced by Schultz (2001) to biospheric and altruistic tendencies. Similarly, Steenhaut and Van Kenhove (2006) propose that ethical dispositions are more likely congruent to *conservation* values, claiming that those predisposed would avoid violation of traditional ways and norms; conversely those in favour of *openness to change* values would be more probable of an unethical character, seeking new stimuli, variety and change. In summary, this would suggest that the *self-enhancement* and *conservation* sets of values (and associated qualities) is where individuals displaying pro-environmental or socially responsible attributes would be situated.

The extensive studies and longevity of Schwartz's quest for a universal value structure suggests an academically accepted lens for this research to consider. Acknowledging that empirical exploration of a subjective cognitive construct is problematic at best, Schwartz provides a framework of recognised semantics; debate and analysis for future consideration.

2.4.7 Needs, habits, norms, beliefs and attitudes

When exploring values, other personal qualities and attributes require consideration. With relevance to this study, **needs** can be reflected within Schwartz's value dissections; i.e. his value type of *universalism* relates to 'understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature' (Schwartz, 1992, p12). And what this stresses is the acknowledgement of the *needs* of others (and other *things*) both within a social grouping and its environment, principally for its *need* to

survive. This obviously bodes appropriately for those with strength in the value type *universalism*, however, needs manifest in all consumption situations throughout populations.

Those with a strong disposition to the value of *self-direction* place the need to fulfil mastery and control at the forefront of life choices (Deci, 1995). They are also believed to require a sense of freedom or creativity, and on a societal level they seek autonomy and independence (Kohn and Schooler, 1983; Kluckhohn, 1951). The self-direction aspect is also believed to underpin a degree of the *stimulation* values, where the attributes of excitement and variety will be sought (Berlyne, 1960).

Similarly, this can also be extended into *hedonism*, where the need for fun, self-pleasure or gratification is desired (Williams, 1968) and *power*, the need for dominance or control (Korman, 1974). Yet what needs can also be referred to, in separation from values, is their connotation to biological influences, something that can be reflected upon with specific examination (Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004). As Rokeach (1973, p13) expresses; the '*need for sex might be culturally reconstituted as a value for love*'. The biological reference is supported by Dietz (2005), i.e. an individual who values the sanctity of preserving the environment may find conflict in fulfilling the need for affordable food vs. industrial farming methods. Freestone (2007) continues with this, referring to the financial consideration where the *need* faces a possible *trade-off* in respect of inherent values; feasibly a cost-benefit analysis.

Habits (in relation to choice or behaviour), differentiate from values in the manner that they are a settled tendency to behave in a regular manner, often involuntary without due thought or consideration. Dahlstrand and Biel (1997) however still place values as a probable antecedent to habit formation, with the emphasis on reflective analysis of the consequences in verifying the habitual status or creation of a replacement. This is supported by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) who also place intention in the latter part of their model when it comes to dissecting the connection between values and behaviour. Interestingly their placement of intention towards the end of the chain posits that intention and habit battle for supremacy from an individual's behavioural perspective at any given time (see also Triandis, 1977). Furthermore, Stets and Biga (2003) also link habits to inherent values. They proffer established

environmental concern values feasibly manifest into habitual recycling, energy saving and public transport usage.

Norms, according to Marini (2000), are simplistically *ought to* statements. These can be conceptualised as stemming from shared beliefs with a conscious perception of reward or alternatively, disapproval (Schwartz & Howard, 1982). Schwartz and Howard (1982) suggest a difference in the internalisation of how norms are perceived from either a personal or social perspective; supported by Ajzen and Fishbein, (1970) and Schwartz, (1970). The *social* aspect refers to a subjective notion as to how they are perceived from a group perspective, and therefore the premise being that the individual adheres or rejects to the norm on the perception of actual or perceived social pressure (Ajzen, 1988). The personalised norm is understood to be a self-reflection of how the situation manifests in regard to a moral obligation and is congruent to the individual's values (Gibbs, 2003; Schwartz, 1977). Indeed, research into internalised norms connected to the anticipation of guilt, pride, self-depreciation, loss of or enhanced self-esteem has also been discussed placing it with consequence (Wildegren, 1998; Reykowski, 1982; also see Bagozzi, Dholakia & Basuroy, 2003) although this requires an appreciation of both the individual and situation with acceptance to the lack of generalisation (Thøgersen, 2006). Moreover, this can result in social pressure being superseded by inner pressure (Biel, Borgstede & Dahlstrand, 1999) and when this is the case and the social norm is internalised lightly, without due reflection on personal values and norms, then they are referred to as *introjected norms* (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The contribution of pro-environmental focussed studies in connection to norms is evident (e.g. Onwezen, Antonides & Bartels, 2013; Cialdini, 2003; Bator & Cialdini, 2000; McKenzie-Mohr, 2000; Baumeister, 1998). And the relevance of such research infers behaviour is driven by *both* social and personal subjective norms (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003; Bratt, 1999; Harland, Staats & Wilke, 1999).

Beliefs are regularly placed in the same context when authors discuss values and attitudes and refer to a state of mind pertaining to an assumption of fact without necessarily supportive empirical evidence. What is acknowledged is that individuals possess significantly more beliefs than values (Feather, 1995) and with maturity we are understood to place more confidence within them, therein proffering more confidence

in decision making (McDevitt, Giapponi & Tromley, 2007). Schwartz (2016) and Döring et al. (2016) stress how beliefs are *inextricably* linked to motivation and our actions; this *can* be appropriated to intrinsic values but is not always definitive.

From an environmental perspective, concern vs action has been acknowledged to relate to an individual's beliefs (and / or values) (e.g., Schultz 2000; Stern et al., 1995) moreover, Hessami and Yousefi (2013) showed there was a strong relationship between individual's ecological beliefs and their pro-environmental purchase behaviour. Furthermore, personal moral beliefs were found to be the antecedent for consumer social responsibility (CnSR), or at least the 'will' to consume responsibly (Crane & Matter, 2004).

Attitude is said to be the sum of behavioural beliefs and that the belief is then in the expectation that the behavioural consequence is beneficial and favourable, according to Klöckner (2013). An attitude is suggested as being more abstract than values (Williams, 1979; Rokeach, 1973) and considered evaluations, positive or negative, of an object or more concrete ideals (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) on something specific (Dietz, 2005). Katz (1960) and Kristiansen and Zanna (1991) place attitudes as expressing values at the core of self-concept and those that are truly value-expressive are believed to be stronger than those that aren't (Maio & Olson 1994). Alternatively, Kristiansen and Zanna (1991) also say that attitudes can in turn *influence* the perception of values, considered the 'halo effect'. Conclusively, Maio and Olson's extensive research on attitudes found empirical data to directly connect values and attitudes in what they refer to as *goal-expressive attitudes* in that they represent an underlying motivational structure (Maio & Olson, 2000). What is generally accepted is that the abstract nature of attitudes is inferior within the internal hierarchy status in comparison to values (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004), less sustainable over time (Konty & Dunham, 1997) and less directly related to behaviour (Schwartz, 1996).

2.4.8 The link to behaviour

Indeed, from a business perspective and a key premise of this thesis is the understanding how value priority influences consumer behaviour, within a social responsibility context. It should be acknowledged that numerous terms around the

consumption perspective are used by numerous authors including; green buying behaviour (Kim & Choi, 2003; 2005; Kim, 2002), environmentally responsible purchase behaviour (Follows & Jobber, 2000), green purchase behaviour (Ting, Wei, Qi & Loong, 2014) and pro-environmental purchase behaviour (Tilikidou, 2007; Soutar, Ramaseshan & Molster, 1994).

Until now, much discussion has only touched upon the values-behaviour connection. However, numerous authors claim to have made the conclusive link over the last 40 years (e.g., Schwartz, 2015; Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Rohan, 2000; Williams, 1979; Carman, 1978). Bertillon's (2015) states that an individual consumer's moral position infers their moral behaviour, moreover individual's values mediate basic human needs (Schwartz, 1992; Rokeach, 1973), with *needs* by definition a key motivator to behaviour (Hitlin, 2004). Researchers have found behavioural connections to various topics including shopping (Shim & Eastlick, 1998), ecology (McCarty & Shrum, 1994; Ellen, 1994), the environment (Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Vitell, 2003; Osterhus, 1997; Prothero, 1990), ethical consumption (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan & Thomson, 2005), fair trade consumption (De Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005), and a variety of social psychological topics by Schwartz, including prosocial behaviour (1977).

Stressing the individuality of this concept, Verplanken and Holland (2002) reassert that it is those values prevalent to the self that impact strongest on behaviour.

Furthermore, Nicholls (also in 2002) found that there had been a 'shift' in research from simple self-centric decision making to more of a value-centric focus; suggesting a consciousness to a consideration of others. Indeed, if it is accepted that values affect behaviour and that this occurs both consciously and subconsciously then the focus then leads to when or how this is most likely to take place.

Schwartz has regularly accepted that values require activating to have influence on behaviour; yet the abstract nature of values and inclusion of attitude indicates the imperfect nature of value-behaviour predictability research (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Williams (1979) and Maio, Olson, Allen and Bernard (2001) also highlight the role that additional influences / determinants have in the cognitive process. Maio et al. (2001) continue to say that the situational context can even supersede the original motivation. And if the value held is not supported by the individual's cognitive reasoning, justification or understanding then it is susceptible to argument or social

comparison in a given situation proffering behavioural change (Maio & Olson, 1998). To add further complexity, Bardi and Schwartz (2003) state that behaviour may indeed be influenced by more than one value, making the causality even less predictable for empirical research. For example, there could be conflict in decision making for an individual with social bonding or community affinity versus a hedonistic group activity. As per Schwartz's universal value criteria (1994) and discussions, it was claimed that individual's make value-expressive behaviour choices in correlation to their prioritized personal values or interestingly, in reaction to those opposite if incongruent (Bardi & Schwartz 2003). For example, Bardi and Schwartz (2003) found strong correlation between tradition and stimulation values; power, hedonism, self-direction and universalism showed moderate correlation; with benevolence, security and conformity demonstrating weaker links to their respective behaviours. Schwartz (2016) states that values predict behaviour *well* with power values predicting manipulative behaviour as an example, yet with caution, the more ambivalent the value, the less predictive the behaviour becomes (Lönqvist, Verkasalo, Wichardt & Walkowitz, 2013).

Carlo and Randall (2002, pp32-34) looked specifically at adolescents' perspectives and concluded that value-behaviour research again required acknowledgment of context and subjectivity. Furthermore, they stated that weak correlations in previous studies were attributed to global perspectives (possibly over-ambitious generalisations) rather than situation-specific studies; supported in earlier papers by Kurdek, (1978) and Underwood and Moore, (1982). Additionally, the subjectivity of an individual's socially responsible or 'green' knowledge is called into question by researchers in relation to behaviour. Dodd, Laverie, Wilcox and Duhan's (2005) study on wine consumption showed that consumers knowledge was biased to what they believed they knew more so than what they actually had learnt from experience (personal empirical testing). Moreover, Yusof, Singh and Razak (2013) purported that there was insufficient prior exploration into research participants' environmental knowledge, suggesting an untapped significant variable (previously raised by Chan, (1999)). With the caveat of Corraliza and Berenguer (2000) who posit that knowledge and education are key factors, but situational characteristics play a pivotal role with actual behaviour.

2.4.9 Values and identity

Blasi (1983) is believed to be the first to make the connections to link identity to values, followed by many (e.g. Liutikas, 2017; Narvaez & Laspley, 2005; Gibbs, 2003; Hitlin, 2003; Greca, 2000; Colby & Damon, 1992). Suggesting values significant to self-identity are considerable factors that recognised socially, subsequently become internalised, by the individual. An alternative, yet correlated term being *moral identity* (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Hart, 2005; Bergman, 2004) is also considered salient to behaviour or action (Gibbs, 2003; Blasi, 1983). And as mentioned earlier (2.4.6), those values important to the self, when activated (Schwartz, 2015), are significant antecedents to behaviour (Verplanken & Holland, 2002).

It is acknowledged that moral identity is of multifarious definition (Hardy & Carlo, 2005) yet is essentially concerned with the parity of self-reflective morality congruent to the sense of identity (Colby & Damon, 1992). Therein, this extends to analysis in the understanding of personal identity, be that goals, values or desires and how they fare morally (or amorally) (Blasi, 1995). Hardy (2006) believes that when these goals, values or desires are pivotal to an individual's self-identity there extends a sense of responsibility or obligation to act coherently and behave consistently. Therefore, the reflective sense of morality, that the individual considers right or wrong, can be considered the significant motivator in choice or action fulfilling their goals or desires (Colby & Damon, 1992). Moral identity studies have looked at research focussing on late adolescents (Aquino & Reed, 2002; 2003; Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Alisat, 2003) where they found positive correlations between it and *observed food donations* and *self-report volunteerism* although this could cynically be attributed to Carlo and Randall's (2002) inference of ego; 'public motivation' and self-worth connotations.

Nevertheless, the self-classification that is observed via these identity studies involves the individual objectifying the self and attributing the value's meanings associated by their structured society, group or social network (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Stryker 1980). The group or collective see themselves as similar, be that in views, appearance or lifestyle and play individual but coherent roles within the group. Significantly, the group acknowledge themselves as separate to recognised out-groups or non-members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Noted, this practice is entitled simply

identification in identity theory and *self-categorisation* in social identity theory yet is tantamount to the same classification.

The key connotation that the role moral identity plays in a situation determining behaviour, is when or how the identity is activated. Both identity and social identity theorists refer to this as salience; the difference being that social identity infers the probability as yes/no whilst identity theory views a more subjective spectrum of probabilities (see Turner et al., 1987; Stryker, 1980). Insofar as the perceived conflict or incongruence that social or group interrelations may have on individual moral decision making, proffers the possibility of self-righteousness indignation and in the extreme, manifestations of scepticism and cynicism.

2.4.10 Cynicism and morality, why and with what relevance

It could be considered that with the rise of social media and interconnectedness of social groups, the 'manipulative nature of SNS (Social Networking Sites) leads to a lack of trust in information' (Jothimani, Bhadani & Shankar, 2015, p121). Indeed, Moisander and Pesonen (2002) suggest that social discourse amongst consumption groups can reflect moral positioning, be that literal or otherwise (supported by Caruana, (2007)). Their conclusions infer that individual morality becomes inherent to the formation of identity construction by subjectively selecting, interpreting and using specific discourse that can be viewed as coherent, alternative or challenging to normative consumer culture (Mikkonen & Bajde, 2013; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Moisander & Pesonen, 2002). It is also acknowledged that individuals can strongly self-justify these identities (Bertilsson, 2009) by feasible connections to similar groups such as within this context, ethical food consumption or animal welfare and the connotations therein (Pecoraro & Uutisalo, 2014). Although, the concept here is that this has the propensity to be less than permanent and more fluid to interpretation or social shift and interpretation (Thompson & Haykto, 1997). Readily available Internet (mis)information, along with societal consumption norms becoming more fractured, combined with socially or peer constructed morality judgements and individual confirmation befits a complicated consumer. This shifting environment proffers uncertainty and indecision to the extent of reflexive resistance, especially aimed at marketing consumption ideology (Oudou &

de Pechpeyrou, 2011) perceivably manifesting in the guise of untrustworthiness and/or cynicism.

In context, cynicism has multiple definitions and applications when related to consumption including Chylinski and Chu (2010, p799) as;

(a) process of related cognitive, behavioural, and affective reactions expressed by initial suspicion, defensive attempts, and eventual alienation of the consumer

Supported on the whole by Vice (2011) it is suggesting the propensity of consumer disassociation from the marketer or organisation is evident. This distrust (Helm, 2004) or challenge (Holt, 2002) of marketing narrative intent could suggest a negative perception of 21st century consumption insofar that Vice (2011) declares cynicism as essentially *immoral*, incompatible with faith, hope and charity. However, the ubiquity of contemporary marketing, blatantly commercial or societally focussed directs an alternate view that it is born from a general sense of world weariness; "*Because everything has become problematic, everything is also somehow a matter of indifference*" (Sloterdijk, 1987, pgxxxii).

Sloterdijk's (1987) discussion in many ways offers a perspective on unpacking the complexities and dichotomies of late 20th century consumption. Now definitively into the 21st century, we sustain a western world where Sloterdijk could not foresee the Internet and the media mass information readily available to all. Entitled *technoculture*, Quinby (1999) refers to this as the bane of late 20th and prediction of the early 21st century, and the foci of his *terminal cynicism*. He states the sheer abundance of information makes it '*hard to discern consequence or assess relevance... coupled with increasing anxieties of economic insecurity, economic depletion, and personal safety it's not surprising that some people feel overwhelmed...*' (Quinby, 1999, p36).

Moreover, accepting a social constructivist view on morality where choice is reconsidered continuously within an individual's consumption or social group consideration (Caruana 2007; Ellul, 1969), cynicism as a consequence of the availability of an overwhelming amount of information, can impact on decision making. Bertilsson (2015) states that individuals extend this reasoning, insofar that it becomes congruent to becoming the norm. He furthermore surmises that further *enlightenment* or critique

has no effect on the 'ideological system' and that '*cynicism therefore implies that consciously acting against better knowledge is quite reasonable*' (Bertillon, 2015, p450). Extending this, it could arguably be supported by the Oxford Dictionaries 'word of the year' being *post-truth* (Flood, 2016), with widespread acknowledgement that currently, emotions prevail over 'facts'.

The implications of this to socially responsible behaviour and ethical consumption could therefore be construed as negative insofar that those of a cynical disposition are likely to offset responsibilities and assign blame elsewhere (Detert et al., 2008). In support, Detert et al. (2008) surmise that there are strong correlations between cynicism, moral disengagement and unethical decision making.

From a Millennials' perspective, Bertillon's *The cynicism of consumer morality* (2015) dissected online narrative from the Swedish chat forum *Hamsterpaj* in connection to their fashion consumption choices. His tripartite classifications are succinctly; 1) market cynicism - related to their perception of the central morality of brand values and/or corporate messages, 2) peer cynicism - related to their perception of their own social group's morality and consumer choices, and 3) self-cynicism - a direct reflexive disbelief in their own consumption habits and moral judgements. Acknowledging that elements of acceptance were evident, this relates back to Sloterdijk's *modernized, unhappy consciousness and cynicism is enlightened false consciousness* (Sloterdijk, 1987, pg5); in that they accept the morality judgement, they 'believe' they have sufficient knowledge, yet continue to consume or act in questionable ways.

This cynicism, coupled with an abundance of (mis)information, befits thought that peers along with the external environment; marketing, government, NGOs etc. can at times be feasibly construed as equally contradictory voices. For example, the concept of UK Government Aid to countries affected by war, perpetuated by arms sold by the UK; the 'interpreted truths' of the Brexit marketing campaign, or the horse meat scandal of UK supermarket supply chains. Consumers' morality can therefore be uncertain, lost in perceptions of interpreting marketing rhetoric; so, if they cannot escape it, they possibly accept and reproduce it in their own (sub) consciousness and morality framework (see Kozinets, 2002).

2.4.11 Section 4 summary

This final section of the literature review discussed how individuals make ethical or moral decisions based on their personal value priorities and related variables. Whilst discussing the individual, the narrative also incorporated the relevance to social groups along with internal and external considerations.

Key issues in 2.4.2 included the introduction of moral emotion and the consideration of empathy as a character trait (Hoffman, 2000; Batson, 1998; Eisenberg, 1986). They raised that as a moral principle, empathy is only really prompted when emotion becomes a realisation for the individual. Further support for this research also reinforced that value, especially moral studies were complex (Ossowska, 1971) and particularly that generalisations were ineffective if pursued.

Furthermore, moral and ethical decision-making connections to values (i.e. Shaw & Shiu, 2003; Rawwas, 1996; Muncy & Vitell, 1992) was acknowledged in 2.4.3. And with relevance to the Millennial demographic, the topic surrounding an individual's perceived locus of control appears coherent (Forte, 2004) suggesting an understanding of how they perceive their personal influence on societal or environmental issues is required. With additional consideration to the consequence and inclination of behaviour (or not) regarding ethical opportunities for those who appear to be conscious of external recognition or affiliation (Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Smith, 2007).

The topics of empathy and altruism were critiqued in 2.4.4, with empathy being acknowledged by Batson and Ahmad (2009) as salient to altruism, along with a motivation for collaboration and pro-social behaviour. Moreover, Hoffman (1987) suggested in contrary that a lack of consideration requires the individual to morally disengage, that in-turn pertains to less ethical behaviour and furthermore as Detert et al. (2008) suggest cynicism. Interestingly, further discussions regarding altruism and empathy proposed a tripartite classification. Schultz (2005) and Stern et al. (1993) suggest these as: egoistic – the self, social - others and biospheric – all living things. Where research suggests there is more positive correlation of an ethical value priority to social and biospheric and less, or even negatively, to egoistic persuasions (Schultz & Zelezny, 1998).

Additionally, the work of Stern et al. (1993) and Stern & Dietz (1994) added that those with an egoistic preference would behave in a manner beneficial for the self rather than those that consider others. With a contemporary context, the socio-environment is considered a factor for an individual's attitude, mind-set or perspective, as explored in 2.4.5. The political turmoil or crises (Cileli, 2000; Erikson, 1963) young Millennials are incurring / have incurred early into adulthood and the excess of information could be considered a key driver of individualism with associated attributes. Such as a self-orientated perspective including a propensity for freedom of choice, self-reliance, independence and the likeliness to having a competitive nature (Triandis, 1989). Individualism could therefore be akin to the earlier mentioned 'generation me' attribution of Twenge (2013) and Arnett (2013).

Values being central to this study were discussed in detail in 2.4.6 with the acknowledgement to prominent authors in the field. Considered to be formed in adolescence (Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004) and relatively stable through adulthood (Feather, 1992), values are believed to transcend situations and are the stimuli of an individual's behaviour (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Accepting that value priority formation is not solely an internal process, Fransson and Gärling (1999) again offered that the external, social environment along with peer consideration as highly influential to hierarchical importance – a consideration already discussed as pertinent to this demographic. The worth of Schwartz' research into the universal classification of values has proved relevant, particularly his higher order groupings. To aid this research, Schwartz's *self-transcendent* grouping are understood to benefit socially conscious consumers (Barbarossa, De Pelsmacker & Moons, 2017; Schwartz, Sagiv & Boehnke, 2000; Karp, 1996) containing Schwartz's values: universalism and benevolence.

2.4.7 looked at five related elements as indicators of decision making. In the context of ethical purchasing, Freestone (2007) suggested that a *need* can encounter a cost-benefit consideration when financial factors are prevalent (e.g. 'I *need* a car, I can't afford an electric car'). *Habit* was then discussed, where Eagly and Chaiken (1993) and Triandis (1977) proposed that an individual's ethical intention competes with habit at the point of purchase (e.g. 'I said I would buy fair trade from now on, however, at the cashpoint I bought my regular chocolate bar). The actual or perceived social pressure

in adhering or rejecting to social *norms* was then raised, considered a subjective notion that individual processes on any given occasion (Ajzen, 1988). Whereas the personalised *norm* was suggested by Gibbs (2003) and Schwartz (1977) as a construct of self-reflection to how the situation manifests in consideration of a moral obligation, consistent to the individual's values. In addition, authors concur therefore that an individual's behaviour is dictated by both social and personal subjective norms (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003; Bratt, 1999; Harland, Staats & Wilke, 1999). Discussion relating to *beliefs* followed, with findings proposing personal moral beliefs being an antecedent for consumer social responsibility (CnSR), or at least the intention to consume responsibly (Crane & Matter, 2004). *Beliefs* were also correlated to general motivation and action with some correlation to personal values although not conclusive (Schwartz, 2016; Döring et al., 2016). Finally, *attitudes* were acknowledged as less indicative to behaviour than values (Schwartz, 1996) although accepted as more influential when truly value expressive (Maio & Olson; 1994; Zanna, 1991; Katz, 1960).

2.4.8 discussed that those acknowledged to have a higher regard or concern for ethical issues were more likely to manifest into behaviour (Schwartz, 2016; Verplanken & Holland, 2002); in contrast to those who claim to place it with less importance (Lönqvist et al., 2013). Authors recommendations for further value research inquiry included Carlo and Randall's (2002) consideration of adolescent value studies to factor in context and subjectivity (with added caution regarding generalisations, also noted by Kurdek (1978), and Underwood and Moore (1982). Indeed, Maio et al. (2001) considered that the situational context can surpass the original motivation, particularly if the value is not prioritised for the individual. Cognitive reasoning, justification or understanding is acknowledged as required or the individual is susceptible to dispute or social comparison in the context and can incur a change in behaviour (Maio & Olson, 1998) or be less predictable (Lönqvist et al., 2013).

The ramifications to value indicative behaviour (Hardy, 2006; Gibbs, 2003; Verplanken & Holland, 2002; Blasi, 1983) was explored in 2.4.9, with relevance to those values important to the individual (Schwartz, 2015). When activated, these *important* values are noted significant antecedents to the individual's behaviour (Schwartz, 2015; Verplanken & Holland, 2002). And in acknowledgement, this Millennial adolescent value research builds in part on earlier studies by Aquino and Reed (2002; 2003) and

Pratt et al. (2003) whilst also considering the extrinsic perception and internal justification of such value-led actions for the individual, attributing Carlo and Randall's (2002) inference of ego and self-worth connotations. Indeed extrinsically, moral identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Hart, 2005; Bergman, 2004) was also considered as salient to behaviour or action (Gibbs, 2003; Blasi, 1983). Hardy (2006) furthermore suggests that when these values, goals or desires are central to the individual's self-identity there is a sense of responsibility or obligation to act consistently and behave appropriately, considered as *salience*.

This final section explored cynicism in 2.4.10, Sloterdijk (1987) offered feasibly a simple explanation, mentioning world-weariness and problematic sense-making culminating in a perspective of indifference. Moreover, Quinby's (1999) portrayal of techno-culture and the profusion of information available extended Sloterdijk's discussion. Quinby adding this has led to terminal cynicism due to a feeling of being overwhelmed (1999 p36). Indeed, Bertilsson (2015 p450) latterly continues that individual reasoning could even suggest that it has become the norm and 'quite reasonable'. Therein, this is feasibly congruent with the earlier discussion regarding Millennials' locus of control as Detert et al. (2008) proposed individuals with a cynical outlook are more inclined to assign blame to others; and that there is a link between cynicism, moral disengagement and unethical decision making.

Therein, the *key issues* discussed in this section are whether a lack of empathy or consideration for 'others' can inhibit ethical decision making, with the exploration into what values *do* influence their behaviour. Additionally, exploration around how consciousness of external recognition or affiliation for ethical behaviour (i.e. guilt, pride, reward) could be an antecedent for an individual. Discussion also raised if situation and/or context are significant factors in decision making, adding recognition to peer affiliation or approval as another factor that can influence decisions around their ethical behaviour. The topics of cynicism, moral disengagement and unethical decision making were also critiqued where feasible negative implications for ethical purchasing decisions could be evident.

The discussion was based on text spanning seven decades from prominent academics, philosophers, industry commentators / analysts and more; culminating in the recent debate about untrustworthiness in a perceived world of seemingly endless (mis)information to comprehend.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review chapter and key issues

Each section of the literature review has been summarised to highlight *key issues* for this research in terms of areas for new or further study and the gaps it aims to address. The aim of this research is to offer new knowledge around CSR, environmental strategy and marketing communication relevant to the Millennial demographic. Furthermore, the research intention is to explore a selection of the cohort's opinions and value priorities relating to consumption and behaviour with a focus on CSR perceptions and personal social responsibility. In acknowledgement of the research's contribution to knowledge, the intention is to explore 'if', and indeed the reasons 'why' the topic is or isn't a priority for them.

The first section of the chapter (2.1) looked at the premise and interpretation of CSR from many angles including the *business case* and suggesting that corporate giving could be an 'oxymoron' (Stepenak, 2010 and see Lee & Fernandez, 2009). It proposed that organisational antecedents were diverse and open to interpretation by both the host and the stakeholder. This in itself proposes a subjective comprehension as to how the consumer may perceive the action and questioning that may arise. Moreover, the role of marketing was introduced as a pre-orchestrated conduit to the transference of CSR narrative and how identity and 'fit' were considered as relevant (Schmeltz, 2017; Lee et al. 2011). The quandary that the literature raises and this research can consider is how Millennials perceive CSR marketing communications with some authors recommending that CSR marketing communications reduces scepticism, (Bachmann, & Ingenhoff, 2016; Maon et al., 2009; Pomering, 2009) yet the stakeholder understanding doesn't necessarily perceive it as authentic, genuine, brand (or consumer) affiliated, or indeed 'true'.

Therein, disengagement was considered, and this research looks to extend on the work by Devinney et al. (2010) where they proposed 'The myth of the ethical consumer'.

Additionally, Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) proposed '*are consumers even aware of CSR implementation?*' suggesting a potential lack of awareness with the added, more recent statement from D'Acunto et al (2019) suggesting '*do they care?*' The financial implications of their 'cash point conservatism' requires revisiting in addition to exploration as to the consciousness of the consumer regarding the consequences of their choices, proposed by Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw (2005).

The second section (2.2) focused on a discussion of ethics, focussing on the consumer/individual perspective but acknowledging organisations and again, marketing as relevant. The positive benefits of a connection between organisational CSR initiatives and the socially responsible consumer was proposed by many (i.e. Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Although within the 21st century context, Jones et al. (2009) acknowledged organisational reputation is vulnerable online (supported by Lim & Greenwood 2017; Woestenburg & Machado, 2018). Yet, the ever-expanding online proliferation of CSR narrative is unavoidable and pertinent to corporate-consumer communication (Sajid, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The section further considered theories relating to 'fit' with the focus on how the consumer should be considered, significant for proactive decision making. In continuation from Lichtenstein et al (2004, p29), exploration was suggested as to consumer perceived CSR initiatives being inconsistent to personal values where cognition 'is unlikely to increase brand equity and may even harm it'. In contrast, Broderick et al. (2003) and Peloza and Shang (2011) proposed organisational communications should be congruent to the consumer's values or beliefs, offering suitable support in linking the key areas of this research together to provide new knowledge.

The discussion progressed to look at the target demographic Millennials in section 2.3. Deloitte (2017), Cone (2015) and Neilson (2015) added context as to how the generation is perceived in relation to corporate and social responsibility, albeit with recognised overtones of homogenisation (Gurău, 2012; Lazarevic, 2012). Conflicting views were portrayed with authors attributing a social conscience with propensity for behavioural change (e.g. Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle & Attmann 2010; Greenberg & Weber, 2008; Hira, 2007) and their concern is other to the self (e.g. Twenge, 2013; Arnett, 2013). Therein, exploration as to a revised perspective of any attribution to either the attributed 'generation me' or 'generation we' (Twenge, 2013; Arnett, 2013) with

connotations of individualism or collectivism was found pertinent. Alternatively, powerlessness and the perceived locus of control was raised yet Bateman and Phippen (2016) proposed that self-identity was inherent and the dominant antecedent of their decision making. Furthermore, self-identity and brand affiliation were recognised as significant to their life-stage (i.e. Noble et al., 2009; Erikson, 1963) along with other financial and 'socialization issues' raised by Noble et al. (2009).

Studies into Millennials and social responsibility is clarified as challenging but not impossible (i.e Beckmann, 2007; Monin, 2007). Additionally, understanding their needs and wants (Chattananon et al., 2007) in an un-patronising manner can be achieved with careful consideration by avoiding pre-conceived notions of social responsibility knowledge and caution regarding methodological issues (including power) should be considered (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Chan, 1999).

The final section of the literature review (2.4) looked at values. The section deconstructed values' studies and covered ethics, morals, empathy & altruism, individualism & collectivism, along with the connotations / separation from needs, habits, norms, beliefs and attitudes. The critique acknowledged the recognised contributions of Rokeach and Schwartz in the field of value studies; with Schwartz (1994) offering an accepted framework of universal value classifications including meanings, differentiation and related semantics all pertinent to support this study.

With connection to Millennials, values were described to be formed in adolescence (Hitlin and Piliavin, 2004) and believed to be relatively stable through adulthood (Feather, 1992). Their ability to be transferable as an influence in various contexts added support to their relevance (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990), accepting that only values that an individual rates highly as being influential (Schwartz, 2016; Verplanken & Holland, 2002) - herein, the 'value priority' theory being a focus to this research.

Discussion regarding empathy considered that cognitive attributes for the individual (Hoffman 1984, 1987; Davis 1980) regarding moral reasoning was pertinent, where a 'lack of consideration' alludes to unethical behaviour. Moreover, moral disengagement was also attributed to connections between cynicism, moral identity and unethical decision making (Detert, Trevino & Sweitzer, 2008).

In contrast, it was acknowledged that individuals can self-justify shared value identities (Bertilsson, 2009) with connections to similar groups / peers and organisations such as,

ethical food consumption or animal welfare (Pecoraro & Uutisalo, 2014). Furthermore, this proposed exploration into individuals' consciousness of attributed values with external considerations of positive association i.e. guilt, pride, reward, pleasure etc. (Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Smith, 2007). With moral identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Hart, 2005; Bergman, 2004) as pertinent, this proposed that if a positive ethical persona or identity was not desired by the individual, then what was? Situation and context were suggested as significant ((Maio & Olson, 2001; 1998) to explore, along with the role of their peers (Noble et al., 2009; Nicholls, 2002; Oskamp et al., 1991; Newhouse, 1990). The closing section of the review concluded with discussion regarding cynicism and morality. The discussion offered that cynicism could be a by-product of the information abundant technological / social media fuelled environment that this demographic has only known (predicted by Sloterdijk (1987) nearly 30 years ago, and Quinby (1999) 10 years later). With Detert et al. (2008) suggesting that those with a cynical outlook are more likely to deflect responsibility and assign blame elsewhere. With opportunity for further knowledge, Bertilsson (2015) proffers that to Millennials, cynicism has become normalised and inherent to the generation, adding providence for contemporary exploration.

Thus, socially responsible consumption and behaviour has been debated and subjectivity deliberated, considering the relevant areas of exploration: demographic generalisations, CSR, CnSR, social norms, peer advocacy, identity, empathy, the effectiveness of marketing, brand affinity, their life-stage role in society, and value priorities.

Chapter 2.0 intended to demonstrate how the secondary research provided direction for the primary research that follows and the qualitative approach that befits. The challenge herein, being to contribute to these previous conversations in line with the central exploratory nature to this document. The following chapter will explain the methodological approach taken to gain a better understanding of how a selection of Millennials view social responsibility, CSR, personal ethically considered consumption and in turn, their personal attributed behaviour.

3.0 Methodology

What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.

(Heisenberg 1958, p58)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodological approach that will consider my philosophical position. Research methodologies and my theoretical framework in relation to collecting the primary data are discussed and reviewed to illustrate the path of research undertaken.

Therefore, with respect to the exploratory nature of the topic, a qualitative interpretivist approach and subjective viewpoint are the primary foci within this chapter. The discussion looks to relevant literature to illustrate the theoretical standpoint undertaken, with analysis and debate regarding the chosen approach of interviews followed by thematic analysis acknowledging constructionism and hermeneutics.

The chapter is structured to allow the reader a logical progression of understanding the approach taken, beginning with the methodological theoretical perspective in 3.2. The most applicable method, 3.3, includes the interview questions (3.3.2) that illustrates how the *key issues* from the literature review (2.5) are explored. 3.4 explains and discusses the chosen thematic analysis process. Reflexivity is discussed in 3.5, with ethical considerations in 3.6, and a summary to close (3.7).

3.2 Ontology, epistemology & theoretical perspectives

Challenging one's perception of *reality* as part of DBA process has proved evidently more troublesome than expected. The premise of categorising my position amongst the recognised presupposed classifications within academia was therefore troublesome yet enlightening. It is appreciated that the theoretical framework has significant implications in being influential as to how the data is collated, studied and particularly interpreted (Mertens, 2005).

With pertinence to the context of this research, the previous literature review has offered support and direction. The notion of exploring an individual's social responsibility essentially sits within the moral domain and as Ossowska, (1971) explained, the perspectives of individuals with similar characteristics or demographics i.e. 'Millennials' can be totally contrasting (good for one, bad for another or indifferent for a third); that strongly suggests heterogeneous connotations. Colleoni (2012) acknowledged the understanding of the consumer was paramount, inferring the heterogeneity of the individual's value systems (ethics, cultural beliefs and behaviour), also alluded to by Arnould and Thompson (2005). As discussed, the generalised Millennial headlines regarding ethical issues (e.g. Deloitte, 2017; Cone, 2015) were in contrast to the voices I experienced and these homogeneous suppositions were lacking in explaining any consciousness regarding their own behaviour or views on corporate social responsibility initiatives (Bucic, Harris & Arli, 2012). Thus, this research proffers a deeper understanding looking into their meanings, concepts, definitions, and descriptions of related narrative to progress knowledge and be beneficial for industry (as per the DBA).

Indeed, with relevance to marketing research, Gurău (2012, p110) stated that there was a *'danger to adopt a reductionist approach'* regarding their behaviour and the social reality as they feel or live it. This including traditional marketing segmentation models that are *'insufficient to describe and represent the complexity of the present day society'*, supported by Lazarevic (2012) and literally by Bateman and Phippen (2016, p78) who raised that the *'Millennial consumer crosses socio-political boundaries and cannot successfully be defined by social class, age, gender or political party.'* With guidance to consider that young people's thoughts, needs and behaviour become more multifaceted upon reaching certain milestones (Foscht et al., 2009), the life-stage consideration of the individual should be taken into account (Gurău, 2012) and the variables therein for each participant to discover the 'how, 'what' and 'why' within the given context.

As per the title, *'An exploration of Millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR'* the 'exploration' component proposes the researcher's requirement to familiarise them self with an issue or topic in order to satisfy curiosity and desire for additional or better understanding. To explore *perceptions* and a Millennial's value

priority, my belief is that an individual's choices and actions are a cognitive process that is based on a knowledge and understanding of our world that alters continuously, a view shared by Auger, Devinney, and Louviere (2007). This posits that, although open to criticisms (i.e. Diefenbach, 2009), interviews are an applicable and recognised method that allows an exploration into participants' views and response to the associated topics. Referred to by Manning (1997) as 'dialogical conversations', it is supported that interviews are a method of viewing reality with an accepted authenticity.

As Fylan (2005, p65) explains, semi-structured interviews (in particular) are essentially conversations where the interaction is flexible allowing variation between participants, whilst covering the pre-conceived topics of exploration. They are also widely recognised as a powerful and insightful method of data research and notably, interviews are acknowledged particularly relevant to the social sciences where understanding of human nature is required (Fontana & Frey, 1994). With the discussion around perceptions and values, the acknowledgement of acquiring subjective perspectives required participants discussing their thoughts and actions relating to what we both considered to exist in the mutually understood, external 'real world'. Furthermore, these 'real world' conversations consisted of numerous discussion points and topics as the interview developed, guided by a semi-structured format. However, as the transcripts were thematically analysed then the specificity of their narrative (and my subjective interpretation) proved more complex. For example, when discussion regarding using a *paper recycling bin* or driving in a *hybrid car* (topics that arose during the conversations), it is concurred that these are tangible and an 'objective' reality assumption (Orlikowski, & Baroudi, 1991) that exist in what can be considered a shared understanding of 'the real world'. However, when they discussed how they were *cynical to marketing* or had a *dislike of power*, then an objective reality proves problematic to categorically define due to subjective interpretations of such constructs.

This complexity and perhaps naïve separation proved challenging and this led me to consider a realist ontological perspective as per Johnson and Duberley (2000). Yet to consider self-labelling as a realist then there is acknowledgment that things exist, or something is real. Adding further complication, ontological realists' approach from

various encampments (i.e. see Haack, 1987) and then there's the debate, *what exactly do you mean by the terms 'exist' or 'real'?*

Ontology is often referred to as a branch of philosophy concerning *'the essence of phenomena and the nature of their existence'* (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p17) suggesting a comprehension of the real vs. the ethereal. The complexity of classification is clearly not an everyday debate for the non-academic, however the key issue is to differentiate between accepting that a social reality is 'out there' independent from us (the realist view), or is it a *'creation, or projection, of our consciousness and cognition'* (the subjectivist ontological view) (ibid, p18). Ontological realism accepts that reality exists independently of our cognition and observation (Bunge, 2006; Trigg, 1980; Sellars, 1917), although this still lies open a range of perspectives (including positivism). The key separation here is negating the association to positivism's 'empirical realism', the belief that only that which is *observable* and *measurable* is 'real' (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). It is Kant's Transcendental Idealism that offers a resolution to my *hybrid car* vs. *dislike of power* quandary; he separates them and calls the 'real objects' *noumena* and the 'thought objects' *phenomena* (Kant, 1999). Kant's objective ontology advocates that reality cannot be objectively observed and that our brain constructs meaning to the cognitive process, affected by our a priori knowledge (Ajdukiewicz, 1973). This knowledge formation clearly brings us into the realm of epistemology.

The research outlined herein, makes objective ontological assumptions. As that suggests, it is considered that reality is existent although interpreted through social engagement. This, through the interview method, is a shared experience and shared understanding of topics and subject matter raised; however, as interviewer and researcher my understanding and analysis is interpreted, therefore it has a subjective epistemology - through my lens of comprehension. Suitably, Creswell (2003), and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2011) state that interpretivist researchers discover reality through their participant's views and experiences. Moreover, Schwandt, (2003, p300) states that it is in the interpretive 'tradition' to objectify 'that which is to be interpreted', quoting Bernstein (1983, p135, in Schwandt, 2003, p300), *"object' orientated, in the sense that it directs us to the texts, institutions, practices or forms of life that we are seeking to understand"*; with pertinence to the transcribed text for analysis.

The criticality of this position therein has connotations to how knowledge prevails within the research context. The realist ontology is accepted, in the attempt to explore the 'real phenomena' of the 'real world' (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p20) that is in-turn subjectively approached and understood. This conflicts somewhat with Hudson and Ozanne (1988, p509) who state that '*interpretivists deny that one real world exists*'. It is believed that the entity in question exists if my interviewee and I both believe it to (i.e. hybrid cars or recycling paper), yet my interpretation may vary from theirs (or indeed anyone else's). These literal, tangible examples are easier to comprehend as objective, but regarding the *power relationships* or *manifestations of cynicism* that were literal in the text (or the data) it was my interpretation that constructed meaning, beliefs or intonation etc. Although Levering (2006, p462) posited that whether an '*experience is true or not is unhelpful*', continuing that it is more important to ask whether they are '*convincing or unconvincing*'. Thus, as Cohen and Crabtree (2006) offer, the knowledge outcomes this research intends to contribute to is open to critical analysis as there is no infallible belief in an unquestionable single interpretation of the data (in particular of human discourse and meaning). This is invariably indicative to *any* proposed output or knowledge claims that *any* research will endeavour to create (Creswell, 2003). The author is inherent in the process and the output is based on their perspective on the reality (ontology) and their theory of knowledge (epistemology).

However, Crotty (1998, pg10) morphs these 2 components '*the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of a meaningful reality*', presenting the 2 elements as mutually dependent. He elaborates that an individual's epistemological stance implies their ontology and similarly in reverse, a view echoed by Burrell and Morgan (1979). And the epistemological approach that *this* research utilises is applicable to how the participant's voice and therein the qualitative data is understood by me i.e. subjectively through interpretation. As Johnson and Duberley (2000, p150) explain;

It is from the position that knowledge entails both social construction and the transactions of human knowers with an independent reality where it is possible to discern a very different understanding of realism

With relevance, this research required obtaining the participants' narrative (as members of the Millennial demographic), their *voice* was essential. Within the interviews the participants were asked as to how they view, think and act in regard to CSR and consumer social responsibility; trust was placed in this narrative as *their* truth and reality (latterly dissected through analysis). Furthermore, my role is self-acknowledged as axiologically value-laden, subjectively analytical (Symon & Cassell, 2012). From the recruitment, via the interview to the analysis of the text and interpretation it is undeniable that my influence is unavoidable in the process; my role is not passive, neutral or objective. And as researcher I am '*conducting a value-laden enterprise in a particular historical context*' (Johnson & Duberley, 2013, p62) that must be essentially transparent. Moreover, my *values* will have influenced judgements, through the direction of the semi-structured interviews and when interpreting the data. It could also be said that it is influenced by my sociocultural and historical experiences related to the topic, location, and use of language;

...no research can be free from the taint of the researchers own knowledge, understanding and assumptions, and neither can the reader consult the data except through their own subjectivity.

(Cole, Chase, Couch, and Clark, 2011, p142)

At this juncture, it could be deemed pertinent to consider the 'why' as to my reasons or direction of this research. My position upon commencing was influenced by my career that has primarily focused on the 18-25 year old demographic (in various employment positions). Having worked with this age group since I was 18, my perspective is that I believe I have an understanding, or at least a willingness, that includes empathy for their life-stage and explorative, evolving maturity. However, with what could be considered an 'open book' approach, my view was always to hear what they were thinking about the topic and particularly their reasons *why* - perhaps with uncertainty to homogenous generalisations made about them. Thus, where my values and any bias have been consciously apparent during this journey, every attempt has been made to document it and make transparent throughout. Further discussion regarding reflexive attributes and acknowledgement follow in the *Reflexivity* section (3.5), later in this chapter.

In accordance to the social constructions of Johnson and Duberley (2013), Berger and Luckman (1967, p3) previously posited that knowledge is '*developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations*' or 'socially constructed'. Knowledge is accepted as ever-evolving and contextual where multiple factors require consideration to appreciate their meaning; particularly regarding qualitative interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). And regarding the interpretivist approach, the analysis of each individual participant's ethical value priorities creates a considerable deliberation in knowledge formation. Therefore, with value priority pertinence, the task is locating epistemological literature in support of locating the reasons 'why' certain issues are more significant and 'what' factors influence 'when' decisions are made for an individual's behaviour choice. For these cognitive based reasons, it then becomes problematic *at any depth* to any approach other than the realm of qualitative interpretivism. With the analytical exploration of their value priority meanings, as pivotal to this research, Sayer (2000, p17) states;

Meaning has to be understood, it cannot be measured or counted, and hence there is always an interpretative or hermeneutic element in social science.

In support of this, von Glaserfeld (2007, p14) posits that '*interpretation implies awareness of more than one possibility*' and that the exploration required by this line of inquiry will undoubtedly require a methodological transparency and reflexivity to be acceptable by those of a similar persuasion. In their book, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985, p84) Lincoln and Guba also hold the notion that reality is 'constructed' in the mind of the individual where there are '*an infinite number of constructions*', to which I concur. In search of the participants' meanings it is therefore accepted that their constructions are numerous or multi-faceted, with implications as to how they share their narrative and reasoning behind it (further construct discussion to follow). Akin to Lincoln and Guba, the key to commonality is mutually understood discourse; of course, this is at liberty of re-interpretation, but nevertheless acceptable for developmental knowledge, partially or otherwise. In perhaps paradigm tainted criticism, Crotty (1998, p48) discusses these interpretations, '*...may be judged fulfilling and rewarding... 'useful', 'liberating', 'fulfilling', 'rewarding' interpretations, yes. 'True' or 'valid' interpretations, no*' with the caveat, *true* and *valid* being positivist terminology without relevance to

this research; see 'trustworthiness' in Lincoln & Guba, (1985) or further counter arguments e.g. Golafshani, (2003); Shenton, (2004).

However, in search of *useful* and *rewarding* research Crotty (1998, p64) supports that a temporal understanding is central to any comprehension of knowledge;

Historical and cross-cultural comparisons should make us very aware that, at different times and in different places, there have been and are very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena.

Or 'knowledge evolves', he continues with emphasis on heterogeneity (ibid);

We need to recognise that different people may well inhabit quite different worlds. Their different worlds constitute for them diverse ways of knowing, distinguishable sets of meanings...

Furthermore, it is believed the meanings that are explored within their narrative are inherently linked to their value priority assimilation; which is invariably influenced by any manner of external stimuli (e.g. see Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber, 2011; Walker & Kent, 2009) and this needs to be explored. The primary research is, in part, an exploration of how corporate communication, peers and influential others as external stimuli, influence or connect to these values (or not). Similarly, the study of Millennial brand affiliation, knowledge, loyalty or 'social quiescence' (Festinger, 1954 p125 supported by Alick & Govorun, 2005) will also be prevalent if uncovered correctly. However, literature discussing anomalies is limited; with only occasional references alluding to its existence. Thus, the discussion in justification and support of qualitative interviews/conversations is required. Auger et al. (2007, p377) suggest that the standard format used in consumer research negates the opportunity for locating overarching consumer '*true attitudes or intentions*', referring to questionnaires. In addition, and as previously discussed, many academics have documented how an intention-behaviour gap is prevalent including where the decisions are made at the point of purchase consciously or otherwise (see Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Folkes & Kamins, 1999; Roberts, 1996; Cone & Roper, 1994). Critically, these studies depict the belief that consumers are indeed aware of socially responsible practices (and to some extent, consequences) *but* these findings are based on positivist constrained survey

methods. Therein, their understandings of the data are summarised or reduced, presenting their conclusions for feasible generalisation or replication purposes, indicative to the approach (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). It also suggests that they are oversimplifying any multifaceted meanings or interpretations regarding the intention becoming the behaviour (Belk, Devinney, & Eckhardt, 2005; Fukukawa, 2003). Indeed, Beckmann (2007, p31) raised the consideration of researchers' bias in regard to CSR study methods; "...*'opinion polls' reflect a high level of interest, 'quasi/experimental' methodologies offer generally inconclusive findings and 'qualitative' research leans towards disinterest or scepticism of CSR*". Thus, the consideration of exploring an authentic or alternative interpretation or 'more honest or holistic' account of their *actual* behaviour and perspectives requires attention and accountability of method bias.

It is not unreasonable to generalise that the majority of research has aims and objectives, and this thesis abides by its own. Therein, the exploratory qualitative favoured interview is beneficial for exploring the notion that consumers have a conscious or subconscious ethical *value system* that is taken into account when purchasing or behaving environmentally (e.g. Arvidsson, 2011; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Holt, 2002), also raised in the literature review. In this context, this *value system* refers to a moral (sub/) consciousness of 'how much' salience the choice impacts on the individual; that, in-turn impacts on their ethical opinions, behaviour and /or on purchasing decisions. This research therefore, through the flexibility of semi-structured interviews and relaxed conversational approach explored this salience with significance to the individual's socio-cultural context, and links to individual behaviour; considering sociological and to a lesser extent anthropological perspectives (Watson, 2011). And as Manning (1997, p101) describes the challenge, the participant's narratives require the researcher's considered approach as *'to the complex and heterogeneous voices with the goal of disclosing value systems assumptions in an inclusive portrayal of the context'*. This is supported in reference to explaining human behaviour by *'why people do things that they do in various social contexts'* from Gill and Johnson, (2010, p148). Moreover, this approach acknowledges that qualitative research enables knowledge acquisition regarding; *'activities, events, occurrences, and behaviours and seeks an understanding of actions, problems, and processes in their*

social context' (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p3). It is therein relevant to the central necessity of this exploratory research to acknowledge the qualitative narrative, open-ended and evolving that allowed participants share their perspectives and reflections. Interpretivism's interconnectivity to the qualitative approach can feasibly achieve this with its '*propensity to make a valuable contribution to knowledge and understanding of behaviour and outcomes'* (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2011, p268).

As with the very essence of the interview-transcription-analysis process (and the Sayer quote previously (2000)), the discussion now progresses to philosophical hermeneutics that acknowledges '*understanding is participative, conversational and dialogic'* (Schwandt, 2003, p302). For clarification, hermeneutics was proposed by Kearney (1991, p277) as '*... a method for deciphering indirect meaning, a reflective practice of unmasking hidden meanings beneath apparent ones'*. Common discussion notes that the in-depth analysis of this narrative infers the 'hermeneutic circle' where it could be considered problematic to distinguish meaning of the whole by understanding the parts, simultaneously understanding the parts, by considering the whole (notably credited to the works of Wilhelm Dilthey and Martin Heidegger). However, in hermeneutics this is deemed beneficial in obtaining a broader understanding whilst accepting that any interpretation is accessed by the researcher's '*socialized pre-understanding'* (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p66). Reason's description (1981, p243) that hermeneutics is more the *map* than the *actual territory* in so much that it will always be the researcher's translation of the empirical rather than the *truth or reality* is also considered as debated earlier. Yet Grey (2013, p26) stresses the opportunity that it offers;

Social reality is too complex to be understood through the process of observation. The scientist must interpret in order to achieve deeper levels of knowledge and also self-understanding.

It is understood that hermeneutics and interpretivism have in their *essence* a '*commitment to verstehen'* (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p21); this refers to the subjective interpretations of the participant's cognition into how they behold actions, behaviour and understanding. Furthermore, with belief that as individuals we interpret our understandings and construct our realities through dialogue this research befits the

perspectives associated with these 'constructs'. Accordingly, Grey (2013, p23) states '*In terms of epistemology, interpretivism is closely linked to constructivism.*' However, as Hood (2006) cautiously suggests, the majority of researchers will be unable to classify themselves concisely within *any* typology.

Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon.

(Crotty, 1998, p9)

Additionally, Schwandt (1994) offers that we are all constructionists if we believe '*the mind is active in the construction of knowledge*' (p237) and goes on to say:

We invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience, and further, we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience.

These quotes appear to sit comfortably within an interpretivist epistemology and acceptance of a mutually constructed output (with hermeneutic interpretation) (Erlandson, 1993). Crotty speaks of the exploration or discovery of their individual meaning and Schwandt describes the role of the conscious mind in sense-making. What is clear is that with transparency the analysis and discussion chapters that follow, attempt to find 'meaning' to the participants' narrative, albeit accepting this is not an absolute, objective truth (Crotty, 1998, p8). With direct relevance, these meanings or findings are therefore constructed (subjectively) as the data is interpreted (Crotty, 1998, p43).

Social constructionism is also said to be influenced by Weber (1864-1920) in how 'ideas' and particularly 'values' influence social behaviour. Moreover, discussing the ephemeral with participants requires clarification in the dialogue and as Bryman (2012, p18) attributes, the '*notion implies that, rather than being treated as a distinct inert entity... is construed as something whose meaning is built up during interaction. That meaning ... will vary by both time and place*' supported by Garfinkel (1984). Again, stressing the contextual and temporal connotations for transparency of justification.

Thus, narrative and its interpretation are acknowledged as subjective; and finally, interestingly said by Berger and Luckmann to be shaped by two significant phases in our lives. The first is said to happen in our childhood with 'primary socialization' which is shaped by those with a significant role in our upbringing. The second is shaped through adulthood and happens *'in the context of a specific social structure'* (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p183) where during 'secondary socialization' we acquire *'role specific vocabularies'* that perpetuate *'the internalization of semantic fields'* (p158). This second phase is where the Millennial participants are envisaged to be, beginning their understanding in shaping their own thoughts and opinions along with how this may reflect or contribute to their identity. And furthermore, as I want to understand this subjective sense making of Millennial individuals an interpretive, qualitative interview-based approach was chosen.

In reference to the aims and a reminder of the research objectives:

1. To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their consumer social responsibility (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority.
2. To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics.
3. To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation.
4. To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.

The following explains how this positioning influenced the data method collection and analysis.

3.3 Method

Pragmatically, the DBA journey for a new researcher requires some knowledge relating to acknowledged methodological associated method frameworks. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p188) present a model for the line of naturalistic inquiry (their interpretation of constructivism) that offers guidance for a novice, with resonance to the applicable methodological approach within this research.

Although acknowledging that some may infer positivist terminology (e.g. see Hudson & Ozanne, (1988) for criticisms) Lincoln and Guba's model is said to iterate until redundancy; where the researcher engages in 'purposive sampling', 'inductive data analysis', 'grounded theory' and 'emergent design' involving 'negotiated outcomes'. Accepting the 'human element' the process utilises qualitative methods with an appreciation of tacit knowledge, within this four-part process of enquiry. This leads to a 'case report' which is both 'idiographically interpreted' and 'tentatively applied' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The method explained herein discusses how it best suits this line of exploration and how the Lincoln and Guba method has inspired but not become resolute to the research approach.

3.3.1 The interview and semi-structured approach

The interview is a well-accepted method of data collection (Bryman, 2001) and relevant to the applied aforementioned philosophical position as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994). Moreover, the interview is regularly recognised as a significant part of an interpretivist research component due to the intrinsic subjective influence that it plays in the data collection. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Wengraf (2001) further support this when they refer to the method as a co-creation by both parties, moreover 'the raison d'etre of constructivist inquiry... mutually discovered and constructed' (Manning, 1997, p95). Furthermore, as this research is entitled 'An exploration...' the interview, in its less than fully structured form, allows a multiplicity of investigation with discussion of applicability herein.

It is appreciated that there is a significant quantity of literature available to guide interviews i.e. Eisenhardt (1989), Dick (1990), Stake (1995) and Veal (2011) and appreciatively the process, guidance and application is essential to comprehend for a

new researcher. As this research has outlined, several areas of discussion were required with a variety of unknown responses expected, thus a flexibility in approach allowing *'the discovery or elaboration of information'* (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008, p291) from participants; with an unknown variety of responses expected it befitted the semi-structured format (Longhurst, 2009). Noted as the most common of all qualitative research methods (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p194), the semi-structured interview creates a more comfortable space for people to share information (Krueger & Casey, 2000) away from a more formal, fully-structured interview technique.

Testing the research method is recommended (and was undertaken) to ascertain or 'trial run' the interview and conversation technique especially when research theories are at their most inductive stage. The trial was performed with an academic 'critical friend' and highlighted areas that could allow further exploration, along with suggestions regarding the flow of topics. Having illustrated that the semi-structured format be the most appropriate, this befits the exploration of participant perceptions relating to what could be considered complex or sensitive topics (Barriball & While, 1994). It also enables the interviewer to rationalise the less structured nature of investigation and probe for information (Yin, 1994), relevant to the thesis' emergent nature. Similarly, the variety of socio backgrounds expected from the cohort would not benefit from a structured format. The positivist leaning to standardise questions to feasibly negate miscommunication is counter-argued with the ability to adapt the questions, semantically to befit the individual's understanding - changing the words but not the meaning, as participant's vocabularies are accepted to differ (Treece & Treece 1986). Moreover, the flexibility and accessibility of the semi-structured interview (being closer to a conversation than other methods), suitably allows the *'interviewer to modify the style, pace and ordering of questions to evoke the fullest responses from the interviewee'* (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p246).

The semi-structured approach also allows the researcher to prepare key points or questions (Longhurst, 2003) yet enable them to be incorporated into the dialogue, building a rapport that lets the participant's conversation flow organically. Moreover, a developed rapport between the two parties assists the interviewee to consider and share their world viewpoint (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Alternatively, it is acknowledged that

without a relaxed relationship it can impose an academic, power relationship or unfamiliar perspective, ineffective for the outcome (Fontana & Frey, 1994) and with pertinence, particularly relevant to the student-lecturer dynamic. Having spent a considerable amount of time in the presence of this demographic discussing ethical and sustainability issues previously, I was aware that some were self-conscious of their opinions relating to the topic. Thus, steps were taken to make them feel relaxed and that they never felt *judged* or *belittled* when I was communicating with to them. This was done by choosing an informal, familiar setting for them, dressing casually and constantly reminding them that the interview was purely an exploration of their personal views and behaviour. They were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and it wasn't a test of their knowledge or an indictment of their character, regardless of their response, ensuring them no judgement by me would be made. They were also reassured that their narrative would be anonymised.

Moreover, the semi-structured nature provides a reliable source of 'cross-case analysis' (Perry, 1998) as the subsequent interviews commence and develop into the project. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p269) elaborate that the naturalistic interview style will subsequently become more structured 'for triangulation and member-checking'. They continue that it is almost always overt and that in style it is neutral where the two parties see each other as peers.

3.3.2 The interview questions

The following presents the resulting semi-structured format that illustrates how the *key issues* from the literature review were incorporated, in line with the research aims:

Step 1 - Before we talk brands, on a scale of 1-10 (10 the highest) how would you rate yourself on 'how green am I?' How does this compare to 5/10 years ago (1-10)? Explore discussion as to how much they 'do' - is it more/less than in the past?

This was to get them to think about what they do; what they think about CnSR and begin to reflect upon how they feel about this, are they aware and do they care, whilst making their thoughts explicit. By considering their past, it offered discussion to their

home life and how it has changed since becoming more independent along with their purchasing and behavioural decision making. This in turn supported areas from the literature review *key issues* including whether there is evidence of 'Consumer Social Responsibility' and if so, how much and in what way it manifests. Furthermore, it intended to explore if they are 'generation me' with evidence of individualism, or 'generation we' akin to collectivism as appropriate attributes to ethical behaviour. Probing offered the opportunity to see if a perception of inability to significantly contribute infer a tendency to pursue alternate priorities. Discussion regarding available finance and/or beneficial social image as a priority over ethical consumption decision making could also be explored. Their tone and attitude to topics they discussed could suggest a lack of empathy or consideration that may or may not pertain to non-engagement of ethical decision making, whilst situation and/or context could supersede decision making. And finally, the topic of peer affiliation, approval or external recognition may arise as influential to their ethical behaviour.

Step 2 - Which brands do you affiliate to? Why?

This was to explore personal or shared identity and their attitude to consumption, along with providing relatable content that could be used later in the interview.

Step 3 - Looking at this selection of brands - 'how green / socially responsible' do they think they are?' - Perhaps use the 1-10 scale if it helps. Contrast and compare the brands higher/lower, then ask where they might rank on the Global CSR RepTrak 2015 top 100 (Reputation Tracker based on 100 most highly regarded and familiar global companies in 15 countries, 150,000 interviews conducted).

Step 4 - Discuss the actual Reputation Tracker ranking results and on into their connections / affiliations / pre-conceptions / use of these brands (if not covered already). Do they think any of the brands have raised their green agenda in the last 10 years? What are their perceptions regarding this?

The participants were shown a series of brand logos (appendix 8), the intention here was to offer a benchmark of globally recognised brands as a catalyst for discussion to all participants. This would hopefully trigger narrative or anecdotes from their

conscious or tacit knowledge relating to CSR awareness, brand identity / affiliation and level of concern for such initiatives or discrepancies. It was intended to explore their attitude to marketing communications; 'fit' / identity, indifference, incongruence, exuberance or scepticism. The conversation allowed participants to consider prior brand knowledge or experience along with financial connotations, feasibly in line with beneficial social image and peer approval or affiliation.

Step 5 - Evolve into assessing their attitude towards ethical consumption choices with relevance to brand and shared identity; 'what do you think buying/owning 'brand X' says about you?' Bring Coke Life into the discussion. Ask how they would visually identify someone who may be a '10' on the scale.

This enabled a revisiting of personal CnSR discussion whilst openly connecting the identity theories or 'fit' whilst also exploring any notions of 'generation me' or 'generation we' and indeed if they care. It was pertinent here that disinterest may arise, and cynicism / scepticism may feasibly appear. Brand affiliation and ethical disposition or value priority would become evident, along with identity ramifications that could offer insight into positivity or disinterest. How they perceive brand messages or marketing communications could be explored; relevance, brand loyalty / pride in ownership or scepticism and incongruence. With the suggestion that a brand they like becoming more ethically minded, empathy for others could arise whilst an honest account of how this impacted their alternate priorities i.e. available finance, product attributes or peer approval.

The identification of an ethically '10' consumer allowed their character / narrative to illustrate how they considered what this might be, and how that reflected on them, having initially disclosed that they were less than the maximum. Individualism or collectivism could be evident when considering others and what they could personally contribute, pending on narrative and emphasis of their delivery. This would assist exploration relating to life-stage, locus of control or appropriation of responsibility.

Step 6 - Refer to the brand they may have personally affiliated to - What if that brand were to go '100% green'? Continue to explore their perception or

experience of how a brand is perceived by being green or ethically focused
(introduce the Prius car to discuss)

This hypothetical concept was to get them to consider how the affiliated brand, perceivably prioritising their ethical values affected them and if they cared. Identity constructs were again feasibly expected whilst the conversation was open to comments of both positivity, advocacy, future consumption or affiliation, and cynicism / scepticism should that be apparent. Brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' would be explored that could pursue how, and in what way, do they consider social responsibility when making purchasing or behavioural decisions. Again, marketing communications would be discussed along with brand identity, exploration into the efficacy of such, pros and cons and their thoughts on how this may impact on theirs' and others' view of the brand. This coming towards the end of the interview, allowed final reflection of how they would react to such initiatives, consideration of individualistic and collectivist perspectives and how they consider it would impact on their behaviour or attitude, or if they ultimately, have alternate, higher placed values or priorities.

On numerous occasions the order of delivery was adapted to suit the flow of conversation allowing the participant to explore and dictate the narrative. With relevance, the post-interview analysis enabled the equivalence of meaning through dissection of the text (Denzin 1989) to aid standardisation and cross referencing between participants, enabling comparability (depicting Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthy components).

In continuation of the parity to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic enquiry, the following describes the consideration of their approach followed by 'as it happened' for clarification:

3.3.3 Choice of participants - Approach

The focus of this research is Millennials, socially responsible behaviour and perspectives, their consumption habits, and CSR views, with implications for industry.

To recap, Millennials are generally accepted as those being born between 1980 and 1999 and termed as the natural successors to demographic cohorts entitled, generation X and the baby boomers before them. A generation synonymously considered submersed in consumption, born of parents short of time, who would rather consider more expensive longer-term investments to buy, than repair or recycle (according to Sutherland & Thompson, 2003). Interestingly Sutherland and Thompson (2003) discuss how technology, along with multiculturalism and mass media, are significant stimuli with this age group. In-turn they are considered as a demographic that is constantly (globally) aware of current affairs, corporate brands and peer opinion.

In acknowledging the various possible approaches to obtaining participants, purposive sampling is the term indicative to select those who can fulfil the 'purpose' of the particular research enquiry. Based on the exploratory, inductive search for information rather than proving statistical data, this method does not look to create generalisation, preferring to be led by the inquiry rather than a priori judgements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 p202; Manning, 1997). Conversely, sampling is considered by some as an inappropriate term for the interpretivist researcher (Farquhar, 2012) as there is rarely a declaration of population generalisation; yet decisions on selection are still required. Purposeful selection is proffered by Yin (1994) where respondents are those that can elucidate relevant insight. Yin also describes that multiple cases are 'multiple experiments' (p94), confirming they are not components in a survey and reiterating the distancing from sampling logic.

The exploratory nature of this primary research would expect that a multitude of interviews will be required (Perry, 1998) to find appropriate variation or commonality before information exhaustion. The approach in relation to Lincoln and Guba's suggestions follows.

3.3.4 Choosing participants - As it happened

Considering purposeful selection, it was deemed pertinent to access those that could fulfil the conditions of being representative of this demographic. Apart from the age criteria there was no intention that the focus to be on any other aspect (gender /

ethnicity / religion / socio-economic etc), only a preference that they were neither very high nor very low on any pro-environmental spectrum, discussed shortly.

As a lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University it seemed without logic to not consider the indigenous students as a selection of heterogeneous and diverse consumers (Harding & Gantley, 1998) befitting the Millennial demographic. As an individual study and piece of research it was seen that these were as relevant a group as any other selection of Millennials who are capable of offering a perspective. Indeed, definitionally as much convenience as purposive, the elucidation of insight with these participants is nevertheless apparent. Accepting any inference of bias, the use of what could be classed as convenience sampling in this research is the open admittance that population generalisation is never intended. It should also be noted that bias is often raised with alternate sampling methods (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Acknowledging this, it should be noted with openness and transparency perspective that, the participants used were all Business School undergraduates with no personal connection to myself having no real incentive to participate (accept that a soft or hot drink was offered for their time); so, participated in good will. It is acknowledged, especially with the use of surveys that 'incentives', particularly money can improve chances of obtaining respondents (Yu & Cooper, 1983), yet it was considered that the drink on offer was to suggest an informal arrangement and a beverage in return for their time. And as Kelly, Riddell, Gidding, Nolan, and Gilbert (2002) and Hultsch, MacDonald, Hunter, Maitland, and Dixon (2002) (mentioned earlier) stated if the argument were to request a more generalisation of sample then random sampling doesn't necessarily provide any further external validity. Indeed Hultsch et al. (2002) go further in saying that large scale random surveys are just as likely to be susceptible to selection bias from purely pragmatic or operational restraints.

Furthermore, there was no self-selection of participants from those that responded, the approach was taken to allow all who wanted to participate, to be involved. Convenience or purposive, this non-random associated method of collecting participants empowers the researcher (with clarified transparency) to seek those '*who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience*' (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016, p2).

Moreover, in the acknowledgement that the sample or selection (Nesselroade, 1986) of participants need to fulfil the purpose of suitability; appropriateness and adequacy of the research focus (Morse & Field, 1995) it was accepted that these students do, with their ability to contribute as members of the attributed demographic. Their contributions offered a suitable richness of information (Kuzel, 1992) that provided the capability to explore emergent concepts and build theory as the data analysis evolved (Rice & Ezzy, 1999) as per the exploratory nature of this research.

A posting was placed on the University intranet student community pages to all undergraduates within the Business School stating *'Nike, Coke, Starbucks, Toyota, eBay; would you be up for chatting about your thoughts on brands?'* The casual terminology was intentional to attract as many as possible with the focus on brands to hopefully attract those who are commercially aware of their consumption choices. Moreover, this was used to avoid an associated issue with convenience / purposive selection being the negation of 'outliers' (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016), those that could offer a broader selection of voice. The relaxed text within the post extended to include *'...I am happy to meet up in Uni or a local café to chat to you about your own thoughts as a regular consumer regarding a selection of brands; their image, reputation and marketing. I'll also be asking you about green issues to see how you feel about the topic.'* This too had the intention of negating any higher-level academic concerns and inferring that it would be relaxed and informal process but now alluding to the environmental perspective. From the outset, it was always the intention to appeal to and talk with 'average' consumers rather than the extremes of pro-environmentalists or serial non-engagers. As a lecturer within the Events Management subject group the decision was made to exclude participants that knew me directly to eliminate any power issues (as discussed earlier) accepting that their participation was 100% voluntary anyway with no university credit applicable.

Responses to the request for participants culminated in 23 responses and as Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, and Davidson (2002) support, qualitative sampling is likely to involve a small and unspecified number of participants in contrast to the sizeable quantity of data gleaned from questionnaire investigation. The intent being, to highlight and consider how this limited number of Millennial consumers is sufficient in

extrapolating useful and credible insight (Landers & Behrend, 2015) into their value priorities and socially responsible perspectives.

With no preconception of generalisation but to offer context, there were 1.75m undergraduates in the UK in 2015 (Universities UK, 2017) with approximately 26% of 18-year olds entering higher education 2014/15 (Department of Education, 2016). To clarify; gender, religion, socio-economic, place of birth and ethnicity were not recognised as relevant to participant selection. This was due in main in reaction to many of the headline articles in relation to the demographic that chose not to segregate their studies (i.e. Cone, 2008 and Neilson, 2015). It also served to eradicate research stereotypes within the data analysis or to distract with any misguided generalisations relating to such data with the relatively small number of participants. From the initial 23 responses, the impracticality or loss of commitment for some resulted in the final 18 participants, all of which were between the ages of 20-30; identified as:

Adam	Kamile
Alex	Laura
Annie	Lottie
Daisie	Maisie
David	Mollie
Davina	Peter
Emma	Rosie
Hannah	Ross
HanNah (2 were called Hannah)	Sam

All 18 were UK under-graduates studying in the Sheffield Business School at the time of interview. Their willing participation offered a variety of views and a range of anecdotes that fulfilled the criteria insofar as being relevant and information rich (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

3.3.5 Preparation - Approach

What would appear as common sense; the 'homework' around the respondent, suitable time, location and setting, suitable dress and formality was considered. Furthermore, the environment and context for the participant was conducted primarily at the subject's choice of location. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p191) consider that the researcher must therefore consider all stimuli stating that 'if anything may make a difference, then everything must be monitored'. They also suggest a dry run of the interview with a 'stand-in' to practice the less structured nature of the interview and how the information may flow within an environment.

3.3.6 Preparation - As it happened

As mentioned, a test interview or dry run was undertaken with a 'critical' colleague who helped me refine the structure of the interview along with guidance on maintaining judgement free dialogue and question prompting. This trial run encouraged me to focus on areas where more pertinent insight could be obtained and remove questions that offered irrelevant information or appeared an inappropriate use of time. Of the 18 interviews the majority took place in a mutually agreed quiet corner of a University café location at a time that suited both. I dressed casually rather than collared shirt and tie attire to distance myself from my lecturer persona and perceivable power connotations therein. The participants acknowledged the participant information sheet and signed the consent form (appendix 7).

3.3.7 Warming up - Approach

Getting the respondent comfortable in the environment was advised both from literature and academic peers, asking polite and informal 'grand tour' questions relating to their work or life. This coupled with the obvious overt nature of the day's topics would help relax the interviewee in preparation of what is to come.

3.3.8 Warming up - As it happened

Upon locating the individual at the location, a welcome smile and a handshake was coupled with an introduction and offer to purchase them a soft or hot drink for their voluntary participation, most but not all accepted the offer. We then located a quiet space and after confirming the suitability with them, we sat down to make ourselves

comfortable. Opening with polite conversation relating to their studies / the weather / current affairs or being interviewed beforehand, in an attempt to make them feel at ease. They were then introduced to the Dictaphone placed on the table and verified that they were fine with the exchange being recorded - they all were. Notes were gathered and we began.

3.3.9 Pacing and prompting - Approach

As the interview questions progress, they are expected to become more specific as information becomes more 'relevant' and it is important the interviewer is proficient at being aware of where and when prompts are required (Bryman, 2012). From a simple 'uh-huh' or wave gesture of the hand to encourage more narrative to literal 'can you tell me more about...?' style questions should be considered as methods to provoke further comment. Although interviews tend to be time constrained, the pace in which it is conducted is acknowledged important. Maintaining a rhythm to the discussion and keeping a good two-way dialect is imperative as both parties are generally more comfortable with the conversation format.

3.3.10 Pacing and prompting - As it happened

The test interview assisted this although it is acknowledged that the technique improved with each interview completed and reflected upon. Some participants stipulated how much time they had from the outset which defined a conscious parameter in dictating the approach. Fortunately, most were open to requirements and an attempt to assess each individual throughout the interview was made to ascertain when to speed up to conclude or have opportunity to push for further information, exploration and insight.

Upon reflection, the interviews appeared to go well, and all participants appeared and confirmed that they enjoyed the experience or found it interesting which offers reassurance that hopefully their accounts and views were honest as transcribed. The quantity and richness to the interviews as expected, varied; and it soon transpired that a selection of opinions was available. A variety of topics were discussed with various levels of enthusiasm ranging from passion to apathy - nevertheless a significant amount of data was considered usable and interesting. A reminder, as university

lecturer, interaction with Millennials happens on a regular basis with awareness as to the multiplicity of student knowledge. However, for a generation said to be worldly in their knowledge consumption, quite often they were totally unaware or oblivious to topics that my a priori preconceptions would expect them to be able to comment on. Approaching discussion from alternative angles or 'bringing it back' to something they could relate to, usually achieved a similar resolution eventually - where and when required.

Additionally, in appreciating that nonverbal cues and body language are recognised as their own specialisms in science, Lincoln and Guba (1985) profess that they are not essential to master but can aid the interviewer when it raises questions over the authenticity of the respondents' narrative. Enthusiasm, empathy, agitation, disinterest, and apathy were the most evident visual cues, along with characteristics of indifference or being nonplussed. Where appropriate in adding emphasis, this is commented upon within the analysis chapter (4.0).

3.3.11 Closure and member-checking - Approach

Along with recognised time restraints, it is noted that information exhaustion, human fatigue or a guarded mood change may well signify that the interview be brought to its conclusion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking is then essential with information verification especially within the interpretative domain; the key reason being that the findings are not 'abstract' or 'detached' from the respondent (Reason, 1991).

Furthermore, in acknowledging the propensity that there may be discrepancies of the participant's understanding (including the semantics used); along with possible changes of their opinion or perspective over time, this could feasibly inhibit progression (Appleton & King, 1997). Also, in support of the process, Manning (1997 p102) describes that the negation of 'member checking' is the assumption of authority and an 'elitist stance' that is 'incongruent with a subjectivist epistemology'. As aforementioned, the power issue being a concern in that the relationship is trusted and transparent between the two parties, supported by Morgan and Smircich (1980). Lincoln and Guba (1985) add to Manning (1997) and emphasise that member checking brings credibility, along with trustworthiness. Member checking allows the respondent

to understand the analysis of the interviewer's synopsis along with the constructions of the dialogue that they have shared. This has the added benefit of exploring further information when the interviewee wishes to add or clarify points that may require elucidation.

The closure and acceptance of the participant to the agreed points signifies the admittance that the information is 'final' and is less likely to negate any denial or withdrawal at a later stage. Courtesy thanks and pleasantries should conclude along with written appreciations where relevant, this also opens opportunity for further correspondence if required by either party.

3.3.12 Closure and member-checking - As it happened

Applicable to each participant, the interviews terminated as appropriate due to time restraints, information exhaustion or human fatigue. At relevant times throughout each interview (where applicable), pertinent statements were revisited as interesting or contradictory information required further exploration. This was also beneficial for contextual member-checking insofar confirmation of understanding their position or comments was correct. Interviews were concluded with asking for confirmation that they were OK with how it went and asking them if they had anything else they wanted to say or add, before thanking them and switching off the Dictaphone.

Post interview individual emails were sent, again thanking them and reinforcing if they wanted to add anything that had come to mind after our meeting - they didn't.

Following this and after the interview was transcribed, they were sent individual emails, again thanking them but this time attaching the transcript, inviting them to read and comment as to the accuracy of content relating to our meeting, should they wish to. With each transcript being a considerable document to apprehend, perhaps unsurprisingly, only 2 responded stating their intention to read and respond but this did not transcend. Disappointingly yet unavoidable therefore they did not confirm or contest the transcript accuracy.

3.3.13 Case report

In what can be considered a case report (or 'the data'), the resulting transcribed interviews with notes present explicitly the entire process allowing the reader to

envisage the scenarios experienced by the researcher. The preceding explanation along with the following narrative explaining the analysis hopefully accommodates the reader's enquiries. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p214) explain the three major principles of this component.

Firstly, centring on 'transferability' the report is to provide a deep explanation of the process (3.3.1-3.3.12 as before); compared to a novel it endeavours to describe the context and clarify complexities or ambiguities. Secondly, accounting for the multiple perspectives perceived by both the subject and researcher along with notable reactions, the report illustrates the axioms encountered. Lastly, the findings should allow the ability of the reader to 'realise' the experience, 'grounded, holistic and lifelike' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p 214) acknowledging the researchers tacit knowledge explicitly where pertinent (see Analysis 4.0 and Discussion 5.0 chapters).

However, the interpretative nature of the 'dynamic' enquiry warrants any generalisation of the findings could be arguably unstable (Lather 1993). This can be perceived problematic for those steadfast in a nomothetic disposition, but the perspective discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) posits that all research will only ever offer insight into the context in which it was collated - akin to this research. Consistent with this, the findings of the case report are considered tentative in their application. Accepting that the information presented is unambiguous in its description; any transferability (rather than generalisation) is only applicable when factors are 'consistent' to this study, with appropriate similarity to the selection, environment and other comparable components.

3.3.14 Considerations for analysis

With relevance, it is pertinent to first consider tacit knowledge. From Lincoln and Guba's perspective, tacit knowledge essentially negates any given 'objective' knowledge and infers that what is already known '*becomes the base on which the human instrument builds many of the insights and hypotheses that will eventually develop*' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p198). It is proposed that the researcher has the ability to build on this subjective propensity (Wilson, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), while at the same time acknowledging its existence is part of the process. In support of trustworthiness, this propensity of explicit narrative, acknowledges a relevance to

transferability of the outcomes (where or when required). Susceptible to this process, Kauffman (1992) and Schwandt (1996) discuss the problematic nature of the researcher's tacit knowledge contributing to the power relationship between him/her and the participants. This is a consideration that requires monitoring as discussed previously, to ensure the participant doesn't feel emotions of 'belittlement' (Monin, 2007). Moreover, clarification through reflexivity is particularly applicable; especially as the primary data collection and participant-researcher intercommunication commences (further discussion in 3.5).

As outlined previously, this research is approached from the interpretivist position and therefore characteristically qualitative yet as Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p6) suggest;

Qualitative research, as a set of interpretive activities, privileges no single methodological practice over another. As a site of discussion, or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own.

Perhaps unhelpfully or suitably ambiguous this infers that it is suitable for many approaches and as with the nature of constructionism; it is faithful to emergent knowledge formation. Sat firmly at the inductive end of the continuum, for exploration it proffers that there is '*no theory under consideration and no hypothesis to test*' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p536).

However, as stated earlier, this journey is in-line with Yin (1994, p21) in that the knowledge and theory obtained from the literature review does provide guidance relating to consumer ethical (dis)association (e.g. Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005). Although not concise in a verifiable 'yes or no' style proposition, the prior relevant literature has offered direction as to the gaps, a significant antecedent for this research. Moreover, Manicas (1989) acknowledges that the literature along with the author's tacit knowledge plays an integral part in the early stages of the research 'design', the interview framework and inevitably the analysis and output. In support, this research's consumer exploration can be formed and 'questions posed' throughout the process which begins with what can be described as a 'broad brush approach' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 p 209). This is also aligned to Schwandt's 'guiding ideals' (1996).

Through this evolution, the investigation into consumers' interpretations of corporate rhetoric and personal ethical behaviour explores ambiguities and contradictions along with commonalities in the participants. This tolerance of a working / progressive investigation is essential to the interpretivist research process.

3.4 Thematic analysis

With the nature of induction there is a feasibly endless exploration of the information, it is therefore pragmatically essential to recognise that inevitably this research is bounded by resources. It is then the judgement of the researcher that, "*(d)espite the endless possibilities, some interpretations are more plausible (Donmoyer, 1984) and fruitful (Lather, 1995), given the specific cultural context and the purposes of the study*" from Manning (1997, p95). At such a time, agreed by the researcher and the DBA supervisory team that a suitable quantity (and quality) of data is collected, it is to be acknowledged that the research enters its next stage (reiterating Manning earlier 'never complete, only finished' (1997, p110)).

What the inductive analysis primarily intends to achieve is the dissection and constructions of the narrative meaning, care of the discourse. As McNamee (2004, p7) explains, narrative is the two-way dialogue that exists as storytelling, subjective and distanced from scientific objectivity;

With narrative, we populate our rationalities – our ways of making sense out of the world– with people, events, context, history, culture, family, and all the quirky things that go along with that.

With acknowledgement that a full dissection of each participant's life history is inconceivable within this research, the acceptance that their narrative is homogeneously constructed from their personal experiences and interactions is relevant to the analysis of the text. The step by step process undertaken was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) highly cited, *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. Presented as 'a foundational method for qualitative analysis', Braun and Clarke also state; '*Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account*

of data' (2006, pg78). A 'theoretical freedom' that pragmatically enables a hermeneutic, constructivist approach; in support they state;

...analysis is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it is more recursive process, where movement is back and forth as needed, throughout the phases.

The following explains the thematic approach used in this research project.

3.4.1 Phase 1: Transcription, familiarisation of the text and initial issues

Upon commencing transcription of the interviews, as a new researcher the process was slow but nevertheless beneficial to revisit the interview discussion in a line-by-line manner. The process was made somewhat easier by foot operated software that enabled transcription at a manageable speed with the 'rewind' option to clarify the narrative where required. The content was typed into Microsoft Word. The result of this being that, all but 2 or 3 comments were inaudible and unusable. Transcribing enabled the feasibility of a clearer analysis and the decision was made to include laughter, hesitation, and emphasis where considered relevant. This was purposeful to both appreciate the subtleties of delivery and allow interpretation of meaning or emphasis later in the analysis of the text.

With 18 interviews that averaged around 45 minutes each this was a time-consuming task for an average typist like me but coupled with the notes taken during and post-interviews enabled the first draft of similar issues that had arisen.

These initial issues of potential interest included: money, recycling efforts, motivations for consumption choice, global dominance / power of brands, offsetting of responsibility, barriers to doing more, awareness of issues and the significance of age / life-stage. For example for money - Emma; *'I would say that I'm not as green as I used to be and when, I think that's just because the kind of money issues'*, or Kamille; *'I don't have the money to like buy products so like I would love to have every product that is organic'* and Maisie; *'I remember the recession and things and remember it is money over those sort of choice(s)'*.

3.4.2 Phase 2: Generating codes

The Word files were inputted into NVivo software to visually analyse, contrast, compare and revisit each interview concisely with a framework to construct code folder categorisation and furthermore candidate theme generation pragmatically. It should be acknowledged that the full capability of the NVivo software was not utilised but the creation and filing of quotes into categories proved beneficial. The software enabled a reliable platform to compare and contrast concisely in a digital format that felt manageable considering the body of content that had been created. The other facility that the software offered was that although the quotes were 'cut and paste' into the respective folders, the original source and location was evident so quotes could be revisited in context. In addition, hand-written notes acting as a diary were compiled to reflect on the process and allow transparency as to the workings.

Approaching each transcript one at a time, quotes were selected and placed into code folders (also known as 'nodes' in NVivo) and given preliminary working titles. In respect to the inductive nature of this research the initial noted *potential issues of interest* (outlined earlier) acted as a foundation to explore the text in great detail with a recursive approach. Each script was picked through word by word and it was noted with the aid of the software that on average each transcript had over 80% coded content through this initial process. The remaining narrative was generally incidental dialogue or irrelevant and off-topic.

With the initial issues from the transcription phase created as introductory code folders in NVivo as a starting point, very early into the first interview's analysis it was evident that numerous more were required (as expected). An example of this is the topic of Age / Life-stage requiring being split into: *delaying responsibility, being a student, parental funding, maybe when older* and *parent behaviour*. Some quotes were placed in multiple code folders at this first analytical read through of the complete data set.

As per the purpose of the accompanying hand-written diary it was evident mid-way through the second interview that further code folders were required. The diary kept track of this and as expected subsequent interviews produced more and more codes. Upon completing the first wave of data analysis it was therefore necessarily to begin

again with consideration of the additional codes that had materialised during the first wave. Unsurprisingly this created a significant quantity of further segmented data and 3 further codes (*external stimuli*, *lack of media coverage* and *generational attribute*). To avoid 'data blindness' the decision was made to rest for a week and revisit refreshed for a 3rd wave of analysis from the start. The 3 new codes produced some, but minimal revised segmentation with no further codes added so it was accepted that the initial code generation was at a suitable stage that it was time to progress. To note, the whole process (approximately 3 months) was inductively dynamic insofar that code titles evolved and were reassessed, semantically more than with anything, as the quotes and collection of quotes were re-evaluated. It should also be acknowledged that preliminary codes were depicted with an emphasis on their descriptive nature, but this evolved to a more theoretically analytical approach as the data was further interpreted.

All code folders were revisited in isolation to confirm that their respective contents were verified insofar that they were consistent to the code title. A selection of codes is illustrated in Figure 6.

Money	Insufficient available knowledge	Being a student	Participation if convenient
Recycling efforts	Converting / teaching peers' behaviour	Celebrity / SM influence	Lack of awareness of available facilities
Motivations for consumption choice	Peer pressure (alternate products)	Consciousness / concern but no impact on behaviour	Perceived pressure / obligation to comply
Global dominance / power of brands	Lack of readily available facilities	Parent behaviour	Easier / cheaper options
Offsetting of responsibility	'As bad as each other'	Laziness	Lack of desire to change
Barriers to doing more	Delaying responsibility	Hypocrisy	Size: 'Get away with it'
Awareness of issues	Corporate disassociation	Inconvenience	Contentment of regular choices
Age / Life stage	Parental funding	Disinterest	Fashion
Perceived price barrier	Greenwashing	Product attributes	Ulterior motives
Profit (motive)	Fair trade purchasing	Desire for more agency (CnSR)	Animal welfare
Pre-determined habits	Product loyalty	Rise of vegetarianism / veganism	Support 'local'
Customer service / CRM	Lack of empathy	Maybe later	Timing

Figure 6 NVivo sourced code folders

3.4.3 Phase 3: Refining candidate themes

The task of locating broader, first level candidate themes from the codes was approached with a neutral perspective, appreciating the conscious / unconscious bias of any researcher. It was evident that codes depicted; positive attributes i.e. *recycling, fair trade purchasing, non-ethical corporate boycotting*; negative attributes i.e. *lack of empathy, negating recycling, laziness coupled with lack of caring to know more*; and neutral or indifferent enthusiasm i.e. *participation if convenient, choosing a pro-ethical option only if immediately available, priced equally or favourably, consciousness of options available or concern but having no impact on behaviour*. There were other codes that didn't appear to sit comfortably with the central research and were placed in a miscellaneous folder to be revisited at a later point to check relevance.

Although the actual codes were not necessarily predicted, the tripartite perspectives were hoped for given the approach of participant recruitment. Central to this research the simple tripartite perspectives were not sufficient to any significant output but were reassuring to appreciate that a variety of individuals were contributing, and further analysis wasn't skewed in favour of either. However, what became evident was that the neutral and negative perspectives were the dominant topics in both quantity and intensity.

As the dynamic and evolutionary process of candidate theme formation progressed it was evident that some of the lesser mentioned codes were superfluous to the candidate themes emerging or could be incorporated to others. It was also clear that the relative significance or importance of some codes began to provide structure and form to the mapping of the 11 candidate themes as outlined in figures 7, 8, & 9 in the Analysis (4.3).

When the codes were suitably clustered in their respective mapping of 11 candidate themes, the NVivo transcripts' quotations were revisited to confirm suitability to the derived headings. At this stage it was acknowledged that some codes overlapped and therefore required repeating, re-working and deliberation. The second level clustering

of these 11 candidate themes into 3 mapped images/figures are illustrated and explained, also in the following Analysis chapter (4.3).

As an interesting reflection, the early issues of potential interest noted during the interview and transcription stage, and used as the initial code folders in NVivo, evolved into all 11 of the candidate themes in various degrees;

- Money > Alternate Priorities and significantly, Financial Restraints
- Recycling efforts > Facilitation, Location and also Apathy
- Motivations for consumption choice > Alternate priorities, Location, Financial Restraints, Parental / Peer Influence, Life-stage, Marketing and to some extent Apathy
- Global dominance / Power of brands > Power, Cynicism & Scepticism
- Offsetting of responsibility > Primarily Life-stage, but also Parental / Peer Influence, Financial Restraints
- Barriers to doing more > Financial Restraints, Location, Facilitation, Alternate Priorities but also Ignorance
- Awareness of issues > Marketing, Cynicism & Scepticism with a lesser connection, but also relevant to Alternate Priorities
- Significance of age / life stage > Clearly Life-stage, but also Parental / Peer Influence, Financial Restraints, Ignorance, Apathy, Cynicism & Scepticism.

3.5 Reflexivity

Key to the interpretivist research discussed thus far, the influence that the researcher plays on the collection and interpretation is value-laden along with an evolutionary nature of research maturity as the process happens. Moreover, reflexivity involves metacognition, a challenge to think about thinking, for the purposes of transparency and an explanation of what 'reality' and 'knowledge' is proposed with clarification that it is socially constructed; in support, '*...being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice that requires researchers to stop being shamans of objectivity*', Smyth and Shacklock, (1998, p7).

The topic and relevance of reflexivity in social science academia is well discussed although the application in research is more challenging to specify (Haynes, 2012). Johnson and Duberley (2000) propose two forms of reflexivity to consider. The first is methodological reflexivity that is inherent in the understanding of how our behaviour impacts our outcomes, applicable to the operational interview process. This is in-part outlined earlier throughout 3.3-3.3.12, particularly in the 'As it happened' sections and also included; *my wrongly anticipated expectation or bias that participants would have knowledge of corporate CSR initiatives*, an increased self-awareness (Alley, Jackson, & Shakya, 2015; Raven, 2006) that required my restructuring of interview questioning to be more exploratory to gain beneficial data as applicable.

The second is epistemic reflexivity that articulates the researcher's beliefs in assimilation to the knowledge (and constructs) created. For an applied realisation of epistemic reflexivity, they quote Bourdieu (1990) and state that the social scientist's responsibility is to make the 'unconscious conscious and the tacit explicit' (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p179). In addition to the epistemic nature of reflexivity, Raven (2006) suggests that we are unaware of our metatheoretical cognition or the unknown; and significantly that there are consequences to us not knowing. This feasibly being an onerous challenge for any new researcher, but hopefully observable in the Analysis (4.0) and Discussion (5.0) chapters.

Angen (2000) adds that reflexivity's purpose within interpretative research is to highlight the researcher's input and contribution, whilst acknowledging how their perspective changes during the journey, and highlighting any impacts therein. Marcus (2004) similarly suggests that it enables a *transparency of reality* and has the propensity to highlight ethical and epistemological factors that may impact the research. With pertinence, my tacit knowledge of the demographic, coupled with the extensive knowledge accumulated whilst conducting the literature review impacted on how this research was shaped. The ethical 'neutrality' of the participants (as outlined in 3.3.5) was paramount and upon reflection worked effectively, however the component topics and approach to the interviews evolved as they progressed. This then enabled me to re-phrase questions and topics rather than *shutting them down* and moving on.

With specific relevance, Moisander and Valtonen (2006, p71) are particularly critical of the interview process and describe it as 'a vehicle for producing cultural talk'. They suggest that the stories told are not necessarily the participant's own but those constructed in an appropriate situation or setting, even a performance and *enactment of cultural or social meanings* (ibid). However, latterly they explain cultural connotations such as 'social desirability, self-presentation/image management and self-deception' are interactional components that are deemed available for analytical investigation (Moisander, Valtonen, and Hirsto, 2009 p340). This was particularly relevant for this research insofar that discussion relating to an individual's ethical behaviour was at times perceived as reflecting on the participants' self-image.

What Moisander et al. are discussing is the joint creation of the dialogue and the significant contribution that the interviewer plays in this data collection method. Something that reflexivity helps to circumvent. It should also be noted that researcher neutrality is unachievable, hence the need to be open and engage in reflexivity. Upon meeting the participants, I made it clear that I had no agenda other than being interested in their views on the associated themes. An overview of the interview topics was also discussed before the recordings began to encourage pre-thought but more an openness of narrative with the intention that they feel comfortable in the discussion. I was conscious from the start to not express any feelings of judgement or belittling of their thoughts and efforts regarding the subject matter; as interviews progressed, I was aware of their self-consciousness within their responses and attempted to placate any anxiety or defensiveness that they were feeling. This personal technique improved as I spent more time with them; clearly their individual personas varied and included a spectrum from 'loud and proud' to 'guarded and hesitant'. In support of the chosen method of interviews this was evidently the most adaptable format to obtain the required information.

Pragmatically, the realisation of reflexive accountability is recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Haynes (2012) in the form of a 'reflexive journal' or trail of evidence (Koch, 1994). Focussing on methodological reflexivity the journal offers a value to the auditor with its opportunity for catharsis, documenting of the schedule and logistics, as well as a log of methodological decisions with supportive rationales (ibid, p327). This also has merit in terms of authenticity (Manning, 1997) where

transparency is evident, back through the whole line of enquiry. For reference, notes have been kept along the DBA process that has aided the reflexivity and noted sporadically throughout this journey.

Another method of overt reflexive consideration suggested by Manning (1997) is peer debriefing, supported by Reason (1981). Peer debriefing being, the regular use of 'peers, mentors [and] friends willing to be enemies' (ibid, p247) to challenge progressional findings and the development of analysis during the research process; a role accommodated by the supervisory team along with peers within my academic subject group. Unsurprisingly, some authors are critical of reflexivity e.g. Maynard (1993) attributing a vanity to the process. Yet in conclusion, reflexivity categorically accepts that true to the subjectivist viewpoint, there will always be multiple depictions or interpreted accounts from the research that requires deliberation. The challenge being to use reflexivity sufficiently so as to benefit the research without it becoming detrimental to the end result; whilst being aware of its limitations (Pillow, 2002).

One area that was evident whilst completing the interviews and noting initial repetitive concepts, was that the sampling procedure, although successful in recruiting Millennial participants, was clearly bias towards the younger end of the demographic. This was perhaps to be expected having recruited via university student channels, yet what this enabled was acknowledging and attributing life-stage concepts and theory as further exploration; that in-turn became significant to the research output.

At all stages I have attempted to be as transparent as possible in my methods, analysis and workings to assist an acknowledgment of authenticity.

3.6 Ethics

This research was conducted in accordance with Sheffield Hallam University's (SHU) research ethics guidelines and passed by the Ethics Committee (see appendix 7). As noted by Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013, pg66) the nature of qualitative research raises issues and subject matter that is not always anticipated and as per SHU

guidelines informed consent from voluntary participants along with an overview of what the participation would entail (see appendix 5 & 6).

There was no conscious attempt of deception made throughout the recruitment or interview process and the informative nature of the pre-interview information was cautious as to the details in revealing enough, but not too much (Kvale, 1996; Ritchie et al, 2013). Acknowledging this, the conversations highlighted discussion regarding global brands and the prospective participants' views on them and their CSR activities, coupled with their thoughts and behaviour relating to their own socially responsible consumption or behaviour. These topics were emphasised as Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001, pg93) suggest that a desire to participate will only offer the willingness to share their experience and views. The voluntary nature of the participants ensures the lack of coercion and no financial or course credit rewards were on offer. As the majority of participants requested to meet in the University café, there was no risk of any physical danger befitting them and they were made aware that they could withdraw or abstain from any questions throughout. From the outset they were also informed that their anonymity was assured, and confidentiality was prevalent by the use of pseudonyms. The interviews were dictated, and the recordings were filed on a memory stick along with the transcripts with no reference to the participants' names being attributed. All electronic files were anonymised and stored on an external USB drive and kept secure.

3.7 Summary of Methodology chapter

Through the exploration of the participants' understandings as to their personal value priorities and position on social responsibility, this chapter clarifies the methodological approach and deems this enquiry appropriate within the interpretivist paradigm.

Appreciating the interpretative nature of the proposed findings, qualitative methods were used for data analysis. With acknowledgement to authors and theories, particularly Lincoln and Guba (1985) whilst also akin to a constructionist perspective, this chapter has illustrated the most applicable methodological approach.

Furthermore, via a hermeneutic lens and orchestrated through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) befits similar published articles, comparable in content and purpose. The research therefore displays an overt methodological process that is transparent to the inherent subjectivity of my role in this thesis. And appreciating that the interpretative inquiry is not for all, Manning offers (1997, p110);

Readers, respondents, research community members, and stakeholders will 'see new things in the data' as they bring interpretively different lenses to each reading of the final research product. As such, the research remains dynamic and open for interpretation.

In support of this and a key DBA objective, the subjective insights and interpretations assembled from this inquiry intend to facilitate and stimulate further enquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Reason, 1981). The literature discussed and the resulting pragmatic process have been explained and upon reflection was a time consuming but thoroughly enjoyable part of the process.

The enthusiasm of the participants was incredibly appreciated, and the discussions were fascinating as well as purposeful to this research. The findings and analysis of the collated interview data with a full clarification of the method; analysis, coding and interpretation, follows in chapter 4.

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Introduction

To recap and clarify, participants were collated from a UK university internal email to Business School students asking them to participate in research regarding global brands, without emphasis on CSR or social responsibility. This was intentional so as not to simply hear the narrative of 'pro-environmentalists' but to have a better opportunity for a more varied perspective across the participants. To note, all participants were undergraduate students within the Business School faculty of a post '92 northern England university and that some authors have acknowledged that there are insignificant differences in value priorities between those studying different topics in higher education (e.g. see Malinowski & Berger, 1996, Verbeke, Ouwerkerk, & Peelen, 1996).

The research objectives are:

1. To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their *consumer social responsibility* (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority.
2. To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics.
3. To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation.
4. To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.

The literature review critique (2.0) produced numerous *key issues* that included gaps in existing knowledge or areas for further / specific exploration. The interview questions (3.3.2) explained how these *key issues* were incorporated that allowed inductive exploration to achieve the research objectives. As a result, data provided insight that strongly suggests that the participants (overall) had a low value priority regarding their

consumer social responsibility and little more than top-level concerns for corporate social responsibility.

In addition to the value priority exploration, and with regards to all 4 objectives, the data ultimately found 3 themes in the analysis of the participants' transcripts. These are the result of 11 candidate themes that were themselves formulated from 50+ code folders through thematic analysis as explained in 3.4. These contribute to the research aim to offer new knowledge that would be useful to advancing research relating to CSR strategy and marketing communication to the demographic. This was by exploring their consumption and behaviour with a focus on CSR perceptions and personal social responsibility. With acknowledgement of the research's contribution to knowledge, the intention is to explore 'if', and indeed the reasons 'why' the topic is or isn't a priority for them. The 3 resulting themes are:

- Convenience and indifference (4.4)
- Self-reasoning and justification (4.5), and
- Distrust (4.6).

4.1.1 Outline of this chapter

The chapter begins by exploring the participants' value priorities regarding social responsibility (4.2). Quotations from the transcripts are used to demonstrate the analysis and associated findings in justification of the output.

With the intention to highlight antecedents, influences, contexts, and alternate, higher level priorities (the 'ifs' and 'whys'), the chapter then demonstrates how 3 themes (4.4 / 4.5 / 4.6) were exposed through a hermeneutic approach. This is in continuation of the 'Thematic analysis' discussion and explanation in the Methodology chapter (3.4). The analysis demonstrates, with illustrations (Maps), my developmental thinking in refining and reducing the 11 candidate themes into the final 3 themes that are explained with participant references throughout. Each theme is respectively followed by a summary of important outcomes and analysis relating to the *key issues* that the appropriate section has covered.

An overall chapter summary (4.7) concludes, highlighting all the key findings.

4.2 Value priority: Observations & analysis

The following acknowledges the previous work on values by Shalom Schwartz and his peers - in particular: Schwartz (1992; 1996), Schwartz and Bardi (2001), Schwartz and Bilsky (1990).

Central to this research it was significant to explore each participant's full narrative to analyse discourse in order to address the objectives (particularly 1, 2 & 4).

Participants were asked to consider how they rated themselves on a hypothetical 'green spectrum' with '0' meaning it had no priority in their lives and '10' inferring that it was central to their decision making. This is herein referred to as the Hypothetical Rating Scale or 'HRS'. It was made clear to each participant that this was purely subjective, and that no judgement would be made but the decision was concluded that this task itself became a conversation starter along with a barometer to revisit should it be deemed relevant.

The following quotations and analysis illustrate how ~~and~~ the 18 participants perceived their value priority to socially responsible behaviour by considering both corporations (CSR - corporate) and themselves (CnSR - consumer). In reference to the self-determined HRS of 0-10, their individual self-classified scores are denoted in brackets after their name. For reference the average rating for the 18 participants was between 5 and 6 signifying they believed they were marginally past the middle of their respective hypothetical spectrums.

The analysis commences with the less than enthusiastic approach to the topic. Annie ('3 or 4' on the HRS) begins with what appeared to be reasonably common among the participants; she offsets her own low priority by generalising to others;

I don't think we're really aware of it, like it's never really slapped in your face or anything, coz like I don't really see any campaigns for it or anything so yeah people aren't really that aware.

Question - Do you think um, do you think that's a passive thing as opposed to a wantonly active thing that people would go out there and look for it? Or do you think people are just going about their lives and don't really...?

Yeah I think if you looked for it you'd know more but people just generally in their day to day life, you don't really see anything like, round a like, round a shopping centre or even like adverts on TV. I don't really ever notice but then maybe coz it's not like I'm looking out for it, and I'm not that... not coz like I'm not bothered about it, but it's just like not kind of top of my mind.

She ends this excerpt by stating (somewhat) defensively that she is 'bothered' but in conclusion, almost literally, proclaims that there are other, prevalent thoughts at play. Similarly, Adam ('6 or 7') informs how it holds minimal importance when consuming;

It's not something that particularly concerns me when purchasing things... no it's not something I think about, like where it's been made or come from in terms of products.

On most occasions, the 0-10 HRS subjective barometer allowed the conversation to extrapolate meaning from the individual. This inevitably offered insight as to how they justified their position. Davina (7) was a good example of how the subjective interpretation of Likert style scoring can offer more than taking at face value;

Um I don't say it plays a massive part in my deciding, so I would say around, probably around 7

Question - So I'm just interested in what you think and where you sit. So how does that manifest itself, what sort of things do you do or what concerns you or...?

I don't necessarily, I don't know if you're trying to say when you're looking at brands to purchase and whether they're ethical or not, I don't necessarily know...

Question - Ok so does it swing you, decision making or?

I wouldn't say it does. I wouldn't say I'd purposely go and purchase from one brand to another because it's ethical and you know, concentrating on green issues etc - But I would say I'm aware of the issues and the impact of not, say, purchasing a brand that does/ are more ethical and

Question - So would you, does it determine whether you buy product X or product Y?

Yeah

Question - It would?

Umm no I'd say it wouldn't - I don't purposely go looking for a company or a brand or support a brand because they are or they're not corporate social responsibility but I am aware of the issues that's why I place myself as a 7, because I am aware of it, but I wouldn't say it necessary influences my decision with purchasing.

The context for the participants and the feasible vulnerability during the interview in being open / honest to how their (in)actions are perceived was clearly different for each, nonetheless significant. By asking for a 0-10 position at the outset allowed me to explore further reasoning and or justification whilst allowing them to reflect on their personal values and what else was achievable, or to consider the action of others. Latterly, I asked Davina (7) about how she perceived her peers' attitude on the topic;

I'd say we're a generation of followers. I feel um, we don't have, we don't necessarily... start the trends? I think you know I don't know the proper terminology for it, but I would definitely say we follow a lot of what people say; celebrities to see what they do. And we follow you know, we'd probably shop where a celebrity shops if it was one of our favourites, you know - bearing on what price wise or definitely have a similar style um - so yeah I yeah I'd definitely say that.

Question - And when it comes to, so you say they're the kind of main drivers, maybe, of how people make their decisions?

Yeah I'd definitely say so, I think if one celebrity endorses it and you know, endorses a message or a brand you know, um ethical issue or something, I think then the fans of that brand being followers would probably do the exact same - and I think yeah, I don't think we're necessarily forefront, in actually send across a message as a generation. I think we're more, follow people that are a little bit older and I think that's probably what happens, you know as you get older anyway.

Although asked directly about others, she regularly uses the rhetoric to internalise and speak for herself, which was a deliberate tactic from my perspective. As this excerpt

unfolds, she appears to allow some justification on her current age responsibilities or value priority, she continues;

So maybe in a couple of years 10, 20 years' time we'll be the people sending the message but

Comment - Just part of that life cycle...

Yeah, but I'd definitely say we're like followers and just follow what people older than us

Question - OK - and would you say, what is the current sort of feeling I suppose, is it to be ethical or to be / have (a) social conscience or you know, when it comes to like living your life?

Like I say I think we... I'd say we're less social conscious as a group - I think you've probably, parents and older people would probably say the exact same thing; when you're our age you think you've got your life well ahead and it's all gonna stay, everything's gonna stay the same

> I laugh / we laugh <

...and I know it's not improved, I think you've got to be a certain age before you can see the change and the improvement, but right now you can't really see, like the changes in technology, you can't really see that, so you know that for us it's always been there to have like a mobile phone... and that's not necessarily improved drastically from one phone to another, I mean there's better technology coming out but it's not, it's not a new product. Say, from like my parents', it's you know the internet and stuff, something that's come around since they've been, can hardly see where I'm coming from there?

Comment - > inquisitively hesitant < Yeah...

So I think we're less

Comment - You've known nothing else really

That's actually what I'm saying

Question - So you can see, 'smaller steps' for you maybe?

Smaller steps yeah, so necessarily when we get a bit older, we get a bit more conscious of the environment and the impact it will have on our children and I think when you've got other responsibilities, that you actually, necessarily, start thinking more about being ethical and choosing - now you're just living for this day really.

In her own way, Davina (7) draws an analogy with her perception of the incremental evolution of technology in 'real-time' to that of long-term environmental impacts. She appears to be inferring that hindsight will be the antecedent to elevating environmental concern for her, as she grows older and her life-stage moves on to parenthood. She closes this sound bite stating how she feels that today is more important than the future, suggesting she is negating any significant responsibility or value priority for the time being. Mollie (3) echoes this perspective;

I don't know if people really think about it that much at my age; I always think like, being like quite ethical is like something older people do more than younger people. Like knowing like, me and the girls and that, like I know people don't, yeah none of us sort of, don't think like 'oh I wouldn't buy that because of like they're not ethical' I think everyone is just 'used to what they're used to' sort of thing - I don't think like our generation really thinks about it very much at all, well I don't personally, and like my friends I know, they don't either.

Mollie's (3) lack of pro-ethical emphasis is self-justified in her inclusion of suggesting that she/they are 'used to what they're used to'. This infers habit and preference based on alternative important factors (primarily self-identity preservation) that clearly takes precedence for her. She is self-conscious of this and unabashed throughout, when asked about her placement on the 0-10 HRS she responds with a selection of examples;

Err probably about a 3, not very, that sounds awful doesn't it? Well we recycle at the house and stuff like that, but it's probably all we really yeah, probably about as far as it goes, like if a light switch is left on I'll turn it off but that's probably more because I think that I'm paying for the electricity, does that light really need to be on? Not from a green point of view, so yeah - Sort of do things like, people say 'oh you could walk' but if like if I'm running out of time, it's

quicker for me to drive, coz I think I haven't got time to walk, if that makes sense, so yeah I'm probably not very green at all.

From this it's evident she considers that there are areas that are perceivably easy to access in her everyday life and on this occasion, more conscious of. With all being unprompted by me and without hesitation, she acknowledges her value priority insofar that she always has an excuse or self-reasoning that sits, on appearance, comfortable with her.

The age defence argument or relevance is also a factor for Laura (4), I ask her too about her peers and their attitude;

Yeah, it's hard to explain. I think, I go round to my friend's house who lives in student flats and they don't care. I don't think our age group is as environmentally friendly as the older generation. Because I live at home with my mum and my dad, they're big on putting things in the right bins, the right boxes, not throwing paper away etc etc - I think, I think they do it to try and, to try and be, to try and help the environment

...but I think there's a very big difference between the age groups, students don't care, teenagers don't care, little kids don't really care; but I think adults are quite into it - adults put pressure on themselves like, by the media and stuff, they have to recycle but I just, I don't think teenagers and students really care.

Question - Would you envisage that your attitude would change in the future?
May not change in the future?

It probably will, I think, well out of all the things students care about, it's not really the environment. Don't know how to put it, but we're not very responsible people at this, this age, but when you grow up you sort of have to really, be a little bit more responsible.

She talks in reference to generational external pressures and inferring social norms, alluding directly that it is something she does not currently encounter but does perceive of her parents. She clearly also places environmental responsibility lower on her list of things she 'cares about'. Interestingly, when asked how her attitude has changed over the past few years she appears to talk with some contradiction although again referring to obligation;

Yeah, it's got a lot better, I think um the media's helped a lot in, in the advertising, in being a lot more environmentally friendly and like, green bins and what the governments helped - I think it's more socially aware these days, but I still think underneath, if no-ones' looking people just put the rubbish in the wrong bin, we're sort of doing it because we have to do it

Question - You feel that there's some kind of pressure or? Feel there's...

Yeah I think there is a bit a, of pressure and you've got to be socially, environmentally friendly - sorry... because there's so much pressure these days, you have to recycle if there are people about.

That's what I think > defensively? <

From this, Laura (4) is transparent in her acknowledgement that her views are subjective and not necessarily on behalf of others at the conclusion, although she speaks comfortably about others throughout. Personal and social norms also appear to be in conflict. Her narrative suggests discord in what could be perceived as a power relationship with the media, government and marketing efforts, how these messages are clearly conscious to her, but the relevance or importance is not sitting comfortably with her own value priority. She clarifies when revisiting the topic of recycling;

I don't actively go out my way to recycle, like if there's a bin there, I'd put the plastics in the bin - I'll put the paper in the waste but sometimes when I'm lazy I'll just stick it in the wrong bin, I don't care, so I wouldn't say I'm actively environmentally friendly.

These depictions of Laura's (4) CnSR are concurrent to her CSR considerations;

I love Coca-Cola and I love Nestlé's KitKat

Comment - Ah, ok, so we've found something that you like, good.

I have a soft spot for Nestlé's KitKat

Question - Really? OK and what do you know um - what do you know about the companies or the organisations?

I know that, I think that they are very unethical; especially Nestlé. I think it's been in a lot of trouble in recent years, I can't remember exactly, but we did it in business.

The direct linkage in knowledge and purchase intention is interesting insofar that within sixty seconds she states how her product affinity is in no way affected by unethical misgivings. Perhaps she clarifies latterly as she implies a lack of empathy;

It's selfishness, down to the bottom of it, it's selfishness. You can say as much as you want about sweatshops and suicide nets but you're not in that situation, you're not in that sweatshop or that suicide net, you don't know what that's like. For you it's just about the best quality at the best price, so you're gonna go back there. It's in the back of your mind what's right, you shouldn't go there because you know there's people in that situation but you've never been in that situation, you're just where you are, you want the best price and the best product.

She mentions that 'it's in the back of your mind', I push her on this;

Comment - Perhaps. But then there's the, sometimes there's the moral dilemma, I think that the, how much that has an overpowering presence in our minds, I don't know...

I must admit I don't think it does, I don't think people think, people would be quick to agree 'oh that's shocking, that's terrible' because you know you have to, but I don't think they honestly care. You know I'm quite a realistic person and I don't think people care about the other side of the story.

Laura's (4) assertion of being 'realistic' along with her repetition of 'you know you have to' alludes to her view on societal political correctness and perhaps a reaction against such perceived pressures or social norms.

The external environment and its influence is also a key driver for Maisie's (4) value priorities. She recalls a major impact on her upbringing that is clearly still prevalent;

So I think our generation um, aren't particularly mindful of green and sustainable um not that you're all old and wise, I just think that it by passed us a little bit um, I think we just kind a grew up with, you know; I remember the recession and things, and remember it is money over those sort of choice(s) I don't know I'm sure actually.

Picking up once again on the different, separation of age demographic she talks of how the financial recession played a significant part in her early teenage years living at

home with her family. Acknowledging that is some (five +) years ago, Maisie (4) still accepts that it has placed financial responsibility / accountability higher on her agenda than environmental consideration.

For Rosy ('5 or 6'), she explains the inconvenience of recycling expectations;

Um, being in student accommodation, recycling is a bit of pain. Just because there's only one bin in the flat and there's no recycling in the accommodation; so that's something I don't really bother with, as it would take me too far out of my way.

Like the majority of participants, she acknowledges the moral dictate of society in so much that we 'should' care and 'should' make the effort to play our part, she continues;

I suppose that's not a very good attitude to have but um, and then I do like walk and take public transport a lot, but that's more a convenience thing than doing it on purpose, it's pretty nasty to the planet and stuff.

Again, the convenience to her lifestyle is illustrated in her narrative, her tone depicts that she is trying to find some good in her recollection of actions, yet her honesty overpowers any efforts to be perceived better than she is. Alternatively, Lottie (4) is unaware of such external pressures to comply;

No, it's not really something that ever crosses my mind so

Question - No?

And the most it comes into mind is 'which bin do I put it into?' keep recycling

Comment - If the bins are there...

Yeah, that's if they're there, otherwise I won't even think about it, I just do it so...

Lottie's (4) character isn't laissez-faire to CnSR simply that it seems to be distant or removed from her everyday consciousness. It doesn't feature with any significance to her lifestyle choices and certainly holds very little or no value priority.

The student lifestyle along with peer apathy is depicted in HanNah's (4) discussion;

Just because um, back at home we recycle but we don't, it's not a massive thing

like we don't feel overly strongly about it but we understand why it's a good thing but just - its sort out, real sort of laziness, I haven't really contributed much - like last year when I was in halls there was no recycling but this year our recycling bin got stolen.

Not feeling 'overly strongly' but appreciating the 'good thing' that recycling represents is HanNah's (4) indicator regarding value priority; situation and external factors were again used in justification. Similarly, Sam (4) proposes his thoughts demonstrating the attitude-intention-purchase gap;

But actually my action is, 'I don't really care about this.'

Kamille ('6 or 7') had plenty to say and was definitely open for analysis during the conversation. I was keen to explore how corporations' actions impacted on her purchase intentions. As with all participants, I asked of their reaction to a brand hypothetically, radically, increasing their ethical business practice from the core out. Kamille's deadpan delivery offered insight on many levels;

Ah, first of all, I'm not really fond of Nestlé, I don't really have a deep relationship, so I'm not loyal to the brand, so actually I wouldn't really care, like you know coz like, I would say 'well done' coz I don't have that personal relationship with the brand, if they went really green it's like 'well done' but I just would look away.

Feasibly she immediately disassociates from a brand she has no affinity to although doesn't state any dislike. In an almost patronising tone and delivery she repeats 'well done' and then rounds off with 'but I just would walk away', suggesting an unenthusiastic response. She continues;

I would not dig deep or not like analyse it. If for some reason Nestlé would like talk to me, like I would receive like a personal message and say 'how do you feel?' or something, maybe like a relationship would develop...

My first thoughts at this time were that the impersonal nature of global brands was significant, and she was wanting more to earn any affinity, however;

...and I would look and say maybe OK, it's really green, why would it become such a green thing? um you know? Maybe 'well done, its super good' but what

are the reasons? So maybe if I would have that relationship I would be interested and I would like analyse why they did it, how they did it.

What Kamille ('6 or 7') leads to is a form of scepticism or cynicism as to the organisational motives but nevertheless, the relationship she referred to requiring would allow her curiosity to be satisfied. With this not being the case with Nestlé, she concludes;

Where as now, I don't really care.

4.2.1 Alternate voices

So far, the quotes from 10 of the 18 participants have focussed on what could be perceived as 'negative' or less than enthusiastic views on social responsibility, pro-environmental, or pro-ethical concern and behaviour. The following highlights the more positive perspectives from the other 8 albeit including discussion relating to ambiguities or less than convincing rhetoric.

Emma (6) was one of the most enthusiastic interviewees; however, she talked fervently of how student life impacted on her ability that restricted how much she could actually do. She talks of how this and other external factors impede personal satisfaction when it comes to CnSR;

But I do recycle, I always look at packaging and stuff like that and it frustrates me when the top of things are recyclable and the bottoms aren't recyclable, I can't understand when one thing's recyclable and the other thing isn't.

Her use of the word 'frustrate' is indicative of how strongly she feels about recycling and clear that it is out of her control. Clearly, it could be considered that her initial purchase choice could have negated this aggravation, but none-the-less infers a value priority. She talks of her recycling efforts in restricted accommodation alongside her co-habitants;

Yeah a little bit, but I think that's just because we've got like separate things and only like 3 different places to put things in my flat, so if you're in a rush and just doing a quick tidy up round the house and you just go round a chuck it in the bin. But I would, I would be conscious of splitting things - but I would,

probably would be more now, coz I can just go out to the bins and I've got a blue one and

Question - It's easy?

Yeah.

To clarify, I wasn't insinuating that she only did it because of the convenience or that she was lazy but simply that the accommodation's facilities clearly played a role. Economic implications were a topic that featured in all conversations and student life is definitely a contributing factor from Emma's (6) viewpoint;

I think it's definitely a financial thing, coz I still like um, involved in the environment and stuff like that. Kinda like, read all the stuff online and stuff like that, but I just think it's more like kinda financial, do you know like? It's probably more like the organic products and stuff like that, rather than the green products, but do you know what I mean?

Here she demonstrates the intricacies of separate, competing priorities that feasibly fall under the CnSR attributes. By separating organic from green, she establishes a priority upon reflection; feasibly a distinction dictated by her financial situation. A caveat to this is latterly Emma discusses the efforts she went to, to save up for a designer bag.

Emma's (6) enthusiasm for pro-active recycling is extenuated by Hannah's (8) adoration;

Yeah! Oh, I love recycling!

> Both laugh<

It's so funny, my friend before she came to Uni, she didn't recycle at all so, since she's been with me, she's done it all.

Question - Really?

I've taught her! I've taught her how to recycle.

Hannah (8) appeared to genuinely be excited and proud of this achievement and was eager to share the anecdote. She acknowledges the scenario as humorous which came across as her laughing at her own enthusiasm, perhaps considering herself an anomaly

amongst her peers. This could be supported by an excerpt from later in the conversation when she considered the attitude of those around her;

I suppose that's quite an issue in my generation, people just aren't bothered about it, which as our generation, should be bothered about it.

Her personal behaviour and value priority extended beyond recycling; she explains;

Yeah I do try and always buy ethical products but if it's not available, I don't beat myself up about it um, when it comes to companies, I am quite into the whole 'corporate social responsibility', so I won't apply for a company if I don't like their policies on it

Allowing herself some contingency with ascertaining her own perceived *high levels* of CnSR priority she includes that she won't 'beat herself up' when options are not available, in what could be conceived as a pragmatic approach. Interestingly she switches to organisational core, CSR priorities and states that this is a fundamental decision maker when considering employment applications. Similarly, employment is also a deliberation for David (6);

...you wanna know what area's been used for landfill and what sort of area you're going work in and stuff.

Although admittedly this could be more health related and self-focussed, something that could be construed from his following rhetoric;

I recycle, I don't really go out my way to make sure I buy environmentally friendly things, or I don't go out my way to try and, in terms of that but through, definitely during my exams at the moment.

Acknowledging the 1-2-1 interview situation, David (6) is alert, confident, and well-informed; his responses although positive did at times resonate as lip-service.

Likewise, Peter (7) had similar attributes;

I think, yeah - err recently, more recently again, feeling that I want to buy more responsibly, um in terms of trainers I think I'm trying to avoid Nike more - Coz they've got a bit of a bad reputation I think um in terms of brands I would go for um - err, in terms of clothing I try and remain, remain fairly brand less.

Dissecting the above anecdote suggests ambiguity to his actions. He uses 'I want to', 'I'm trying', 'I think' and 'I would' in non-committed sentences, earlier he had stated that the 'idea' of recycling 'really' appealed to him, the previous excerpt concludes in support of this uncertainty;

I don't like to (be) seen supporting a brand, I'll just check what sweatshirt I'm wearing.

However, the environmental/ethical 'cause' in question (as with Emma (6)) indicates where David's (6) priorities lie.

I'm making a lot more changes according to how I feel about the impact of what I buy and the environment and the world so, yeah the main thing for me at the minute is that I don't buy any meat from the supermarket coz I feel like that, especially on social media there's been a lot of um, a lot (of) videos and things and people sharing that, so my awareness of that is increasing so like, I'm in the position that I can act on that - yeah it makes me feel good as a person.

His announcement is that animal welfare is something that he clearly cares for or values and is contributing to his consumption and behavioural choices, he expands;

I just feel like when you can walk through a supermarket and there's like 3 huge aisles just full of meat and people are just piling it in, I think you've really got to question where that comes from coz you just don't know

Question - To see it at those prices and that?

Yeah it just means to me there's got to be some kind of intensive farming for this to be sustainable or it's not you know. It's just worrying I think, the amount of it, it creates questions for me.

It's an interesting use of the word 'sustainable' in the context of pro-business financial success. Daisy (5) too, holds animal welfare as a value priority, as a vegetarian she clarifies;

Well I don't eat meat, um and I don't eat dairy, I think the dairy industry is worse than the meat industry probably.

Ending with 'probably' admittedly suggests insecurity of knowledge or fact, but still one of her justifications for not eating meat or dairy. Food and drink are particularly pertinent to Daisy (5) and the topic is revisited. When discussing the Coca-Cola Life brand extension;

...it's green and it's got plant, um sweeteners from plants but it's still, still completely empty calories and it's still I, I don't think they should be allowed to make stuff like that!

> She laughs <

Coz you know, childhood obesity is a massive epidemic.

I consider that she is laughing at her single consumer viewpoint in confronting the choices of a global corporation's decision making, but interestingly her closing could be considered 'statement of fact' and incredibly serious. The issue that she connects empty calories and obesity in all, but the same sentence suggests the emotion and intent is clearly present.

However, forthright opinions were infrequent when it came to positivity around the topics; most were modest at best where applicable. Alex ('6 or 7') however, was akin to Daisy (5) and recited how she considers that she personally plays a *significant* part in pro-active, socially responsible knowledge transfer;

I remember at Scouts we do a lot about outdoors and stuff all the time and it's trying to get kids introduced to stuff and quite a few of my projects have been focussed around the sustainability of things and those sort of things - Like one of them was a kids teaching event that I did that was focussed around teaching kids, old skills that were like totally lost that were more sustainable to them. And they were making their own posters.

Alex's ('6 or 7') pride was evident; it transpired that she had been involved in the Scouts for many years and her general confidence was palpable. Feasibly some of this character came from her upbringing along with some CnSR habits;

Err, everything at home is recycled. I've got quite a large family so extra rubbish that we get it's like, try and recycle it as much as possible - Um I'd rather walk or go on the bus if I can...

As some of the previous anecdotes have alluded to, there were conversations where

the value priority of CnSR to individuals was unclear, unconvincing or ambiguous. Thus, upon overall dissection and analysis of each individual text, some inevitably suggest a less than decisive conclusion of their value priority, with certain aspects of CnSR more pertinent to them than others. The following are further examples from the aforementioned participants (positive and negative) that allude to this ambiguity.

What could be initially deduced is that any particular action or cause holds subjective importance rather than taking a holistic approach to one person's CnSR responsibilities. Previously Adam ('6 or 7') spoke of how recycling isn't something he particularly adheres to, whereas latterly;

...it's more of a recycling, travelling point of view that I take the green approach - how efficient is the travel route that I am taking? Am I taking too many trains to get to 1 destination, or could I walk somewhere rather than getting the bus? Is it doable that way or get the bike there?

His use of the word 'efficient' could also be perceived as effort, time or financial but from his perspective he is associating it with environmental consideration. Similarly, Rosy ('5 or 6') too had dismissed the inconvenience that recycling is to her but when she discusses businesses supporting charitable causes and animal welfare concerns, she mentions Lush (a UK based cosmetics company that uses vegetarian ingredients and is vehemently opposed to animal testing);

...but also they are just like a really good company, coz they have like err, they support a lot charities, um they have like a product that it's got a sticker on the top to tell you which charity it is, when you buy it, the proceeds go to that charity... But also they're very vocal about um, fighting animal testing and um, all their products are vegetarian, some of them are vegan.

Rosy had also explained that she is vegetarian and an aspiring vegan, although she states it's a 'work in progress' and what's on offer plays a significant part;

It's difficult sometimes to be able to eat that way sometimes, you know, when you're going out to eat and things.

With Lush she continues in reference to their shops and the alternatives;

So I kind of just feel like, if I go in there it's safe to just buy whatever. Whereas if I go into Boots or Superdrug, I've got to be really conscious about what I'm

buying and where it's come from - Um and also like, not even like the animal testing side, the like, a lot of the products like are, well they refer to them as being 'naked' just because they've not put any packaging on - And the ones that have, you can take the packaging back to have it recycled. Again, whereas if I was in Boots or Superdrug, then I've got this plastic packaging and it's just gonna go in the bin. So yeah, so I always feel safe going in to buy, buy stuff in Lush > she laughs <

The repetition of 'safe' appears as a reassurance that her conscience is satisfied that her value priority is being fulfilled. Her depiction of how she sees problematic or unreliably pro-CnSR consumption from the alternate stores supports her argument; although isn't ultimately conclusive whether this happens infrequently or otherwise. Annie ('3 or 4') too explains her priority of animal welfare;

I'm animal friendly as I'm a vegetarian - that's more of the animal side than the environmental side - um so, if I saw a product that was animal friendly I'd probably go for that, if I saw something environmentally friendly it would still entice me but I probably wouldn't go for it quite so much.

Her she clearly differentiates her concern for animals from her consideration of the environment or other humans per se. I appreciate that the CnSR / CSR conversation covers a multitude of discussion points and the intention was never to cover them all but for there to be sufficient to hear their views. With Annie's priority for animals differentiated from the environment it was interesting to see how social responsibility interchangeable terminology played a part in conversations. This is something that arises with Sam (4) who had previously been attributed to the attitude-intention-purchase gap. Initially he appears cognitive to this disposition;

I rate myself around, 4...my thoughts would be in 6 or 7 but my actions would be less

He explains how he considers that he is aware of such issues;

Yeah because I would be affected by the CSR cause or adverts, something like that. But actually for me err in my personal life, I'm not too concerned a lot when I buy a product or so - whatever, it is green, it is ethics, ethics would be important for me a bit, more important than green, yeah.

Similar to Annie's ('3 or 4') differentiation of animals and environment, unprompted, Sam (4) is the only participant to distinguish ethics from 'green'; which I discerned from his overall rhetoric as being environmentally focussed. This arguably places him in the 'social' classification of Stern, Dietz, and Kalof's (1993) description of altruism's tripartite classification; egoistic (self), social (others) and Annie in biospheric (nature). Sam's student scenario is also a conscious factor in his consumption choices;

Yeah because, when you see a product or a service, your thought would be very, you can think a lot of things about a service or a product, but actually when you want to buy, when you need to pay for it, you need to pay with money. So sometimes it's not only your thoughts, your ethical or green thoughts, it's all about the price and the quality, so sometimes the price might be a problem.

This could also be attributed to cash-point conservatism (negation at the point of purchase) as outlined by Devinney, Auger and Eckhardt (2010). Sam talks more about how, post-university and in employment when he will be financially self-sufficient, that he would like to be more pro-active. Whereas now he recalls his significant efforts in recycling, a behaviour that does not have economic implications;

In the library we have different colour bins, so you put your, you put your rubbish into there. Actually, sometimes a little bit err, because when people get into the library, the library was full of people, the bin is always quite full. So sometimes, yeah, I always find the err, I always find the right bin to throw my rubbish in, even though I may need to go down another side of the library.

Question - Yeah?

But it's alright; I do that every day actually.

He smiles and looks proud at this point in acknowledgement of how he behaves in this situation, perhaps in reflection of knowing that he admits to abstaining in other areas. Ross ('7 or 8') too shared his recycling or repurposing efforts with stories of 'rescuing' items that had been left outside his student accommodation for refuse collection. He is pro-brands and loyal to the football club he supports, even changing sportswear after his club's sponsorship change. He talks of how he and others are influenced by celebrities (as mentioned by Davina (7) earlier) along with what they endorse consciously or otherwise, I ask him of his perception of recent UK TV marketing by

MacDonald's;

Clever. Because, they've got a bit of a bad reputation from that. Like when they used to, there were lots of documentaries around, there's like rumours like about like, how they used like, chicken feet to make the nuggets and things like that. Whereas like, with that, they've got like campaigns within the company and they're just like throwing them in our face like, like showing us that the rumours aren't true like. If you see it on the telly then, it must be true > he has a wry smile on his face < > I laugh< and you do remember it, so it works. And then it sort a, like people who are stupid, who are talking about the chicken feet and the rumours like, if you were with a group of people and they started talking about it, it's like 'no' coz it's, 'that's not true coz the advert said it' like, so it stops people spreading, like talking about the rumours... yeah it is fast, it's not that good for ya, but it's better for ya than you lot think, kinda thing.

His narrative is enthusiastic and supportive of MacDonald's efforts with perceivably brand advocate connotations. He acknowledges the dubious health benefits but significantly stresses the ethically related 'rumours' and how marketing is influential in changing consumer mind-sets, albeit with a cynical wry smile at one stage.

Corporate impact on self-image is also apparently prevalent to Lottie (4). Where previously she provided a soundbite as to her low priority with recycling efforts, she explains how she would disassociate herself from irresponsible companies;

Like if they did something like really immoral, I wouldn't want to be associated with them. So, trying to think of an example - like with the, I think it was the Olympics, there was a company who was part of a, I think it was a gas explosion in another country. If you were associated with the company who, although they bought out who was responsible, I just think it was awful and I would just not want anything to do with that.

Her delivery of this negative social responsibility anecdote was not as enthusiastically passionate as others when discussing pro-active prerogatives. The example she used was clearly something that had stuck in her mind from previous years although evidently, details and cohesion were lacking. What could be construed, however, is that the lack of face or corporate image from this incident would be reflected on to her personal image, something she appears to value with priority.

As with Annie ('3 or 4') and Rosy ('5 or 6') previously, HanNah (4) expresses concern for animal welfare as a cause and value priority, unlike her recycling apathy earlier. She explains how this manifests in her consumption practices and how she sees it part of a bigger picture - I ask her about the MacDonald's TV adverts;

(I) always buy local meat from the butchers

Question - What are your thoughts about those adverts?

Well there's one that I did see which is like, I think it starts off with like 'This is Lucy, this is Lucy's cow' they show she's drawn like a cartoon cow and they featured that - Because they wanted to be all into, trace it back to where it came from.

Question - Yeah...?

I think being able to know, especially after like, the horse meat scandal and stuff like that, I think it's really important that people know where their food is coming from, which is why I try to buy local product, like produce.

She demonstrates her recollection of the high-profile media story concerning questionable meat sourcing in the UK whilst acknowledging the public's reaction. She then takes the topic in to a more localised perspective;

Um, I think, coz there's this big whole thing, well especially more recently like, veganism is on the rise - Because people care about, the treatment of animals and then and even vegetarianism is a thing, well obviously, but like

> she laughs <

She acknowledges her self-evident statement as humour.

More so now, especially in my group of friends it has been forever... um but if they know where um, where animals are coming from, then they know they are not mass produced in a warehouse and killed horrendously I guess... Um they might be more inclined to feel comfortable in eating it?

Ending this excerpt as a question infers her uncertainty, she begins more confident but appears to find herself becoming more passionate and then attempting to draw conclusions that she is unsure of. I push her on her view of MacDonald's after these adverts;

Well it's good that they're considering it.

Notably she uses 'considering' rather 'doing' anything about it; suggesting hesitance in endorsement. Her hesitance and scepticism become more apparent, advocating her value priority to the topic;

...like making it widely, like widely known that they know about it, if you know what I mean like. They want to, I think they're trying to be transparent as possible - which makes a change considering. Whenever they started to tell everyone they now use 100% chicken breast in their chicken nuggets, I remember that being a thing, that was years ago now but I remember thinking 'well what did they use in it before?'

HanNah (4) talks openly, with energy and fervour about numerous pro-ethical/ socially responsible issues including same-sex marriage, climate change and environmental pollution. She also offered her views on generational differences, claiming that she believed her generation were 'mouthy' but nevertheless mindful of such issues. Her reasoning was an interesting perception of social mobility caused by changing industries;

...the generations that were there for like the factories and stuff, like we don't have that, so we have to think of like other ways to be employed or whatever. Like they shut down all the mines here, but like people have to (go) elsewhere to find work and then, obviously broadens their interest and broadens their knowledge on what they do.

Kamile's ('6 or 7') earlier deadpan dismissal of CSR efforts was latterly contradicted some-what by her aspiration to consume and behave with more CnSR consideration;

...I want to be like, I wanna be responsible, like I recycle um but I don't have the money to like buy products so like I would love to have every product that is organic like cream makeup. I would love to buy from People Tree, err clothes for example or like 100%, 100% linen - But it's just too expensive, I'm a student - so yeah, so I think I would be more responsible and as well sometimes you like just buy upon impulse

So ethical and environmental options are conscious to her, but financial reasoning is immediately evident. Having tacit knowledge to the disparity of student finances from

one to another, I am hesitant to take at face value every student's reasoning to this being the sole antecedent to their consumption choices. Preference and the propensity to place *want* before *need* is recurrent from my a priori perspective and the fact that she finishes with '*sometimes you like just buy upon impulse*' appears to be an indicator to support my presupposition. Similarly, with Maisie (4), who earlier said that the recession and financial instability was a forerunner to her avoiding spending *more* on pro-ethical/ environmental products; she here claims that her intentions are noteworthy, but again her situation is restrictive;

Well I try if I buy food or I buy um you know clothes whatever. I do try to look at you know, where it's sourced and things and is it ethically sourced? But it's not, as you know, as a student, it's the budget over that preference.

Hailing from a farming background, Maisie still demonstrates a value priority to this community and way of life. I explore the connotations of this;

I've got quite a farming background so I'm really mindful of free range and things like that um and ethically as a renewables and things. On our farm's solar energy and things like that and there, so in that sense

Comment - You're aware of it...

I'm aware of it, err but then that is not my choice so - I can't take any credit for it.

In some ways this is indicative of more than one participant and their attitudes to CSR / CnSR related issues: consciously aware, yet distant from self, thus alleviating responsibility. Feasibly a little negative or pessimistic, this selection of the demographic does however appear interesting in their transition from: *adolescent discovery* into *adulthood responsibility*. To note, their actual ages were not recorded so I cannot deduce any correlation to age with this abstracted proposition and furthermore, each adolescence transition centres on the individual rather than their age.

Maisie's distancing of responsibility is again evident as she considers CSR efforts purporting to a value-action gap;

Any company that tries, you know, to be a bit more green and bit more sustainable um - is surely a good thing. I just think there's a lot of emphasis at

the minute on individuals doing it when there are massive companies that could use their size for good when there's not a lot else that's so good about them being so big you know, if they can't make a difference like that, I guess.

Maisie could be perceived as having some internal conflict as to her value priorities, she appears to have awareness from various perspectives although her behaviour does not necessarily correlate to her vocal concern. She talks fervently of what she sees as the struggling plight of the UK farming industry (speaking from first-hand family insight), discussing issues with Europe and making comparisons to other industries in recent decline, it is a topic that she apparently holds with a high value priority. Towards the very end of the conversation I ask her to clarify her thoughts on the MacDonald's TV adverts and whether she saw it having any impact;

Um no coz I don't have it enough to, for it to be, coz if I was gonna have MacDonald's it was because I was 'hanging' or couldn't be arsed to cook and it would be funny if I went and they said 'oh this chicken, it's not the freshest' I'd be like 'oh, get it in the wrap' > I laugh < 'I'm starving' > she laughs <

Question - Excellent, an insight into your life Maisie?

Definitely, 'I don't care if it's ethically sourced, give it to me now'

Her humour and hypothetical role play are perhaps, nevertheless an insight into how her values or priorities are susceptible to situation. In what could be considered a *'needs' must* scenario illustrated by Maisie, she proposes that her otherwise reputable *'moral compass'* is vulnerable.

4.2.2 Value priority analysis summary

This first section of the data analysis (4.2) has focused on the participants' social responsibility and value priority with direct pertinence to objective 1 *'To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their consumer social responsibility (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority'*. In addition, there was support to objective 2 *'To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics'*.

Upon reflection of the 18 participants and their perceived value priorities, there appears to be a majority that sit in the less than enthusiastic domain that respectively rated themselves low in the HRS rating. There was appreciatively a degree of ambiguity in this, with some rating themselves low but indicating strong pro-environmental concerns and some of those who rated themselves higher, although explaining or self-justifying that there were constraints and other factors that limited their behaviour. Topics such as financial restraints, facility misgivings, alternate purchasing drivers, external & peer influences, and an acknowledged lack of effort on their part were common.

As noted, it was commented that not all was negative (4.2.1). Narrative relating to global warming, rising obesity levels, exploitation of third world resources and employee mistreatment, for example were evident; although admittedly with various levels of enthusiasm and/or knowledge conviction.

The Hypothetical Rating Scale (HRS) has been used in this part of the chapter to allow the reader an indication of how the individual participant scored themselves between 0-10. Clearly there is plenty to subjectively debate and the HRS was originally placed as an open-ended conversation starter to see what they chose to talk about or what was in their immediate minds. My conclusion to the use of the HRS, as a minor part of this research process, is that participant consciousness or knowledge regarding the breadth of 'green' or socially responsible actions feasible to their lifestyle choices is limited and that it could not be considered a reliable assessment of their green aptitude and behaviour. To illustrate, Hannah self-rated the highest at 8 and her overall narrative inferred that indeed she was the most socially responsible member of the group. In comparison, Ross who self-rated 7 or 8 sat more comfortably with those self-rating 4 or 5. Lottie's rhetoric suggested that she was least socially responsible and self-rated 4.

The *key issues* that this section of the analysis has explored primarily include:

consumers awareness of CSR and if they care / lack of empathy / inferences of individualism over collectivism brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' and identity implications / incongruent marketing communications and consumer indifference / evidence of CnSR and how it manifests / evidence of disidentification / reflection on organisational prior reputation in relation to CSR / / relevance of financial restriction priority + other priorities / external

recognition of pride / situation and context / cynicism impacting unethical decision making.

And to a lesser extent, but contribute to:

participant views of online CSR or pro-ethical communications / consciousness of societal obligation or ethically superior 'others' when older (not now) / the perception to significantly contribute / some brand affiliation / peer affiliation, approval or recognition influencing behaviour or opinion.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, it became evident that there are 3 significant themes to their narratives that go some way to explain 'why' their value priority to social responsibilities is the way it is in support of the research aim. How the research reached these themes will be explained next.

4.3 Candidate themes

In continuation of the code creation as the inaugural phase of thematic analysis (explained in the methodology chapter 3.4), the following shows how these 50+ codes were then mapped into 11 candidate themes, across 3 maps that in-turn produced the 3 final themes (4.3.1).

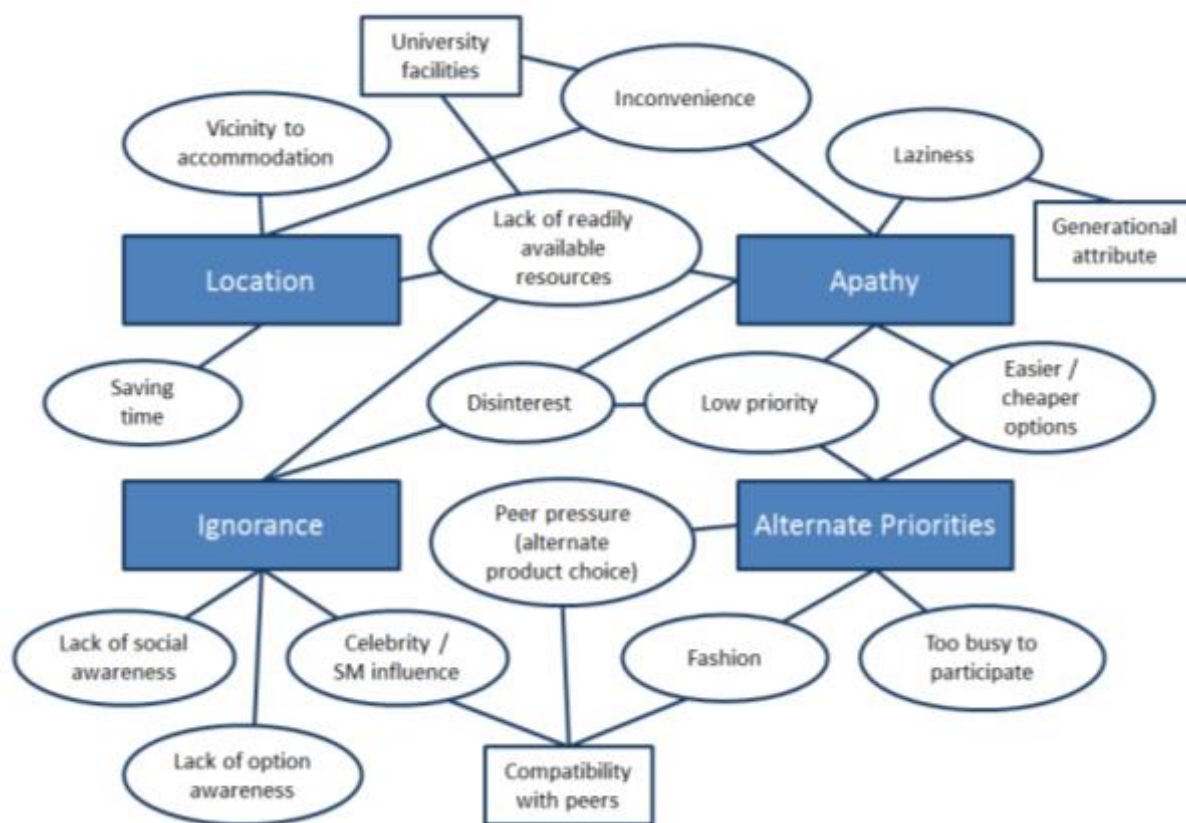


Figure 7 Map #1 Candidate themes Location, Apathy, Ignorance & Alternate Priorities

The first map / cluster presents the first 4 candidate themes 'Location, Apathy, Ignorance & Alternate Priorities'. The illustration demonstrates the 17 component codes and their interrelationships that support the candidate theme development.

Participants explained how their behaviour and choices were dictated by perceived barriers or alternative wants/needs (Alternate Priorities) in respect to their day-to-day life. Barriers were perceived sometimes as a hindrance or simply an inconvenience, this included University or student accommodation and the vicinity of retail or supermarkets - Location. Furthermore, the propensity of the term 'lazy' was evident in the transcripts that along with inferences of having a low priority to the topic found strong resonance to Apathy. The low priority element linked to disinterest that along with a lack of awareness and a predisposition to being influenced by social media / peers / celebrities indicated an 'Ignorance' of associated knowledge. The caveat being, 'if they're not talking about it, we're not talking about it' as a form of disclaimer.

To note, celebrity / social media influence features in Map#2 along with fashion and its link to peers appearing again in Map#3.

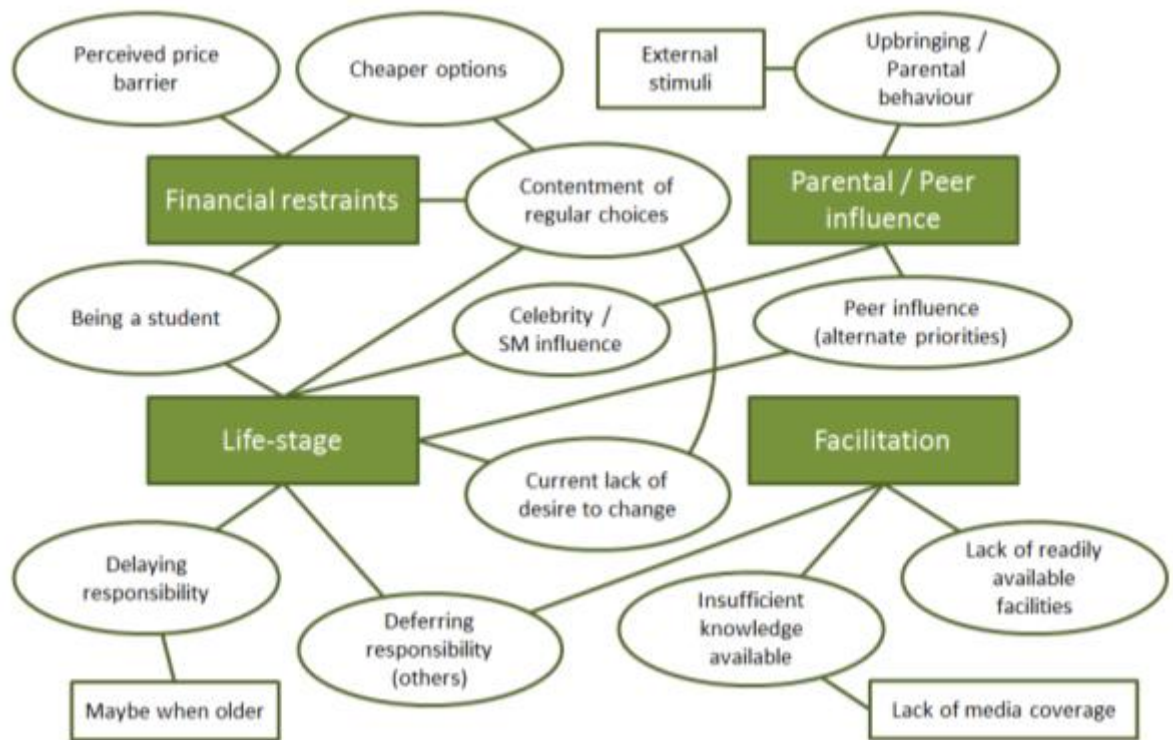


Figure 8 Map #2 Candidate themes Financial restraints, Life-stage, Parental / Peer influence, Facilitation

The 4 candidate themes here are 'Financial restraints, Life-stage, Parental / Peer influence, Facilitation'. To note, a significant number of the supporting codes came during the respective sections of each interview where the participants reflected upon what they did and didn't do in the realms of pro-ethical consumption, socially responsible behaviour or informed purchasing. 'Financial restraints' factored in all interviews in various contexts, perhaps unsurprising for the student demographic, that interlinks significantly to the 'Life-stage' category. The Life-stage connotations were used conclusively for some as steadfast rationalisation as to their choices and behaviour including both deferring and delaying their sense of responsibility. The influence of their parents was notable, as was the role their peers and celebrities (Parental / Peer influence); the latter on this occasion linked more to a phase than a priority.

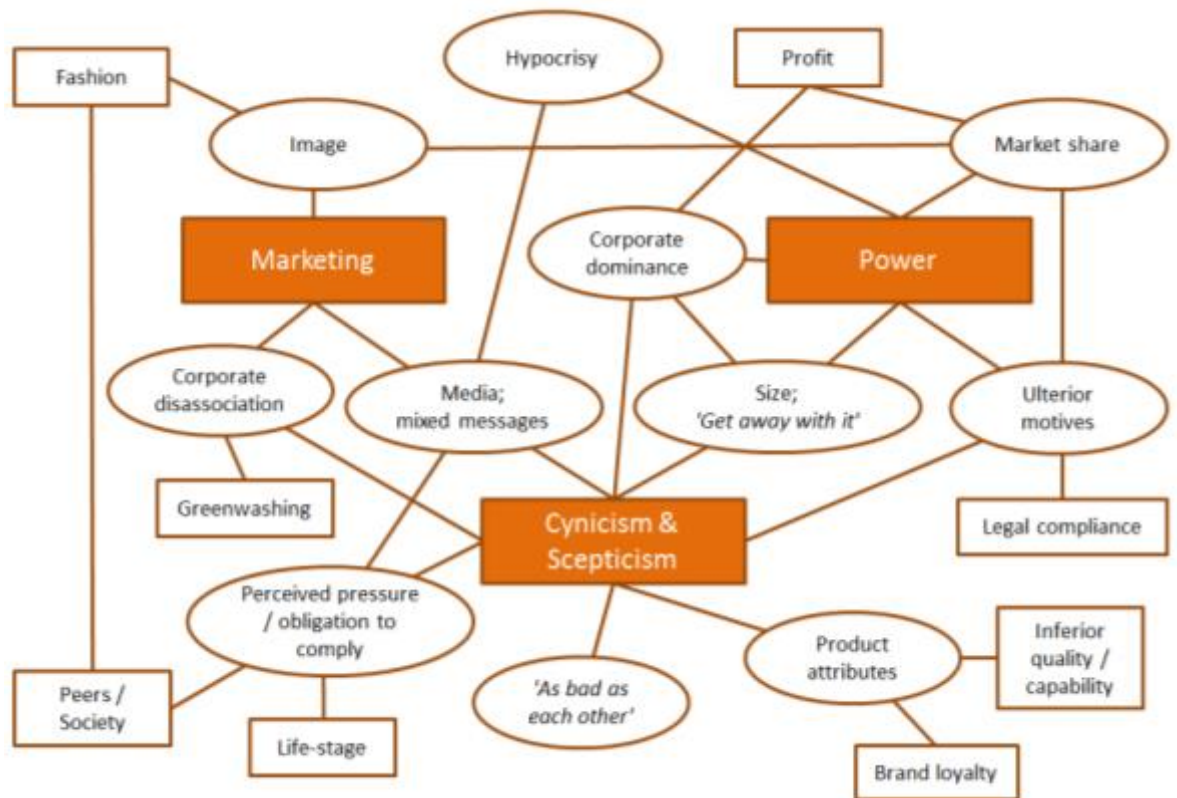


Figure 9 Map #3 Candidate themes Marketing, Power, Cynicism & Scepticism

The 3 candidate themes here are 'Marketing', 'Power', and 'Cynicism & Scepticism'. The map demonstrates some significant interconnections between the 19 codes with more than one having 4 connections. However, in defence of Marketing that has only 3 supporting connections the weighting of narrative in support of the category was self-justified along with the significance to the research. The role of Marketing in connection to the global brands in discussion was primarily cynical, a term that warranted its own category coupled with scepticism. The factors that supported this were a disbelief in corporate ethical behaviour (especially motives), pro-ethical product attributes, the media and a perceived obligation to comply. Finally, Power was attributed to the brands in question on multiple occasions and in numerous contexts. Power links closely back to Cynicism via ulterior motives, corporate dominance and again via hypocrisy.

On the outer peripheries, the resurgence of the fashion connection to peers / society is evident as with Map#1. On this occasion both terms have less-than-positive connotations relating to image and pressure to comply respectively.

4.3.1 Candidate theme refinement and final theme evolution

The final stage of analysis was to look at the commonality and 'essence' as to what each of the 3 maps and their associated candidate themes were.

As mentioned, the refinement of the topics entailed revisiting the original quotations again to establish a strong belief in the constructed mapping as illustrated. On this occasion other than a couple of interconnects, the illustrations remained as they appear here. The 3 maps, highlighting the codes that then became candidate themes and in-turn evolved into the 3 final theme headings (Convenience & Indifference / Self-reasoning & Justification / Distrust) are illustrated and discussed next; an extended analysis with further participant quotes can be found in appendices 2, 3, & 4.

4.4 Theme #1 Convenience and Indifference

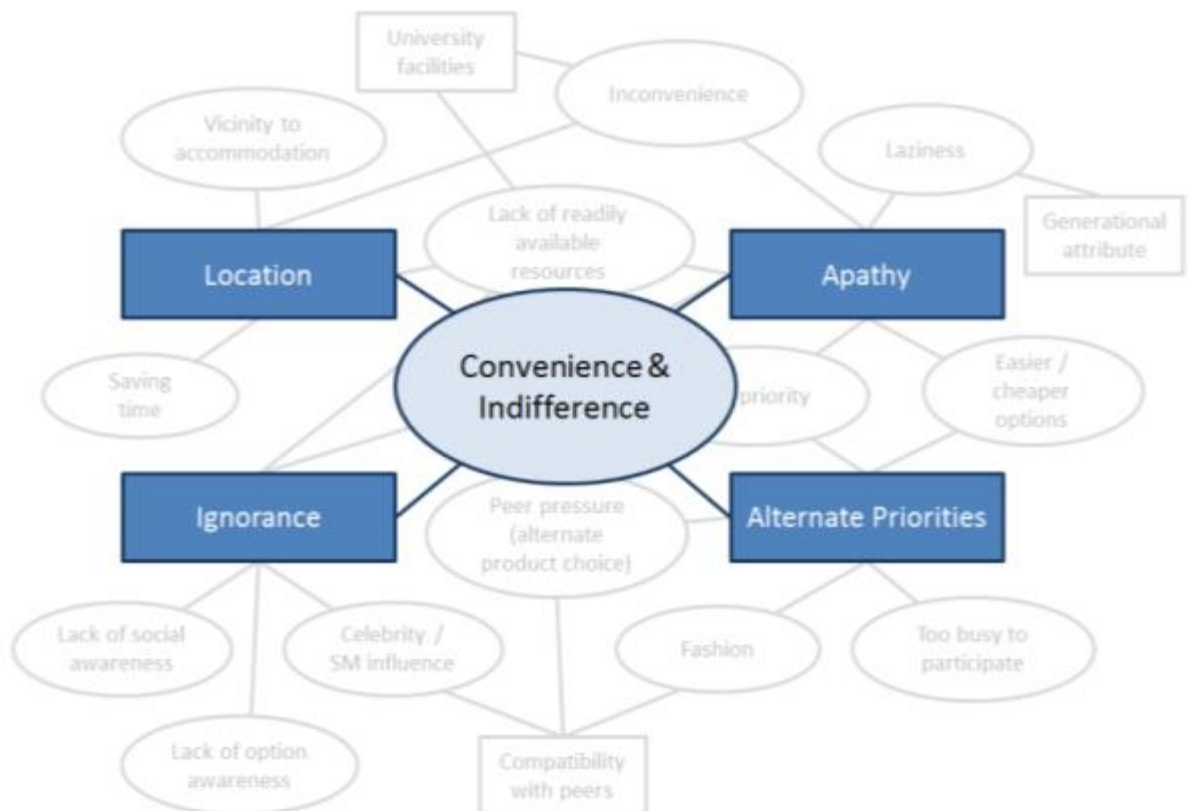


Figure 10 Theme #1 Convenience and Indifference

Convenience:

The state of being able to proceed with something without difficulty.

A thing that contributes to an easy and effortless way of life.

Oxford Dictionaries (2017)

The first element of the first theme is 'Convenience' and as described by the Oxford Dictionaries (2017) outlines the perspective of the participants in relation to 'avoiding difficulty' and being 'effortless'. It was concluded that 'easy, effortless and without difficulty' had tangible links to Apathy: Lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern (ibid). The students also referred to the antonym of 'inconvenience' in almost literal support of this title along with regular discussion relating to Location; inaccessibility, distance or facilities / resources.

Indifference:

Lack of interest, concern, or sympathy.

Unimportance.

Oxford Dictionaries (2017)

The use of the term 'Indifference' again has tangible links to Apathy and clearly has connections to Alternate Priorities when the contributing codes are taken into account. The 'Unimportance' coupled with low or alternate priorities and 'lack of interest' embodied the Ignorance of the topic within this theme. A selection of direct quotes and an illustration of thought processes follow, an extended version if required is in appendix 2.

Millennials have been regularly described as lazy (eg. Deal, Altman & Rogelberg, 2010, Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010) and the trait does materialise in their narrative at numerous points. For the purpose of clarity, the term lazy in this context refers to being: averse or disinclined to work, activity, or exertion; indolent (Dictionary.com), accepting that the participants may demonstrate or interpret this with variance. It should be acknowledged that not all quotes used are directly related to CSR or CnSR, but consumption, perceptions and choice making generically. This was to ascertain overall character traits and priorities that the individuals held and may in turn, elicit a broader understanding of their decision making.

Alex appears to clarify this association when asked as to her thoughts on her peers;

I do think there is an air of laziness to this generation

Supported by HanNah considering her friends;

Well although a lot of them are very, very lazy and don't do anything; I think it is, it's a lot more apparent [CSR related media] than when it would have been when my mum was this age so if you know what I mean.

Without airing frustration or overt judgement of her peers, she appears to sync the indifference and abundance of available information (that she refers again to latterly) into a single sentence. This could suggest her observation is that of a 'generalised lack of engagement' of the demographic, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the ease of relevant information being more readily available than ever before.

At the start of each interview participants were encouraged to identify their socially responsible / ethical or pro-environmental attributes; some were unhesitant, others required prompting for examples. Adam cites his consciousness of his recycling habits (into the correct bins) along with his travel priorities where he takes what he calls, the 'green approach', he posits his internal questioning;

...how efficient is the travel route that I am taking? Am I taking too many trains to get to 1 destination or could I walk somewhere rather than getting the bus? Is it doable that way or get the bike there?

Interestingly, when Adam reflects on his life a few years previous, he suggests his personal rating would be at nearer the (HRS) maximum due to his circumstances and clearly focusing on the transport implications in the breadth of socially responsible consumer opportunities;

...when I was at college and sixth form I'd probably have been closer to the 10, like I would have walked everywhere as I didn't have to travel to Sheffield... my local college was just down the road.

Again, Adam's implicit suggestion of *efficiency* is notable yet perhaps ambiguous, efficient for the environment, cost efficient or efficient for his time? The conversation latterly picks up on further indications when discussing food;

...food brands is err - because its local, we usually go to Tesco as it's the closest one to us... in terms of fast food, I don't have a particular brand that I shop at. So if there's something near I like, ... it's based on location really, whichever I'm nearest to at the time

Supported by Laura; *'If it's not Aldi it will be Tesco's coz it's local'* And Emma;

Yeah, Starbucks. Never, well, with that it's more, it's not because of the marketing or anything like that it's just that, it's because, like I said before it's close to everything

These quotes begin to suggest efficiency is based on convenience (with Adam, accepting his standards of quality and preference) rather than any environmental or social responsibility impact. When discussing shopping habits Laura recalls her view on necessity, product placement (convenience) along with extrinsic perception;

Oh yeah, yeah recycling bags, big carry bags for 10p yeah that looks good, I do that as well - You know because it's there, when you are getting your shopping it's there with a big notice and you think, you look at it and you consciously go yeah, I need one of those, it's good, it's recycling, other than that you wouldn't, I don't.

I don't think people otherwise would unless it's there to remind you.

When it came to personal knowledge; Emma when asked of what she knew about the Apple organisation, she confessed that her awareness was limited;

I think that Apple are quite, they um, they come across really positive don't they as well but I wouldn't say that I've read that much into what they do in a, kinda green sense in that kinda...'

Question - Corporate social responsibility?

'Yeah I wouldn't say that I've sort read that into it but I know that the, I don't know it's a hard one innit? But I just know that I like the product, I can use the product they are very easy to use and they seem to do everything that I need it to do

Her unease is evident at what could be construed as indifference to her research or knowing more when questioned and she brings the discussion back to her justification of why she uses/owns the product and the benefits therein.

Daisie begins her narrative with reflection that she perhaps is not fulfilling her ethical obligation in behaving as responsible as she could or should (referring to her self-scored 5 on the HRS);

I would like, yeah, I'd like to be higher it's just you know in practice, it's...

In this immediate acknowledgement that perhaps her efforts are not in line with her (desired?) values she also expands that convenience or laziness is at play;

I live opposite Aldi, like as close as you can get to it

> She laughs <

...so I do basically all my shopping at Aldi, but I would like to use the Moor market [purpose built Sheffield market venue] more... coz it's like local people and independent, and local produce and, but it's just so much more convenient to go to Aldi

Additionally, Rosy refers indirectly to convenience, sharing that her accommodation presents barriers and the *inconvenience* this causes;

Um, being in student accommodation, recycling is a bit of pain. Just because there's only one bin in the flat and there's no recycling in the accommodation; so that's something I don't really bother with, as it would take me too far out of my way.

Kamille appears unfazed by her own narrative regarding how she has become less preoccupied by the inconvenience of a previously perceived morally correct behaviour;

So yeah I used to turn the lights off, but now I'm like, more like, chilled out... yeah, so I like to turn off the lights, but for example if I am going to go to toilet or something there is a chance I will leave it.

Likewise, as Mollie admitted, a light being left on is also within her consciousness, but she offers her priority of an economical perspective;

...like if a light switch is left on I'll turn it off but that's probably more because I think that I'm paying for the electricity, does that light really need to be on? Not from a green point of view...

Although initially Maisie implies consciousness of any personal social responsibility she reflects with honesty to her apathy when it comes to actual performance in what could be regarded as a simple pro-environmental task;

I like to think... that I am green minded and (that) I would go out of my way to put something in a recycling bin and, rather than the bin; but I'm not, it's just laziness at the end of the day

The issue of 'distance' reoccurs with David;

I recycle; I don't really go out my way to make sure I buy environmentally friendly things

Furthermore, it's also a 'bin too far' for Laura;

I don't actively go out my way to recycle, like if there's a bin there, I'd put the plastics in the bin

Question - Yeah?

I'll put the paper in the waste, but sometimes when I'm lazy I'll just stick it in the wrong bin, I don't care... So I wouldn't say I'm actively environmentally friendly

Convenience and the intonation of minimal effort is evident with Laura, she begins to almost deflect the responsibility to others to make pro-ethical options readily available. The commonality of the previous quotes regarding recycling proximity infers perceived effort for the individual. Ease, convenience, time and motivation appear to be in conflict, although the justification varies in apportioning blame vis-à-vis responsibility. The precept of justification is discussed further in the following theme 4.5.

Laura regularly shifts her foci in what appears to be a more comfortable delivery as she appears to speak for 'us' or perhaps her generation;

And I think if you cleared it down to it, people are very lazy, if they hadn't got a choice, they wouldn't recycle, I think most people don't buy the green bins coz they don't want to ... They don't want to invest money into the environment. We don't have a green bin; we just shove ours in the black bin. I'm sure a lot of people do as well... I think if you can, then you side-step it, because there's so much pressure these days, you have to recycle if there are people about

Here she appears to be offsetting her own actions into her perceived social domain. As she begins to reflect, she attempts to share the responsibility or perceived guilt yet infers her own approach and that of simple indolence. Annie's rhetoric sits with this;

..if the bins are there I'll do it but obviously with my flat here, we don't recycle - we put everything in one bin.'

This shifting of responsibility is revisited by HanNah's explanation and justification of

inaction. HanNah begins her rhetoric with her recycling efforts and admits that it isn't a priority for her, she is however quick to share the responsibility with her flatmates (akin to Annie's use of 'we') and justifies with excuses; '*...we recycle but we don't, it's not a massive thing like we don't feel overly strongly about it but we understand why it's a good thing but just - its sort out, real sort of laziness*'.

It appears she becomes conscious of apportioning the blame and switches intermittently to her own responsibility along with attributing lack of action to laziness on her part. In argument of the negative 'lazy' moniker that Millennials are attributed with, Alex becomes animated as she brings the topic up in our conversation. Her defensiveness and self-conscious explanation become more defined;

...so at the minute there are the ups and downs of this generation and I do think that comes from this situation that the last generation put us in...

With intonations of resentment to her elders, Alex offers a perspective of accepting a responsibility but not necessarily the blame for their environmental situation.

4.4.1 Theme #1 Convenience and Indifference summary

This first theme interconnected two characteristics found prevalent across most participants, *convenience* and *indifference*. Acknowledging that the majority of quotes were directly related to the social responsibility topic although some were depicting habits and choices that were unrelated, but nonetheless depictions of their consumption antecedents, behaviour or brand affinity.

The overall observation that denotes the two characteristics was both literal and inferred within the discussions. Be that references to 'laziness', ease or vicinity as the key indicators in their anecdotes and prime examples of the Apathy and Location candidate themes. Inconvenience examples offered insight to the Alternate Priorities, some stemming from location, others more pivotal to illustrations of Ignorance as to the consequence of their (in)action – time or expenditure of effort being more important. Narrative enthusiasm was as expected, varying in their delivery with the implications that these self-confessed traits could be deemed as uncomplimentary; with most unperturbed as to the less-than positive social norm association.

The *key issues* that have been considered here include:

Awareness of CSR and inference to how much they don't care / some evidence of CnSR / evidence of disidentification insofar as the lazy or apathetical discussion / rhetoric regarding ethically 'superior' others or social expectations / inference of individualistic traits / life stage as a contributing factor / 'pride' in using reusable bags vs. a lack of 'guilt' when not completing simple tasks / suggestion of unconsidered empathy / effort + time being a higher priority / and situation + context being significant to behaviour.

From these perspectives and peripheral observations there was almost an organic transition to the second theme (4.5). As much as the discussion in this section acknowledged traits, habits and preferences that the individuals took to accept in their own character, there were also anecdotes where they proportioned responsibility elsewhere.

As mentioned, further elaboration, quotes and extended analysis regarding theme 1, can be found in appendix 2.

4.5 Theme #2 Self-reasoning and Justification

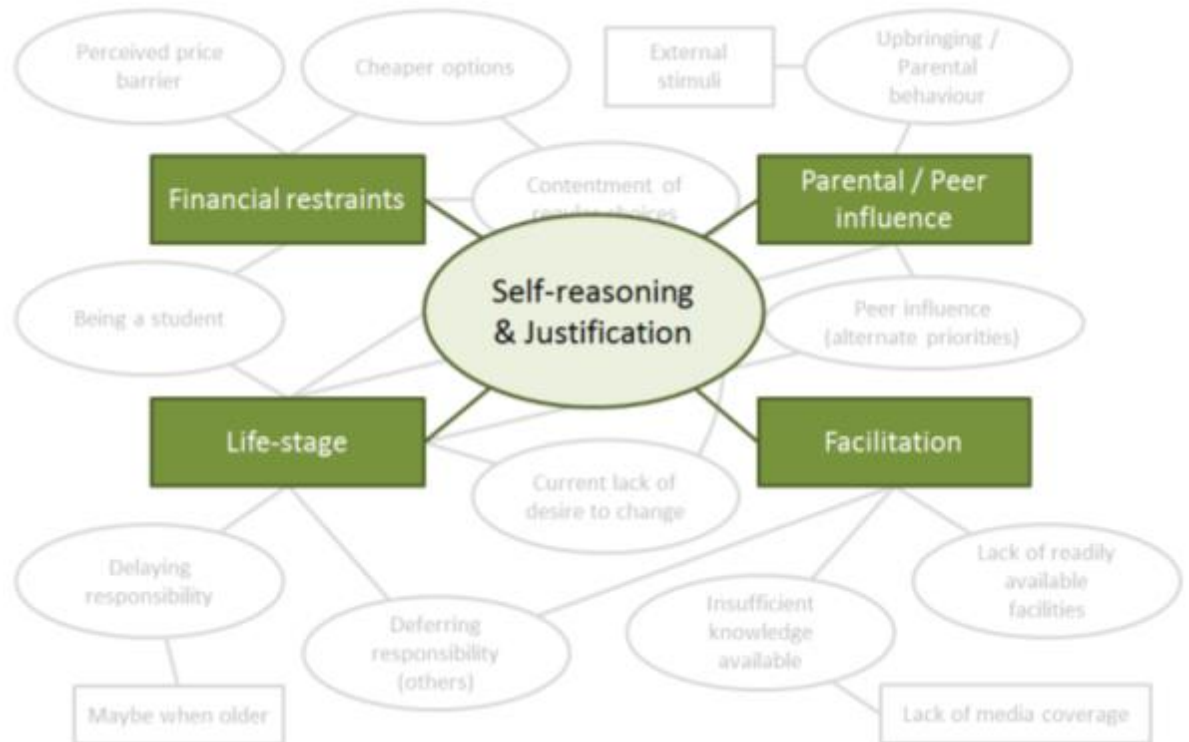


Figure 11 Theme #2 Self-reasoning and Justification

Self:

A person's essential being that distinguishes them from others, especially considered as the object of introspection or reflexive action.

Reasoning:

The action of thinking about something in a logical, sensible way.

Oxford Dictionaries (2017)

(And) Reasoning:

The thought processes that have been established as leading to valid solutions to problems.

Merriam-Webster (2017)

The combination of an introspective or reflexive action regarding cognition and explanation as to their behaviour or choice-making derived the title 'Self-reasoning'. The various discussions relating to participants reflecting on 'why' they think, and act opened a variety of self-reasoning anecdotes that overlapped with Justification in what could often be argued as excuse making.

Justification:

The action of showing something to be right or reasonable.

Good reason for something that exists or has been done.

Oxford Dictionaries (2017)

The four candidate themes of Financial restraints, Life-stage, Parental/Peer influence and Facilitation that contribute to Self-reasoning & Justification are herein elaborated with examples of quotes and analysis. Further examples and narrative can be found in appendix 3.

Unsurprisingly there was no unity to this sense-making in their subjective narrative and viewpoints; yet for this demographic (as mentioned previously in 4.2.2), financial implication was feasibly the most recurrent theme. Emma begins with a retrospective appraisal of her attitude when considering how her efforts are thwarted by economic restraints and the priorities she places therein;

I think it's definitely a financial thing, coz I still like um, involved in the environment and stuff like that. Kinda like, read all the stuff online and stuff like that, but I just think it's more like kinda financial, do you know like? It's probably more like the organic products and stuff like that, rather than the green products, but do you know what I mean?

Kamille concurs with spelling out her restraints making the connection to being in higher education;

I want to be like, I wanna be responsible, like I recycle um but I don't have the money to like buy products so like I would love to have every product that is organic like cream makeup... I would love to buy from People Tree, err clothes for example or like 100%, 100% linen... But it's just too expensive, I'm a student.

Echoed equally as clearly by Maisie;

Well I try if I buy food or I buy um you know, clothes, whatever, I do try to look at you know where it's sourced and things and is it ethically sourced but it's not, as you know, as a student it's the budget over that preference.

Equally Laura agrees, 'it's the price' when ascertaining product choice. Furthermore, a sense of frustration is evident in the tone of HanNah's discussion when she talks of her predicament in wanting to fulfil a desire to purchase more ethically or sustainability minded;

I know for a fact that I actively want to be more like that...But coz I don't have an awful lot of money I can't afford to buy products that are marketed as 100% great for environments, um

Question - It's frustrating?

'Yeah - I just can't do it'

> She laughs <

HanNah's, almost nervous laughter at the end of her anecdote appears as a conscious reflection to her situation, acknowledging perhaps the priorities she places on consumption with limited finance available.

Kamille considers her life-stage and looks back to her younger days at home with her parents;

I think it depends on the age perhaps maybe, like when you, when you're young you don't really care; but then again, your parents buy you clothes when you are small, so yeah it depends on them on how they save the planet so...

With almost an emphasis on 'dependability' of the parental role, Kamille implies these interactions are pivotal in character shaping into adulthood - in general her rhetoric suggests she would like to do more, again her economic situation being perceived problematic. Moreover, when Mollie looks back to the role of her parents, she acknowledges a direct connection;

I think it does, it really does depends on how you've been bought up, towards it, um - coz I've like had friends in the past who've had like parents like, they're like really up there, they're like vegetarian, they only bought like certain and proper, like had a compost bin and stuff like that. And then I think like friends that I used to be friends with like, they've grown up to be like that, so I don't think... it's a lot about how, I suppose about how your parents are...

Interestingly, the friends that Mollie has lost track with, that she says had grown up with an environmentally conscious character trait, are separated from her current or new friends who are perhaps more aligned to her values; placing less emphasis or priority in such matters. Mollie continues in reference to her current attitude to consumption;

I think everyone is just 'used to what they're used to' sort of thing - I don't think like our generation really thinks about it very much at all, well I don't personally, and like my friends I know, they don't either.

She appears to justify the apathy of her generation by regularly bringing her friends into the conversation when discussing her own attitude. She also highlights what could be considered her perceived social norm in being 'used to what they're used to'. This acceptance and adherence to feasibly a personal norm as justification is echoed by Peter;

...I think already, a lot of people are just, I think it's already entrenched in people, how they buy and what they buy, and I don't think for the time being that's not going to change. I think people are happy with the way things are, I think that's mostly, like mostly that although they might be aware of, I don't

know, you know in terms of farming or you know or mining precious metals or whatever it is, I think in regards to being aware of it, as a whole, But it's not changing attitudes to it, you know, it's not translating into buying behaviour.

Peter's view and 'matter of fact' tone of narrative is clarified somewhat as he elaborates on his observation that economics is the barrier to those around him who would like to 'do more' whilst first illustrating his view of his peers' consciousness of socially responsible issues;

I would say that - the awareness of ethical purchasing and responsibility of organisations and how much we know about them now is very high but I don't think people feel that they are compelled to act on it so much and I think there's a perception that something that's ethical and green is more expensive for a start and especially for students that's something that like you know, even the ones that I think would change, feel like they can't coz they're so broke.

> He elicits a small laugh <

Perhaps Peter finding humour in his narrative, he is inferring that he is excuse making by a general acceptance that the choice is cost prohibitive; without basing this reasoning on fact. With finance being central to many discussions, there is evidently an ambiguity as to whether it is the primary reason for abstaining or there are other motivations in place. An observation at this juncture could indicate that buying ethically is still perceived as a premium price point for these individuals, significantly with their linking to associated brands or foundations, Fair Trade etc. With latter discussion picking up on restrained finances, yet brand loyal large purchase inconsistencies (Maisie, Ross & Emma), it's more the justification in the rhetoric that is interesting than the economic barrier. Continuing from both Mollie and Peter, Ross alludes to habit and longevity of a brand presence in his life when discussing his preference for chocolate bars;

Yeah but then I'd probably choose Dairy milk over a Fair Trade... Just because Dairy Milk's been around for ages so... or cheapest, so, rather than Fair Trade.

In apparent contradiction to the previously discussed topic of indifference or laziness I propose to Rosy that her clothes shopping preference comes down to effort;

Yeah...You see I'm quite happy to spend an afternoon going round charity shops

and vintage shops and coming away with two t-shirts, than going into Top Shop and knowing that I need jeans and a jumper and coming out having spent like £80...

Here she appears to be in the realms of a 'cash-poor, time-rich' debate with herself, arguing latterly that perhaps her peers work to enable their high street purchasing.

Conversely to the widespread restricted financial reasoning across the participants, Maisie has a moment of clarity when self-evaluating her consumption habits. Earlier in our conversation we had been talking about the Apple technology brand and her fixation with updating her iPhone regularly, yet the conversation had moved on to everyday consumption;

I think it, especially as student, it does come down to price, just you know, things that I pay for, it's not because I'm loyal to the brand, it's because that, it's cheap at that particular time

Question - uhum, which is quite interesting as you were just talking about the price of an iPhone weren't you?

Yeah, well I think everyone, you've got to be a bit price sensitive, you can't, you can't just, saying that, I never go without things so... So I don't know what I'm talking about really, that was a bit of an oxymoron

> We both laugh <

Again, the humour and laughter element could be seen as excuse making. Maisie's comment '*I never go without things*' was an undercurrent within other participant discussions and the disparity of perceived student finances † mentioned earlier, although not as literally stated. In what could be portrayed as her preference and priority of 'essential' purchases (want vs need), even at perceivably elevated prices suggests the justification of an extrinsic and socially willing nature to consumption is evident; be that fashion, peer compliance or perceived functional necessity. The topic of extrinsic influence on Millennial consumption is also outlined by Davina in her deliberation of her generation;

I'd say err, I think we're followers

I push her on clarification as to whether she believes these celebrities directly influence purchasing action; she brings it back to ethical consumption;

Yeah I'd definitely say so, I think if one celebrity endorses it and you know, endorses a message or a brand you know, um ethical issue or something, I think then the fans of that brand being followers would probably do the exact same

In support, Ross, when discussing Coke Life (a product he hadn't tried) suggested;

...if David Beckham started, I'd probably, as weird as it is, maybe then I'd try it.

An externalising and corporate or societal influence has an inference of accountability for Peter; someone who generally respects business success;

I think people think it's more the responsibility for the company than it is for them... I think that's probably part of it um

His angle appears to be that he wants businesses to do more, to spread the positive narrative that in-turn encourages socially responsible consumer consumption practices. Moreover, albeit without the corporate success acknowledgement, Annie similarly purports to insufficient marketing having an allocation of blame;

I don't think we're really aware of it, like it's never really slapped in your face or anything, coz like I don't really see any campaigns for it or anything so yeah people aren't really that aware.

Living at home and the omnipresent influence of parents featured in Lottie's narrative alongside others. When she reflected on her current situation and attitude to recycling, she apportioned blame to those she lives with;

I've grown up a lot more, I've had to realise that you have to put your bins out or nothing gets emptied um - I think it's probably got worse since I've got to Uni though

Question - Really?

Not better, yeah... Because, my mum and dad are like really green and I live in a house with boys and they're really not!

> She laughs <

Lottie's laughter suggests proportioning the blame to her house mates and, or her stereotyping of males, whilst possibly acknowledging the excuse making element to her statement. The topic of effort vs apathy has already been discussed (4.4) but in the

case of Rosy she explains how her efforts to explore veganism has been thwarted by what she refers to when considering a problematic supply or resources available;

I tried out veganism... I'm still trying to make it work for me, as it's... It's difficult sometimes to be able to eat that way sometimes, you know, when you're going out to eat and things...

So that's something I'm trying to do um, to be sustainable but > she laughs < it's a work in progress!

Question - Right ok, yeah, it's a challenge?

Yeah

Her laughter as she states 'it's a work in progress' appears an acknowledgment of the effort perceived in her claim to being vegan.

Whilst, as Peter alluded to earlier, the influence that a brand improving their CSR agenda could have on consumers, Rosy continues;

And if they were to do (that) I think it would make a lot more people think about, that kind of area and their [the consumer] buying influence and what impact that has. So I think it would impress me, but it wouldn't change whether I bought their products or not.

Rosy is pretty clear, even with the hypothetical proposition made to her, that her key motivation and reasoning is based on taste rather than ethical responsibility which is understandable amongst the rest of her narrative. Laura too, picks up on this in her open reflection on her approach to consumption. Initially I ask her what she makes of corporate marketing (MacDonald's) where they have communicated their efforts in clarifying their supply chain;

Yeah obviously, positive and anything that is positive is good but again um... It's hard to explain I'm just gonna speak generally but I think you have so much marketing - That just MacDonald's changing their supply chain or whatever it's just, I'm gonna be sat watching the TV advert and think 'oh that's good' - next 10 minutes I don't care.

4.5.1 Theme #2 Self-reasoning and Justification summary

These examples of justification and self-reasoning when it comes to socially responsible thoughts and actions were arguably raised in the various conversations, feasibly positioned in a requirement of 'self-defence' or explanation. Indeed, the participants were asked to *explain* and *expand* upon on their attitude and efforts and therefore self-reflection was evident and to some, rationalization and meaning appeared to leave them feeling exposed to criticism or judgement.

The participants clearly had various levels of concern that altered in particular circumstances or scenarios, but perhaps Laura summarized the majority of attitudes for the majority of situations;

Honestly I think it's the combination of many different things... Price, convenience - I'll go to places just for convenience, but then I'll go to places just for price, then I'll go to a place coz I like it, then I'll go to... it's for all different things.

To clarify, she makes no mention of CnSR or its attributions.

What this theme aims to highlight, is that in the various conversations the participants were, on the whole, comfortable talking about their attitude and thoughts regarding their actions and consumption habits.

A selection of topics were discussed including: their perception of ethical product price barriers, including their own financial predicament and ambiguities (Financial Restraints); the significance of their Life-Stage, being students and the role of Parental Influence, and the relevance of house-mates, friends, peers and celebrities were also raised. External factors featured, Facilitation / facilities available, including lack of dietary options, public transport, media & marketing, all pertinent in support of the Convenience and Indifference theme.

The narrative that featured within this theme construction contributes to responses to the following key issues:

The availability of finance at times in competition to social image / awareness and a propensity to care about CSR or CnSR / elements of disidentification in regards to current life-stage alternate priorities / inferences to both collectivist

and individualistic perspectives/ frustration or inability to contribute due to life-stage finances / empathy for animals + pro vegetarian representing value priority behaviours although situation can inhibit fulfilment of behaviour / both perspectives on moral (dis)engagement with connotations to peer affiliation.

Other interesting observations relating to key issues include:

Incongruent marketing communications creating consumer indifference or cynicism was switched to a perspective of brands indifference creating cynicism / with alternate views of a proliferation of marketing communications – both too much overall and not enough / consumer reflection of previous brand CSR efforts wasn't directly supported, but brand habitual purchase negating any CSR connotation (good or bad) was raised.

4.6 Theme #3 Distrust

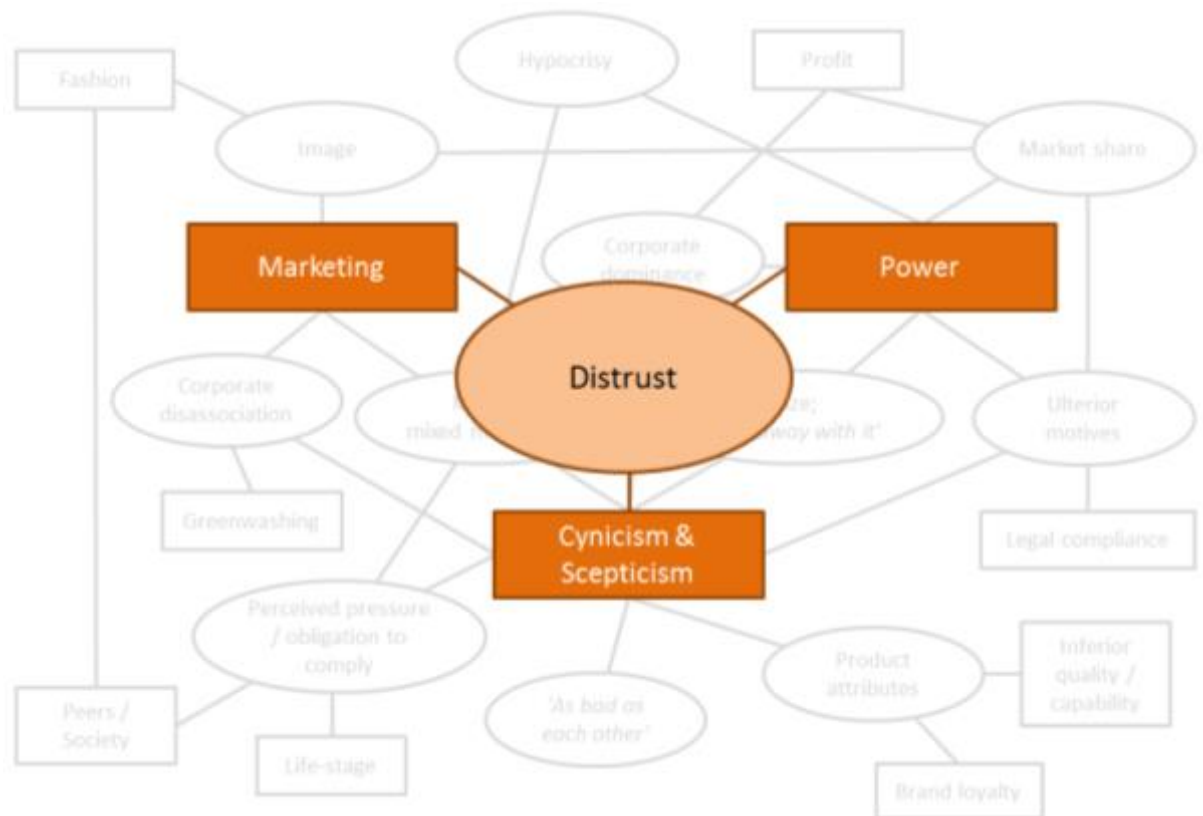


Figure 12 Theme#3 Distrust

Distrust:

The feeling that someone or something cannot be relied upon. (Noun)

Doubt the honesty or reliability of; regard with suspicion. (Verb with object)

Oxford Dictionaries (2017)

The final theme was 'Distrust' and was primarily motivated by the cynical and sceptical overtones within this large collection of codes. Not entirely, but with significant contribution this stemmed from the two, first phase topics of Marketing and Power. The participants had substantial reference points to these two topics that included; their peers, society in general, product attributes, the media and fashion. It should be noted that not all discussion in reference to these topics demonstrated or inferred distrust but across the data in its entirety proved significantly noteworthy.

The conversations alluded to a lack of trust, be that of corporate behaviour/intentions, product attributes, media and societal rhetoric or perceived value priority. In acknowledgement, it has been discussed by many authors that scepticism of CSR rhetoric is coupled with a cynical perception of insincerity and generally that it is being used to enhance a corporate image (see 2.1.7).

In acknowledgment, not all quotations here are directly related to CSR/CnSR but also towards corporate brands that was intended to support objective 4 'To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.'

The conversations flowed between CSR and CnSR, and the topics were interspersed so they are used to reflect individual's attitudes to both.

To begin, Rosy recalls her school days saying; *I think environment and stuff was drilled into us as kids*. Her use of 'drilled into us' suggests that a repetition of the narrative was perhaps an unwanted lifestyle dictate that she distances herself from today and perhaps she has reacted against; HanNah picks up a similar tone in reference to corporate marketing and her connections to a prestige car brand;

...obviously BMW, coz you're paying more for the car they're always going on about carbon and what their emissions are, things like that

Her tone in delivery of 'always going on about...' is apathetic, feasibly she may consider that she is not in the market to purchase a BMW at this time but nevertheless this is what she draws upon when considering her brand association. She appears to consider

that the topic is over delivered or excessively repeated, leading her to demonstrate an element of cynicism, a tone that is elaborated by Emma who considers ulterior motives;

...sometimes though you kinda get a bit sort of 'stop banging on, we've heard it' do you know what I mean? You only have to tell us once and then we've got it, so I think if it is overkill you kinda get a bit, right oh, so what else are you trying to hide...?

Emma's distrust or scepticism as to the organisations motives appears as a reaction to the corporate narrative akin to greenwashing or having an alternative agenda, and furthermore lacking in sincerity. Some are quick to disassociate themselves from large corporations and global brands entirely, as Kamille attempts to explain;

Maybe I'm not really fond of big corporations like Coca-Cola, Nestle, Starbucks um I would prefer to go to a local er, coffee shop or cafe ... I don't really know but maybe like now they're advertising at kids; so when they grow up they will use Coke um and it's not really healthy and yeah they just maybe want to profit, everyone wants profit

Kamille is happy to expand upon her reasoning, she talks of health and ethics, kids and profit, her reasoning is placed after stating that she frequents 'local cafes' suggesting almost a boycotting attitude to feasibly Starbucks, Costa etc. Size, power and dominance are topics picked up across almost all participants albeit from alternate perspectives. As 'educated' Millennials it appears to be an accepted rhetoric to associate these attributes with global corporations in an information abundant society. Hannah's perspective reflects this concisely;

I think, Apple is such a massive brand they could do whatever they want, and people would still buy it

And latterly;

Yeah, sort of like Coke, they're huge, any like, any of the top brands they can just do what they want

The dichotomy and contradiction or conflict in their narratives is generally open in their delivery and reflection. Accepting the ubiquity of the brands in their everyday lives and how the quandary of choice upon consumption can conflict with their ethical

values, at times there is 'justification' in their reflection, as Daisie illustrates;

Yeah, um, I know that Apple had a big tax scandal thing though, um but I don't really know about it... I like, read all this stuff, about that certain companies aren't paying tax and they're putting things through other countries and stuff - but I just don't know, sometimes I don't believe it and it's not the full story coz if you were gonna find that out about Apple, then boycott them and go to a different company then you don't how much tax they pay!

The 'they're all as bad as each other' cynical reasoning was also literal with Laura when asked if she thought others may judge a user of Apple after her anecdote about their less than favourable workforce practices in China that had recently been reported in the media;

Yeah, probably. Probably a lot, I'd say people that do look at you like that are a small minority of people in the whole population in the western hemisphere... It's a very small minority and I think that even though you might have an Apple, they might have a Samsung, which is just as bad, they can't really escape from it.

Furthermore, the lack of committal to statements suggests insecurity in their personal knowledge in being unable to succinctly recollect information or attributing it to being something they perceive as 'fact'. Insofar its information that primarily appears to resonate from the media or their social media not necessarily direct from the organisation in question, Hannah demonstrates both points;

I heard a while ago that eBay don't treat their staff very well? ... But I don't know how true that was, it was just an article I read so I, I'm not too sure on that one.

Appreciating that Hannah refers to *reading an article* could suggest that an element of action or effort was involved in her wanting to read the piece. Cynical or sceptical, some participants appeared pro-active in knowledge accumulation around the topic. What also came through within various discussions was the use and implications of the word 'transparency', be it via the media or elsewhere. Daisie continues from her rhetoric considering the homogenous behaviour of global corporations;

I don't think any of them, any of the big brands are completely transparent you see, you can't really trust any of them more than others I'd say... I think they're all just as guilty as each other.

Lottie also demonstrates an inherent, perhaps long-standing sceptical attitude to honesty when asked of her thoughts on the recent MacDonald's supply chain marketing campaign;

I think it's interesting because at the moment, as at the moment they've got all this thing, like on the TV advert about how healthy and local and green it is, but I still don't buy it - coz I've seen the products before and I don't trust them.

In addition, HanNah was equally as sceptical to open communications;

Well it's good that they're considering it... I think they're trying to be transparent as possible - which makes a change considering. Whenever they started to tell everyone they now use 100% chicken breast in their chicken nuggets, I remember that being a thing, that was years ago now but I remember thinking 'well what did they use in it before?!'

When asked about the hypothetical suggestion that Coke was to transform its organisation to be 100% environmentally friendly Rosy responded;

Um I think it would make me think of them as less of a big scary corporation... um but it wouldn't change whether I bought their products or not, the only thing that would change that is whether it tasted as good, coz if it didn't I, I'd just not buy it

Interestingly she begins with her perception of them being less scary, moves onto clarifying how it wouldn't impact her purchase decisions, and then in to stressing the importance of the product attributes (the taste), concluding that this is the dominating factor with her purchase choice.

Although, Alex's cynicism (regarding the Coke Life product) is along an image or identity by association line of thought;

...which is why I think they're trying to make it more of a fashionable or marketing thing rather than a conscious effort...

Hannah too picks up on her perception of the branding and what she perceives as the

impact this has on potential purchasers;

I think people will associate it with like, well the whole name is like, 'Life' is insinuating that it's better, it's healthier - so yeah, it's all about image.

Echoed by Kamile who highlights the colour connotations;

I think maybe Life Coke is to create an image of being healthy, I think, not just like maybe sugar but just maybe healthy coz it's green

Considering none of these participants drank Coke Life it was definitely an outside-in perspective and consideration of 'others'. Mollie's perspective alludes to lack of knowledge, arguably demonstrating insufficient marketing efficacy on Coke's part. This topic seemed to sit quite uncomfortable with her, which feasibly could relate to her unfamiliarity across the Coke-Cola range;

I don't really know - I just think like, is it necessary to bring out another version of the same drink sort of thing? ... Was it aimed at people who try to be more sustainable and stuff like that? I don't really know, I just think it's another name to add to the brand sort of thing.

Admittedly, she doesn't know and states this repeatedly; her tone infers somewhat cynically '*I just think it's another name to add to the brand*'. So, acknowledging that the conversation is centrally around CSR and socially responsible products / consumption / habits her deduction is that, in this case, it is about a greater market share or profit to be made.

Emma's peer depiction is self-distanced ('they') and she appears to detach herself. When asked about her fellow students, she is literal as to where she sees the significant drivers;

...because they're always on their iPhones and they're reading things and stuff like that but again it comes down to money and sometimes I think that they learn it's just status, you know like with all the stuff that went off years ago with kinda Nike and Adidas, with all the kind of sweatshops and that kinda business...if all their mates are wearing Adidas trainers, then they're going to want some Adidas trainers.

She sees the propensity of self-image as a priority over suggested ethical wrongdoing, she continues with the power of the brand;

I think a lot of it is on status and if it is such a massive brand then they can kind of get away with doing it coz it's so big and we don't have to, do you know what I mean?

Interestingly she suggests that the dominance and standing of an established brand will see them through such negative coverage but also the 'and we don't have to' inclusion appears to negate personal responsibility to react or an external locus of control.

4.6.1 Theme#3 Distrust summary

These final quotes and discussions are pulling together the theme of distrust, pertaining primarily to cynicism and/or scepticism of the Millennials in this study. The conversations revolved around the individual's perception of socially responsible or environmental behaviour and consumption on their part, along with the efforts of global brands. In general, the participants were happy to share their views and stories, at times requiring prompting or further explanation but rarely hesitant or bashful.

It is evident from this section that a range of voices contributed, representing a diversity of approaches with various perspectives on the topics raised, offering at times conflicting viewpoints for example, pro-ethical brand image 'fit' being both advocated and also sceptically viewed as an extrinsic demonstration for favourable identity association but not necessarily 'true' to the individual's values.

The topics of corporate behaviour, intentions, product attributes, media & societal rhetoric or perceived value priority were evident features. Yet most relevant, the individuals' comments and insight have posited this theme as being significantly relevant to this research. With having read previous literature around the cynical and sceptical perceptions of CSR and CnSR this study highlights that ~~the~~ distrust of global brands' CSR initiatives is perhaps more endemic within this cohort. The diversity of topics covered including, global brands, the media, their age, their peers and especially themselves displayed qualities akin to distrust that perhaps posits a significant and problematic characteristic of these individuals to marketers or ethical social commentators alike.

This final theme has contributed to key issue exploration, in particular:

Evidence of cynicism, moral disengagement and unethical decision making / prevalent values of product attributes or brand association as a priority / beneficial social image over ethical consumption / a perception of an abundance or proliferation of CSR or pro-ethical communications / and direct contradiction to brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' insofar as they are loyal even if the brand has negative CSR association.

A significant element of this theme included their views on large corporations that add to the key issue responses, including:

Awareness of CSR misdemeanours with conflicting rhetoric as to how much they care or behave accordingly / incongruent CSR marketing communications relevant to cynicism largely due to the perception of global corporations priority emphasis on financial gain / evidence of disidentification with regards to 'all as bad as each other' perspective but not necessarily 'walking away' / beneficial social image of product ownership being a priority over any negative CSR association with the brand.

Further elaboration, quotes and analysis of the theme 'Distrust' can be found in appendix 4.

4.7 Summary of Analysis chapter

This chapter has illustrated the primary research journey of a hermeneutic approach via thematic analysis as per Braun and Clarke (2006) that has been undertaken to allow the reader a transparent authenticity as to how the research project has arrived at this junction in response to the research aims and objectives.

With clarity to the acknowledged phases of thematic analysis, the 18 participants were interviewed, their narrative was transcribed with initial issues of potential interest noted and then these issues were the starting points for the narrative analysis within the NVivo software. True to hermeneutic enquiry, these initial issues were evidently purposeful for the research direction as the data was further dissected and discoveries made. With many revisits to the text, categorisation codes were created where repeated discourse was coherent and my subjective constructions dictated, this was

revised, amended and cross referenced until no further codes were required. These codes were debated and considered befitting 11 candidate theme headings that in turn were separated to be best understood and represented as the 3 resulting themes; Convenience and Indifference (4.4), Self-reasoning and Justification (4.5), and Distrust (4.6). Illustrated 'maps' were used to aid the reader's understanding of this process. Alongside these outputs, the central discussion regarding social responsibility as a value priority for the participants was debated with the findings to suggest that it was low for the majority (4.2).

The analysis of the text was clear to illustrate where conversation was not directly referring to social responsibility topics but nevertheless explained with relevance.

Therein, numerous participants' 'anecdotes' have been used to explain this process from all involved, with the outputs significant, albeit insular to the research parameters and my analysis, or cognitive parameters.

The primary section, Value priority (4.2), concluded that the for these participants, at this juncture in time, held a low priority to the topic of social responsibility. Numerous examples were highlighted, that in summary featured regular references to a perception of financial restraints, alternate priorities for purchasing behaviour, the influence of external and peer influences, along with an acknowledged lack of effort from themselves.

However, 4.2.1 discussed that not all their narrative was negative. Recognised with various levels of enthusiasm and/or definitive knowledge, global warming, exploitation of third world resources, escalating obesity levels, and employee abuse, were raised unprompted by the participants.

Relating to the *key issues* raised in the literature review that the 'Value priority' section explored in support of objective 1 and contributing to objective 2 of this research were significant. These included, consumers limited awareness of CSR (and CnSR) and how much they cared was discussed, mentions of brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' and resulting or contributing identity implications too. Contributions to incongruent marketing communications resulting in consumer indifference, evidence of disidentification or participant cynicism impacting unethical decision making were suggested. There was evidence of CnSR and the ways that it manifests although inferences of individualism over collectivism were in the majority, where the relevance

of perceived financial restriction took priority (amongst other reasons including situation and context). Some external recognition of pride for CnSR efforts but significant suggestions of a general lack of empathy in support of the low value priority.

The first theme of Convenience and Indifference (4.3) had strong support from the candidate theme of Apathy for both elements. With connotations to 'laziness', or ease of effort, the Location candidate theme was strongly pertinent too. Ease of obtaining socially responsible knowledge or the effort required coupled with the low value priority was construed inferring Ignorance. Whilst a higher priority to Alternate Priorities, including peers, fashion, available finance, their time or expenditure of effort being more important at this stage of their life. As discussed, these conversations were delivered with varying enthusiasm in delivery and with relevance to being self-confessed, habits, attitudes or behaviour, most were unphased as to the less-than positive correlation to any perceived social norm.

The *key issues* raised in this section were directly relating to how much they do and don't care and within some depictions of CnSR there was strong evidence of disidentification insofar as the lazy or apathetical discussion. Narrative regarding ethically 'superior' others or social expectations was raised although their life stage appeared a contributing factor as to how much this impacted upon them. Elements of 'pride' (and positive image association) in using reusable bags vs. a lack of 'guilt' when not completing simple tasks offered suggestions to individualistic traits and diminished empathy. Their effort and time being a higher priority along with the situation and context being significant to behaviour at any moment in time.

Within Self-reasoning and justification (4.4) relating to socially responsible thoughts attitudes and behaviours, narrative analysed proposed elements of 'self-defence' or explanation. Through their self-reflection it could appear that in explaining their views resulted in feelings of exposure to criticism or judgement, thus the self-reasoning and justification.

Again, numerous topics were discussed that contributed to the four candidate themes and in turn, offered contribution to the *key issues*, particularly the availability of finance with their perception of ethical product price barriers that was in competition to spending on an alternative social image. This was occasionally positioned as

frustration or an inability to contribute due to life-stage finances (Financial Restraints). The justification of student Life-stage extended to elements of disidentification regarding their current, Alternate Priorities with inferences to both collectivist and individualistic perspectives within this section. Positive illustrations of empathy, admittedly focused on animals and pro-vegetarian value priority behaviours were highlighted, although Facilitation, situation and context occasionally inhibited fulfilment of behaviour. Animal empathy offered a perspective on pro-active behaviour and moral engagement along with connotations to peer or social group affiliation. This section also explored how their views and behaviour responded to other *key issues* with perhaps unexpected responses. In relation to their reflection of previous brand CSR efforts they explained that with brand habitual purchasing they did not consider any CSR connotation (good or bad). Interestingly, incongruent marketing communications creating consumer indifference or cynicism was re-positioned to a perspective of what they saw as brands' indifference creating cynicism for them. There were alternate views of a proliferation of marketing communications, with comments relating to both too much overall and not enough representing truly subjective interpretations.

Finally, Distrust (4.5) presented findings culminated from the candidate themes of Power and Marketing and significantly Cynicism and Scepticism of the participants. With what could be associated with negative overtones, conversation was rarely hesitant and occasionally with emotional emphasis when discussing global brands and personal efforts or those of their peers / society in general.

To note, this section offered significant support to objective 3, '*To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation*' and objective 4, '*To evaluate social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR implementation and communication decisions that resonate to the demographic.*' A multitude of topics were raised including, corporations' power, global brand CSR efforts, the online media and marketing, their life-stage predicament, their peers and themselves suggested the components of distrust are substantial and therein problematic for CSR marketers or pro-ethical social commentators. With the literature review discussing the cynical and sceptical perceptions of CSR and CnSR

(2.1.7 and 2.4.10) the distrust theme for these Millennials, is perhaps more prevalent than initially proposed.

The Distrust theme has again contributed response to the *key issue* exploration with significant evidence of cynicism, moral disengagement and unethical decision making. They proposed the prevalent values of product attributes or brand association as a priority that offered beneficial social image unrelated to ethical consumption (acknowledging the previously mentioned pro-vegetarian discussion previously). With negative perceptions of an abundance or proliferation of CSR or pro-ethical communications that at times was in direct contradiction to brand-consumer socially responsible 'fit' insofar as some are loyal even if the brand has negative CSR association.

As noted in the analysis, there was significant narrative regarding their views on global corporations that also contributed to the *key issue* responses. There was awareness of CSR misdemeanours although with conflicting comments as to how much they cared or consumed. They alluded to incongruent CSR marketing communications with relevance to cynicism. This was primarily due to their perception that corporations' priority was purely financial gain. There was clear evidence of disidentification supported or justified by the perspective that they are 'all as bad as each other' perspective but as with the aforementioned CSR misdemeanours this didn't necessarily dictate that they were 'walking away'. Unsurprisingly, brands represented beneficial social image by product ownership, and this was a priority over any negative CSR association with said brand.

Appreciatively with a theme entitled Distrust, this section also highlighted that a range of voices contributed, representing a diversity of views.

The following chapter will take these discussions and cross-reference the literature to check efficacy to established knowledge in response to the research aim and four objectives. Extending the output from this chapter and with reference to Berger and Luckmann's (1991) 'secondary socialization' regarding the life-stage of these Millennials, it will look to expand the ramifications or implications beyond the value priority discussion and 3 themes.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the results of the data analysis and demonstrate how it answers the *key issues* raised in the literature review (2.5) and meets the research objectives (1.5).

The previous chapter analysed the participants' narrative and used thematic coding to illustrate their value priority through exploring their overall discourse and in turn presented three themes for the purpose of meeting the research aims and objectives.

As per the title of this research, '*An exploration of Millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR*' the aim is to offer new knowledge that would be beneficial to furthering research relating to CSR environmental strategy and marketing communication to the demographic group referred to as Millennials. In addition, the aim is that this research will explore a selection of the demographic's opinions and value priorities relating to consumption and behaviour with a focus on CSR perceptions and personal social responsibility. In acknowledgement of the research's contribution to knowledge, the intention is to explore 'if', and indeed the reasons 'why' the topic is or isn't a priority for them.

5.1.1 Outline of this chapter

The chapter begins by revisiting the literature pertinent to the value priority analysis (2.4 & 4.2) succeeded by each of the three themes that arose through the thematic analysis of the transcripts (4.4 Convenience and indifference, 4.5 Self-reasoning and justification & 4.6 Distrust), cross-referencing where applicable and/or important. The topics follow the sequence from the analysis chapter but have additional sub-headings to highlight literature themed areas of each relevant discussion.

The respective summaries clarify and discusses how the discussion within each section addresses the research aims, the relevant objectives and contributes to the gaps in knowledge or areas for further study highlighted as *key issues* from the literature review (summarised in 2.5).

5.2 Value priority

Upon reflection and with an overview of all participants' rhetoric there was a slight majority who openly disclosed how the topic of pro-ethical or socially responsible behaviour was low on their priority list. Having spent the last 8 years teaching Millennials and being immersed to a certain degree in their lives (albeit almost entirely within the university buildings) this came as slightly surprising to me although not fully revelatory. The insight this offered was a reflection of how little CSR and ethical business practice impacts on their day-to-day lives and consumption habits. These participants shared their stories of behaviour that depicted them as (on the whole) nonchalant to any perceived socially constructed norms in regard to common topics such as recycling. Clearly this wasn't universal among all 18 (i.e. Hannah's 'love' of recycling or Rosy feeling 'safe' shopping in Lush) but aside from the more enthusiastic examples offered from the minority, their full discourse showed elements of inconsistency in behaviour. This included example of an encouraging attitude albeit at times without conviction, demonstrating that what could be conceived as a positive CnSR characteristic is not convincingly manifested when facilities or resources dictate otherwise.

Although this was perhaps more when it came to be making *inconsequential* purchases with the attributed brands, as alluded to by Öberseder et al. (2011) and Schlegelmilch et al. (1996).

This early indication as to their discrepancies with value priorities befits Devinney et al.'s (2010) discussion relating to the *myth of the ethical consumer* insofar that the rhetoric is not always conducive to the behaviour. Moreover, as Maio and Olson (1998) outlined, the situational context of certain scenarios can overpower any values held as feasibly an indication of the priority said value is held to each individual. Admittedly, the support of these authors in relation to the findings proffers the dichotomy of any preconception as to the alternative; where the attribution of avidly pro-ethical traits is wrongly applied to this demographic (see Henderson, 2010; Schwartz, 2008; Arsenault, 2004; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Beginning to trace the antecedents to this, a topic that Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) state as under researched, as individuals they all clearly spoke from differing positions and shared insights as to their backgrounds, families and influences that have shaped who they are. The influence of their parents and home life was recurrent (an antecedent in character or value formation i.e. Hsieh et al., (2006)) and understandably still pertinent as a significant number return home throughout their time studying at university. Although admittedly, the degree to which they spoke of their families varied and ranged from love and enthusiasm to embarrassment and distancing. Nevertheless, the impact these *significant others* has had on them (and for some still has) in shaping their value priority to such matters was apparent. This suggests the role the family or home life has, be that a passion to behave with an ethical conscience or a rejection / rebellion that is now being fulfilled whilst 'independent', a young adult away at university finding their own identity reinforcing two contributing factors of Noble et al.'s (2009) model of college-age consumers. Having raised home-life social norms that included, encouraged recycling and negating waste / energy usage, they didn't automatically bring these behaviours into their student lifestyles. The narrative they shared outlined self-reasoning or admittance of apathy, which were strong indicators as to the lack of value priority for most, akin to Erikson's (1963) transitional life-stage discussions; prevalence for 'ego identity' conflicting with 'role confusion'. This also supports Pane's (2013) indication of narcissism contributing to apathy regarding environmental issues.

The discussion continues with the topic directly pertinent to the research aim, objective #1 and the *key issues* of Millennial consumer awareness of CSR / CnSR, and perceptions of an inability to contribute.

5.2.1 Awareness and locus of control

Furthermore, the conscience of inaction or disregard was minimal amongst the group coupled with any concern of consequence to behaving in such manner. This contradicts Harrison et al. (2005) to some extent, with their belief that the impact of the external world's social norms *does* dictate behaviour choice. On reflection, the interview situation is an unavoidable, unnatural scenario and although they all appeared comfortable and relaxed to share their thoughts it wasn't a direct

observation of their behaviour in any real-life option choosing scenario. Regarding social norms, Davina shared that she was 'aware' of ethical issues and impacts yet as I asked for clarification as to whether this impacted her choice she openly stated '*no I'd say it wouldn't*'. Lottie spoke of how she understood that '*recycling was a good thing*', again inferring her social awareness of the relevance or consequences but shared her inaction and lack of consciousness in not participating—explaining; '*it's not really something that ever crosses my mind*'. Similarly, Mollie commented, inferring that she spoke for the '*majority of people*' when explaining that the '*busy-ness*' of life was to blame as justification. She paused and reflected that this was a '*bad thing*' and considered (briefly) that there is a consequence to subsequent generations.

To clarify, Mollie was openly confessional as to her low value priority. Furthermore, Mollie could be noted as an example regarding her perspective on her peers' lack of priority, a view shared by Laura. This was coupled with '*something older people do*' that could be considered to infer how she views it as an external locus of control (as discussed by Forte, 2004) or a deferred sense of responsibility or general despondency (O'Neill & Nicholson-Cole, 2009). Similarly, they self-proclaimed as '*a generation of followers*', again externalising the control factor. I didn't stress any Millennial connotations of their demographic but the topic of generational differences (or justification of offsetting their responsibility) was raised by others. Alex was especially vocal when asserting blame to her elders in her almost self-defensive reasoning. With a lack of admitting responsibility or her peers taking control of their own behaviour, she made resolute argument to deflect to what she considered the source. Tanner and Arnett's (2016, p35) emerging adulthood discussions find some resonance here; they suggest how the transitional life-stage from being the 'dependent' (living at home and parental influence) has an inevitable 'shift in dynamic' and that a generational separation is evident. Laura represented this quite succinctly (whilst acknowledging the inevitable progression) when she said that they were '*not very responsible people at this age, but when you grow up you sort of have to really*'. Alternatively, it could be perceived that Kamile also felt helpless to her situation stating that she would like to consume more ethically but her student, financially restricted predicament was to blame (further discussion in 5.4.2 Self-reasoning / Self-justification). This externalising of perceived control or responsibility perhaps demonstrates a realisation of acknowledging a current negation of ethical obligations, a key element of internal

cognition that Barnett et al. (2005) implied *requires occurring for action to materialise*. The discussions regarding any perceived lack of control is perhaps disheartening yet simultaneously interesting insofar that such a highly vocal attributed demographic (see Smith, 2011; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008) appearing to have a sense of low-worth when it comes to making a difference. In contrast, Hannah stood alone in her pride of recycling behaviour, externalising her own socially responsible sense of control. This is in line with how Singhapakdi and Vitell (1991) perceived those with an internal locus of control are inclined to act more 'responsible' regardless of any conflict arising in a social environment or averse to any social norm (perhaps by her peers).

Indeed, value priority and *internalising* a locus of control in relation to causes or specifics that they care about was evident by some, as again, Hannah spoke of how she'd avoid working for an unethical company. David similarly spoke of his own determination to improve and his consideration of the *environment and the world* offering an example of biospheric compassion or empathy akin to Bardi and Schwartz's (2003) *universalism* discussions.

5.2.2 Empathy and value activation

Further discussion supports the *key issue* of empathy and engagement of ethical choices. As mentioned, topics such as global warming, rising obesity levels, exploitation of third world resources and employee mistreatment were raised but the significant cause of concern related to animals (supported by Jamieson, Reiss, Allen, Asher, Parker, Wathes, & Abeyesinghe (2015)). David, Hannah, Daisy (vegetarian), Annie (vegetarian) and Rosy (aspiring vegan) were all vocal with topics resonating with them. With significance to Schwartz (2016) and Barnett et al.'s (2005) discussion relating to how values require activating before having influence, the topic of taking a stance on animal welfare was certainly prevalent for these participants. What became evident from these individuals' concerning narrative was a demonstration of empathy in various measures, aimed at numerous specifics regarding the treatment of animals by humans. Indeed, this has relevance to Stern et al.'s (1993) tripartite classifications of empathy, especially *social* and *biospheric*, as opposed to the personally focussed *egoistic* as previously supported by many (e.g. De Groot & Steg, 2010; Honkanen &

Verplanken, 2004; Schultz & Zelezny, 1998). Moreover, with reference to the *social* classification (other humans), Daisy was enthusiastically vocal when discussing Coca-Cola products' impact on childhood obesity a topic that clearly mattered to her by raising it unprompted. Similarly, Alex stressed with pride how she engages with teaching sustainability to her scout group. Although conversely or perhaps with more transparency regarding the efficacy of human empathy on purchasing decisions, Laura raised the topic of sweatshops but acknowledged the literal distancing at the point of purchase and her primary financial consideration. Her empathy evident but not actioned, something she evidently depicts as a collective perspective with her use of the second person. This bares correlation to Hoffman's (1987) discussion that a lack of consideration (regarding empathy) involves the individual's cognitive process of moral disengagement that in-turn pertains to unethical behaviour.

However, the *biospheric* empathy connotations (all living things), was more predominant and shared with more enthusiasm and passion when referring specifically to animals. Examples included David's concern of supermarket abundance of meat products and similarly, Rosy's affiliation to the Lush cosmetic brand and their stance against animal testing and Annie clarifying her care for animals is more '*than the environment*'. This highlighted that there was a stronger connection between the empathetic concerns over the treatment of animals, (as a high value priority perhaps over humans), with significance to behaviour for these participants; as previously alluded to by authors (e.g. Batson, 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2004; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987) but not overtly focussed upon. Upon reflection this could be that these individuals are relating to animals as more literal or connectable in their lives as opposed to the human issues raised that may appear geographically distant as with the example of Asian suicide nets that Laura offered. And furthermore, as Thøgersen and Grunert-Beckman (1997) stated that if a pertinent value is salient (i.e. animals found in the UK), they are more likely to engage, act or 'care'. However, offering a slightly less conclusive appraisal of animal empathy amongst her peers, HanNah spoke of her thoughts on recent MacDonald's CSR marketing. She considered that it only *might* influence others to reconsider the brand in knowing animals were not '*mass produced in a warehouse and killed horrendously*'. Unsubstantiated, she appeared unconvinced that the corporate marketing transparency of animal welfare has any significant

impact; transparency being raised previously as a recommended strategy for consumer congruence (i.e. Parguel et al, 2011; Hildebrand et al, 2011).

5.2.3 Identity

A variety of everyday global brands were attributed with less than favourable ethical association including; Coca-Cola, Nestle, Starbucks, Nike, MacDonald's, Samsung and Apple.

Trust was key issue, with Apple's contemporary newsworthy data controversy as an example, observations that have been previously acknowledged (e.g. Cone Communications & Echo, 2013; Fieseler et al., 2010; Keller, 2007). These typically came from those with, what could be considered, quite strong opinions although when pushed they seldomly admitted that their behaviour was consistent to their disapproval as Peter illustrated with immediate hesitance; *'I don't like to (be) seen supporting a brand, I'll just check what sweatshirt I'm wearing.'*

Conversely, a sense of value priority *was* reflected by those who professed to be vegetarian in attributing the socially accepted classification. These meanings could be attributed to what Stryker (1980) and Turner et al. (1987) propose inherent to how these individuals self-classify their identity in objectifying this life choice. Furthermore, the interview conversations allowed them to reflect on externalising how their thoughts and behaviours were perceived by me as their narrative materialised. When Mollie expressed that she scored herself low on the 0-10 HRS, without pause she cited; *'that sounds awful doesn't it'*. Latterly she confessed that her/their recycling was susceptible to 3rd party witnesses proposing how others' perception was significant to her behaviour and suggesting correlation to Ajzen's (1998) belief that social pressure can be either real or imagined. Rosy similarly stated her perception to the inconvenience of recycling whilst acknowledging how her comments reflected on her identity and values to me as she said it *out loud*. Laura spoke of how she engaged with purchasing long-life plastic bags with enthusiasm, *'that looks good'* - literally connecting her ethical behaviour to how her behaviour is perceived positively akin to Stern and Oskamp's (1987) notion of pride. Likewise, Sam spoke of how he claimed to go out of his way for recycling, clarifying that it was no inconvenience to him, by

finishing the anecdote with a satisfied and proud smile. However, inconsistencies arose when talking about consumption choices, he had also spoken of how little anything pro-ethical influenced other elements of his life; *'But actually my action is, 'I don't really care about this''*. With his pride in recycling it portrayed how he felt it reflected positively on his identity or character *to me* with this example; yet as the quote demonstrates, there was inconsistency across his full discourse along with another literal depiction from Lottie. She spoke (without detail) about what she had heard regarding a 'tragic gas explosion' relating to the Olympics. Here she inferred the corporate reputation (attributed to the incident) would create an identity *disassociation* for her, distancing being her initial contemplation. This could feasibly segue into elements of Cherrier's discussion relating to non-consumption or more specifically the more apparent depiction that they do not actually comply in rejection of less ethically compliant organisations (e.g. Black & Cherrier 2010, Cherrier et al 2010; Lee & Fernandez 2009; Cherrier 2007; Sandikci & Eckici 2007). On the surface, this could be akin to Hardy's (2006) belief that when values are pivotal to an individual's self-identity there extends a sense of responsibility to act coherently and behave consistently (*'I would want nothing to do with that'* - Lottie). However, with Lottie, the fact that she didn't know who the company was, or any detail of the tragedy supposes her immediate concern and priority are lower than perhaps more pertinent, negative identity attributions. Schultz and Zelezny (1999) previously raised the consequence discussion back to the individual's perspective or position, with relevance; egoists demonstrate concern when the consequence affects the self, perceivably in Lottie's case, self-image.

Furthermore, HanNah's rhetoric depicted herself and her peers as outspoken. She surmised that they were deliberately 'mouthy', perhaps alluding to social media usage, yet this bold rhetoric online was rarely enacted upon with her admittance that the majority are 'very lazy'. Again, this could be construed as image or identity being a more significant driver; or a higher placed value than action or behaviour change when being vocal or perhaps more relevantly *visible* on social media akin to discussion by Paulin et al., (2014). This surprised me to some extent; the understanding that the demographic was readily vocal was already believed (especially regarding social media) yet the *call to action* disclaimer from HanNah was somewhat disappointing and is more congruent to an image or identity prevalence. In support, Alex's distancing

herself from her own generation offered; *'nobody seems to care about what's going on politics wise or globally or they're more bothered about what Kylie Jenner's doing with her lips this week that's all I tend to see on like my Facebook feed'*.

5.2.4 Individualism over collectivism

With overview and in support of a previously raised *key issue*, there was no strong indication as to how these individuals portrayed their generation as being united as a demographic, although there was an occasional distinction of the cohort that was represented as a resentment of their elders. Rosy considered her generation with explanation that *'they are quite just like, blasé and just leave things as they are and there are only like a small amount of people who will step out and try and change things'*, reinforcing the reluctance of any *call to action* in an individual context. This strongly suggests a lack of feasible generalisation of the demographic (as represented by this small cohort) especially in regard to the individualistic and collectivistic qualities of McCarty and Shrum (2001). They state that *collectivist* consumer beliefs favoured prosocial behaviour such as recycling, where *individualists* were less in favour (ibid) and furthermore, collectivists who demonstrate pro CnSR tendencies are more likely to see this through to consumption choice or behaviour (supported by Kim (2011a) and Kim & Choi (2005)). Whereas an indication of individualistic qualities demonstrated parity to Cileli's (2000) conclusions. Maisie recalled the recession's impact on consumption where discussion was evident relating to memories of said external events having impact and/or perceived continuous restriction on finances that focussed more on the self than others (finances discussion in 5.4.2). Whilst also supporting Tanner and Arnett's (2016) observation that events witnessed at this influential stage of an individual's life are more significant than those that happen later.

5.2.5 Summary of Value Priority

Within this initial discussion, value priority findings were grouped to established correlation, support or critique to existing literature or propose new knowledge, the significant areas outlined were 'Awareness and locus of control', 'Empathy and value

activation', 'Identity', and 'Individualism over collectivism'. Therein, this part of the discussion has primarily addressed objective #1 *'To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their consumer social responsibility (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority.'*

With contribution to meeting the aim of this research, this section has added to exploring their opinions and value priorities relating to socially responsible consumption and behaviour along with 'if', and indeed 'why' the topic is or isn't a priority for them. This has been done by exploration in responses to the literature *key issues (2.5) of consumer awareness and propensity to care along with a perception of an inability to contribute* within 5.2.1 Awareness and locus of control. *Consumer awareness and propensity to care and whether a lack of empathy or consideration could pertain to non-engagement of ethical decision making* within 5.2.2 Empathy and value activation. 5.2.3 Identity contributed to added consideration to *brand-consumer 'fit', the importance of brand affiliation and responses to available finance and/or beneficial social image as a priority to ethical decision making at this stage in their life.* And, *consumer awareness and propensity to care with generation me – individualism or generation we – collectivism* being debated in 5.2.4 Individualism over collectivism.

Indeed, upon reflection the data infers that they all spoke (in varying degrees) with what Sloterdijk (1987, p5) referred to as an *enlightened false consciousness*. Insofar that they spoke with some perception in consideration of accepting a morality judgement regarding their behaviour with admittance of being aware. However, a distancing from responsibility in regard to their perceived locus of control could be, in part, dictating priority, behaviour and consumption choice. This in-turn inferred a disposition to look at either adhering to social norms (albeit at times only verbally) or fulfilling their self-identity as a value priority (social media or otherwise). This adheres to Stern and Oskamp (1987) who attributed behaviour to ascertaining the outcome when social norms conflicted with personal norms. With this cohort there was little conflict or guilt where their personal norm could be vulnerable to judgement from non-compliance. An observation (Schwartz, 1977) relating to the perception of personal responsibility and consequence, or lack of, in additional support of Hopper and Nielson (1991) who proposed that social norms were secondary to that of personal norms.

Discussion regarding distrust in global brands was at times delivered with enthusiasm, *inferring* a topic of personal significance; yet personal behaviour to negate or boycott said organisation was almost always lacking in fulfilment. This alludes to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) who posited that *intention* is placed in the latter cognitive stages when connecting values to behaviour, whilst suggesting intention and habit battle for primacy in each context. Crane and Matton's (2010) *moral framing* is also relevant here, especially considering how a dichotomy or indeed conflict upon decision making competes with brand affiliation or self-identity congruence. This could again be considered an identity persona insofar as being heard (or perhaps more prevalently 'seen') as anti-corporate or anti-global and any out-group affiliation this could manifest (as per Stryker, 1980; Turner et al., 1987).

Empathy was significant for some, especially more to animal welfare (food or cosmetics) than distant human suffering (sweatshops and suicide nets) in line with Twenge et al.'s (2012, p1054) disclaimer that they are 'less likely to express empathy for outgroups' and furthermore negation of value activation. This was significant insofar as suggesting that further research could look to explore whether significant geographical distance negates empathy whereas a 'local' concern of UK appropriated animals is more relatable. Recycling was seen as a low access activity for all, yet individually as either a social norm to adhere to, an association to be proud of, or an inconvenient expectation.

This feasibly adds consideration to recycling having been recently acknowledged as common practice amongst the demographic due to the ubiquitous prevalence in their upbringing (Stanes, Klocker & Gibson, 2015). Suggesting it wasn't necessarily an expectation that they prioritised or felt rewarded by and offering support for objective #2 '*To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics.*'

The value priority that each participant demonstrated regarding CnSR was understandably individual for how they demonstrated these concerns as *instrumental* values for guiding principles (Schwartz, 1994). Arguably, there is a proposition as transitioning adolescents some may view such values as *terminal* (and not currently instrumental) in that they are more of a long-term goal (Rokeach, 1968) that may begin to materialise when adulthood takes full control, closer to an *end state of*

existence. As Davina clarified, 'when we get a bit older, we get a bit more conscious of the environment ... now you're just living for this day really' with further pertinent discussion to follow in 5.3.2 Life-stage.

5.3 Convenience and indifference

Upon analysis and reflecting on the concepts of (in)convenience and indifference, when relating to the theory there appears to be a certain amount that perpetuates a dichotomy. With the central factor to this research being an exploration of Millennials thoughts and priority regarding social responsibility perceptions and behaviour in meeting objectives #1 & #2 (akin to Kaynak & Eksi, 2011; Schwepker & Cornwell, 1991) there looked to be much discussion pertaining to the facilitation and therein they're attitude to such behaviour.

It is not revelatory to deduce that an individual's rhetoric does not always align to behaviour and discussion relating to said 'gap' as has been observed by many (see Carrington et al, 2010; Padel & Foster, 2005; Folkes & Kamins, 1999; Cone & Roper 1994). However, in acceptance that participants in such studies are varied, those that were interviewed for this research offered little in respect of enthusiastic narrative over negation with choice or at the checkout (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Padel & Foster, 2005). Instead they posited the impact *even contemplating CnSR* would have on their lives, where their perspectives became clear. As per Öberseder et al. (2011) who comment that a naïve, preconceived (research) assumption that participants are aware of CSR in society, it became evident that the majority of contributors were incognizant to such information. This too being supported by Yusof et al. (2013) and previously Chan (1999), in that there is an acknowledgement that research does little to facilitate the participants' environmental knowledge - a challenge this research has in part, attempted to accommodate.

For clarity and as this research has documented, it was a conscious decision to appeal for participants with the initial emphasis on brands generically so as to sample a selection of Millennials that would hopefully offer a variety of perspectives on ethical discussions. Moreover, it should be noted that some *were* able to share their knowledge of specific CSR stories that had clearly made an impact, but most were very

'top level' or inarticulate when attempting to recite examples. This deduction being more aligned to Pomeroy and Dolnicar's (2009) questioning consumer awareness of CSR with research connotations.

5.3.1 Self-centric

The consideration and associated attribute that Millennials are continuously connected via Internet technology (i.e. Schmeltz, 2017; Weber, 2015) to perpetual information suggests that it would be inconceivable that they would not have been exposed to CSR rhetoric on multiple occasions. If this is to be acknowledged or accepted, then reasoning would dictate that the value priority is low and the topic is viewed with indifference and contradicts Sasmita and Suki (2015) to some degree. Appropriating the 'self-centric' attribute infers self-importance but not necessarily narcissism with its negative appropriations. As an example, 'making the world a better place' (Becker Jnr, 2012) and the 'generation we' association to the demographic was clearly in the minority narrative, reinforcing the individualistic tendency. Furthermore Hume's (2010) deduction that they are conscious environmentally, socially and culturally would only appear with relevance to these participants with a focus on the 'socially'. Indeed, their repetitive fluctuation between speaking for their selves and on behalf of their peers demonstrated not only a shared responsibility but also their depiction of how they perceived society and social norms therein. By *sharing* the responsibility then the emphasis on *personal* responsibility is perceivably negated with Annie's discourse regarding recognition; *'I don't think we're really aware of it....I don't really see any campaigns for it'*, supporting Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009). She noticeably flips from having a central focus to externalising the issue and her perception of the social norm. Emma explained that co-habiting had had a negative effect on her personal recycling habits. Laura shared this approach, whilst also appointing some blame towards facilities available.

As Bateman and Phippen's (2016) study concluded this research supports that this selection of Millennials appears to hold a higher prevalence to their own priorities rather than ethical societal norms or obligations. This contrasts with Newholm and Shaw's (2007) depiction that consumption patterns indicated we are becoming more

'societally aware' through into the new millennium; it's acknowledged that this deduction was not specific to this demographic. Therein there is consideration that perhaps the shift in emphasis has reversed (since 2007) or that these participants represent a life-stage of self-realisation and identity forming; over Newholm and Shaw's correlation to *self-actualisation*, c/o Abraham Maslow.

5.3.2 Life-stage

In acknowledging the life-stage of these late adolescents, the formation of the self is an underlying constant construct whilst interviewing them. The 'self-centric' connotation is illustrated by the perceivable lack of empathy or furthermore, indifference to participate or learn more. Furthermore, as Gordinier (2009) and Smith et al. (2011) suggest the materialistic and self-image prevalence was at times evident along with an attributed preference for an ease of consumption. Sam and Adam spoke of habitual purchasing of iPhones, indeed Apple was recurrent, with Lottie admitting she was the last of her friends to buy an iPhone indicating the influence of her peers (Parment, 2013). Emma was carrying a designer label bag, that isn't ultimately rare in a student environment but predominantly are of the replica variety. She spoke of how this was something that she had 'aspired' to obtain, saving her tips for a period of 'years' demonstrating the efforts that are achievable to fulfil an intrinsic requirement and self-identity enhancement (Liljander, Polsa, & van Riel, 2009). Appreciating the perceived exclusivity element to an expensive accessory (within a student domain) that this purchase fulfils, the effort displayed by Emma was not required by Kamile. Kamile had perceivably similar aspiration for originality but approached it with less tenacity, she spoke of her affinity to Converse whilst admitting their prevalence amongst her peers. With support to Tsai (2005) and Piacentini and Mailer (2004), Ross was eager to leave University and start earning to fulfil his consumption desires regarding premium brands whilst at the time of interview he was proud to explain his attire with perhaps more modest connotations; '*this is Fred Perry, this is Adidas, I've got so much Adidas*'. Therein, indicating that he was perhaps looking to perpetuate a more favourable social image status and/or affinity to his peers as one example in support of the affiliated *key issue* exploration.

Yet for some this materialised in lower cost items including Mollie's habits with alcohol preferring a brand name over a supermarket own label and contrary to that of Phillips' (2007, in Gurău, 2012, p105) that Millennials '*consider themselves as rationally-oriented consumers, for which price and product features are more important than brand names*'.

Moreover, this materialism or consumerism alludes to Schweitzer and Lyons' (2010) accreditation of Millennials as the 'want it all and want it now' generation, Rosy offered that her peers were avid workers to fulfil consumption habits when referring particularly to clothes shopping. Whilst Davina also offered context as she considered getting older and having a family of her own alluding to Twenge and Campbell (2009, p135) who considered impulsivity as 'favoring short-term pleasures at the expense of long-term gains' [sic].

This depicts an immediacy upon considering their behaviour that in turn bares correlation to a lack of biospheric empathy regarding long-term environmental concerns, akin to Hoffman, (2000). An immediacy in affect with the incongruence of Maisie being quite vocal about CSR and animal welfare coming from a farming background (although she isn't a vegetarian), into a hypothetical contextual situation of her own volition in a fast food establishment requiring sustenance whilst hungover. This again suggests a contextual, instant response and simplicity to her consumption habits. As Hume (2010) recommended in regard to CSR communications to this audience, a requirement to appeal to their 'self-interest' and to be 'convenient' complies with the characteristics of those interviewed.

5.3.3 Ease and effort

The convenience factor materialised in many ways, clearly a generation that favour the ubiquitous smart phone usage for information retrieval (friends, news, brands etc), and the personalisation of said information could be pivotal in contributing to self-identity (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Komarova Loureiro & Solnet, 2013; Marwick, 2013). Indeed, if the individual has not chosen to be aware of such ethical issues (by selection of information feeds) their knowledge of such issues will understandably be diminished. And as Rallapalli et al. (1994) alluded,

such knowledge is feasibly linked to an individual's behaviour; inferring an individual's ethical disposition being an antecedent to related behaviour - or not.

Similarly, the convenience association was evident when they spoke of facilities (e.g. shops, food outlets, recycling bins) being in close proximity and dictating behaviour akin to the quotes from Laura and Adam; supporting a response to the *key issue* of situation or context being influential. The vicinity was also prevalent to Daisie, illustrated with how she would like to purchase (using a local food market) but evidently isn't prepared to make the extra effort (she lives directly opposite a major supermarket) and perpetuating the lazy connotation to their demographic (e.g. see Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

With acknowledgement, perceived effort related to achieving goals was contextual, considering Emma's long-term target to purchase a Gucci bag. Separating premium purchases from everyday household grocery shopping is accepted (Lodes, 2010), yet what must be considered is the value fulfilment for the individual with every purchase or action. The everyday 'chore' of recycling represents the priority of convenience and reasoning of indifference to the topic, as supported by Rosy.

This bares relevance to Holbrook's (1999) consumer value classification of 'efficiency' with the attributed trait of ease. Convenience and ease were clearly evident with the numerous quotations in the analysis chapter (particularly 4.4) which although acknowledged by Holbrook nearly 20 years ago may now be significant as being a dominant attribute to this demographic (accepting it is only 1 option of 8 in Holbrook's list); again, supporting Hume's previous recommendations. Thus, ease, effort, convenience, time and motivation appear to be in conflict, although the justification varies in apportioning reasoning; blame, responsibility and self-fulfilment being contributing factors. Revisiting Starbucks from Emma before, Sam combines time and convenience clearly when he explained that the coffee chain facilitate his needs when he's rushing in the morning; this demonstrating prevalence of the Millennial-convenience trait, presented by Connaway, Dickey, and Radford, (2011).

Although Mollie looked to save money on a shared utility, perhaps to spend elsewhere when she raised that the effort of turning lights off is financially motivated rather than environmentally. She also explained how time is crucial in juxtaposition to any CnSR

contemplation with her anecdote inferring inadequate time management resulting in taking the car over public transport.

Transport was also an example for Rosy although in a pro-CnSR context, interestingly she spoke with a reflective conscience when reviewing her comment on how she likes to '*walk and take public transport a lot but that's more a convenience thing than doing it on purpose*'. The topic of distance was an undercurrent to HanNah's shopping antecedents and the opportunity to contain her search or optimise her time by going online, offering an insight into the demise of UK high-street retail (i.e. Independent, 2018).

5.3.4 Perceived personal importance

As Laroche et al. (2001) suggest the *perceived personal importance* of ethical issues links to the weighting or priority the individual places upon it when considering their personal role in society. This weighting is evidently subjective and contextual and such moral framing is constantly evaluated when identity decisions conflict, such as brand affiliation, fashion or peer/media/celebrity influence as mentioned in the data; previously raised by Crane and Matton (2010). These external influences were demonstrated through emphasis or direction of numerous conversations. I didn't overtly question their key drivers for decision making; most often the individuals chose to discuss them, at times with justification of their habits. Westerman et al. (2012) and Pane (2013) proposed that any self-identity fixation could suggest narcissistic or self-obsessed tendencies, again alluding to the 'self-centric' or 'generation me' connotation, and there were inferences to support this although the general conversational topic perhaps negated any outward/literal discussion of such characteristics. As per Laura's example where she discussed her attitude at the check-out where she spoke of how her self-image was enhanced when buying supermarket 'bags for life'. Her anecdote depicted how the product had an extrinsic positive CnSR quality through association, although adding it is 100% contextual to the availability. Evidently, the participant sample displayed heterogeneous characteristics when considering the self as a priority. This was depicted by numerous factors; rhetoric, passion, enthusiasm, knowledge and empathy as examples. For those that were vocal

about being ethically proactive it was primarily for animal welfare related issues, be that vegan/vegetarian or supporting shops that were openly pro-animal rights (as raised previously). Annie talked of her affiliation to a UK all-natural cosmetic company (Lush), displaying some but not extensive brand or product knowledge. As per Laura's supermarket bags and self-image importance attributed to her loosely CnSR anecdote, she later added, *'Every girl, or most girls I talk to, when I say Body Shop and I say I buy from Body Shop they'll go 'Oh I like Body Shop because they don't test on animals', 'they're environmentally friendly'*. Here she is displaying the role of peer acceptance or status attributes (as per Parment, 2013; Lueg & Finney, 2007) that suggests her personal importance as an antecedent to the behaviour.

Peter contributed with some extended narrative about his concerns regarding animal welfare and the dominance he sees in UK supermarkets. He spoke with empathy and enthusiasm, offering his perspective on the recent propensity for meat producers and food outlets alike who centre their marketing on British farming. Peter was an interesting anomaly insofar that his passion to speak articulately about the welfare of animals as personally important, was delivered with concern, whilst not being a vegetarian, and was in contrast to others who professed to being vegetarian, but didn't appear to be so vocal or passionate. This perhaps in contrast to Fenigstein et al. (1975) who suggested, the greater the self-consciousness, the more likely the individual will fulfil cognizant behaviour to perpetuate the self-identity.

5.3.5 Consequence

It is feasible that overall they attribute themselves as an *out-group* to what they perceive society dictates of them, by not conforming to socially responsible norms. Supporting this, and as an antecedent, is the aforementioned external locus of control (Forte, 2004) or as the Deloitte (2017) Millennial study acknowledged that they feel accountable for many of society's challenges but sense that their influence to be inconsequential along with the offsetting of responsibility to others; as per Maisie's deflecting of environmental responsibility of consequence to the 'massive' organisations (in support of Cone (2017)).

She offers allusions of personal insignificant power in comparison to the companies' and perhaps an issue of their dominance in society. This could also have correlation to the role cynicism plays in their attitude to the topic, further discussion in 5.5.

Moreover, a feeling of belittlement for Maisie insofar that the consequence of her actions, coupled with perhaps resentment to their obligation may have fostered the indifference; contextualised by the newly found independence and immersion in peer influence that like-minded individuals could propagate.

Although Harrison et al. (2005) claimed that consumers (to varying levels) are aware of the consequential nature to their purchasing, quotes relating to *child labour* and *suicide nets* were not deemed sufficient to alter their habits and patronage as outlined previously. Furthermore, this indifference and lack of empathy is incongruent to Eisenberg's (1986) depiction of prosocial moral reasoning as occurring / materialising during teenage years. For some more than others it appears that events external to their immediate social 'bubble' are relegated to that of unimportant and concern is minimal. As Eisenberg (1986), Batson (1998) then Hoffman (2000) propose, the 'cold' comprehension of moral principles only impact at an introductory level; it takes emotion, empowered by the individual for action likely to take place and perhaps appreciate the consequences of their behaviour. This raises the question, of whether these participants are too young to have experienced the emotion first-hand at this life-stage.

Additionally, this lack of consideration of consequence is believed to be involved with a cognitive process of moral disengagement that in-turn can then result in unethical behaviour (Hoffman, 1987); that was apparent with some participants. Interestingly this also has correlation to moral identity, a conflict perhaps for some less for others i.e. *'I'm just not bothered'*. As Laura offered, *'I don't actively go out my way to recycle... sometimes when I'm lazy I'll just stick it in the wrong bin, I don't care...'* and again with pertinence, hints of cynicism (Detert et al., 2008) and a further lack of consequential consideration. This egoistic (Schultz, 2005) disposition is evidently not a favourable attribute of these Millennials and so it befits acknowledging those with a more social persuasion when it comes to concern or altruism. The animal welfare advocates who display such tendencies and behaviour reinforce the conclusions of many academics (see Schultz & Zelezny, 1998; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002; De Groot & Steg, 2010) and

in-turn the egoistics are aligned to the negative tendencies proposed by Schultz and Zelezny (1998). The corporate benefits illustrated by this brand or lifestyle advocacy and proactive association were purchase and loyalty that participants were happy to share, bolstering their identity.

5.3.6 Hypothetical brand CSR development

During each interview I posited the hypothetical concept of a brand that they had expressed a preference to 'going 100% green' in everything they did (behind the scenes and their product offering). Reasoning to this was in part in response to the *key issues* of exploring their thoughts regarding a perception of incongruent marketing and their consideration of organisations prior affiliation to CSR, akin to greenwashing as authors have covered (e.g. Dutta et al., 2012) whilst also contributing to meeting objectives #3 and #4. Their responses were very interesting insofar that they were generally nonchalant about the prospect. As HanNah depicted when this was put to her preferential skate wear brand, Vans, she said; *'Well that would be great, because, I wouldn't have to actively do anything...'* inferring the convenience attribute once again. Moreover, Kamile goes a step further with indifference and scepticism by questioning their reasons. Whereas Peter, whilst optimistic at first, states clearly what he thinks the key motive would be, *'I think that would be a very positive step, ...again I get sceptical with it just being for the purposes for a marketing campaign err- like with Toyota'* Here he states a specific example where he believed it was the case and expresses some disengagement or disapproval, noted as a possibility by Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013).

Adam was concerned with wastage of old stock and impacts on future product attributes, insinuating repercussions that he wouldn't approve of. However, Alex was the positive anomaly to the concept and suggests that information transparency is significant for acceptance (i.e. supporting Vaccaro, 2010); whilst also stating that a price premium is palatable (supporting recent authors e.g. Curtin, (2018)). Admittedly Alex deferred from the definitive to the probable, as she reflected and concluded her own statement. David also questioned the quality of the new products and any detriment this may cause as a priority but then suggests that it could influence his

opinion, *'you feel better about having the brand and having the product because of them being environmentally friendly'* significantly to the positive brand association > self-identity it would create (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurau, 2012) whilst inferring that it would be without any effort from him. Lottie too, alludes to this sentiment but begins with perfunctory indifference, *'I don't think it would make a mass difference but, ...you'd feel good using it'* yet in conclusion, she openly demonstrates that such an organisational value priority has little significance to her own and resulting product choice.

Indifference was also evident with Rosy, placing product attributes as the sole significance. Annie too expressed a minor significance to such a policy with only the curiosity of new product development as the appeal, yet reflectively concedes *'it literally wouldn't change my opinion'* alluding to the 'apathy' or indifference appropriated by Pane (2013).

Peter talked hesitantly about the perceived positive identity association of Coke Life's green can, a product that was available at the time but wasn't purchased by Peter. However, his anecdote trails off, possibly believing he has made his point or possibly upon his reflection that he isn't 100% convinced by what he is saying. The relevance of Peter's perceivable lack of commitment denotes reflecting to the earlier individualism vs. collectivism connotations, with pertinence to less than favourable environmental factors for individualists (Li, 1997). As authors infer that in contrast, collectivists demonstrate stronger connection to environmental concerns and purchase behaviour (over intention) (Kim, 2011b; Kim & Choi, 2005). See 5.5.5 Distrust (and some positivity)' for further discussion and alternate views relating to the hypothetical brand CSR development.

Only one of the participants was particularly negative about 'her' brand increasing its CSR efforts, Kamile was openly sceptical, *'maybe 'well done, it's super good' but what are the reasons?... I just would look away.'* Kamile's and others' comments deliberated in this discussion show some correlation to the proposals of Lichtenstein et al. (2004, p29) who suggested that a CSR initiative that is inconsistent with consumer values *'is unlikely to increase brand equity and may even harm it'*. Similarly, Bhattacharya and Sen's (2004) 'disidentification' could be harboured by communication inconsistencies or perceived misinformation. The proliferation of questioning the authenticity and

'believability' of marketing rhetoric that the distrusting mind perpetuated also inferred Arnould and Thompson's (2005) cognitive dissonance. Also, it is notable that some proposed that (with some acknowledged apathy) the benefits of a connection between the CSR 'positive' organisation and a 'pro-ethical' consumer was advantageous to organisational affinity (as per e.g. Maignan & Ferrell, 2004) with heterogeneous permutations. Finally, Chylinski and Chu's (2010) goal and value incongruence discussions relating specifically to Millennial cynicism can be acknowledged to resonate with the data and analysis provided.

5.3.7 Summary of Convenience and Indifference

This section of the discussion has highlighted a selection of topics including 'Self-centric', 'Life-stage', 'Ease & effort', 'Perceived personal importance', and 'Consequence'. The section concluded with 'Hypothetical brand CSR development', a topic that concluded the interviews and was included to fulfil *key issues* including marketing incongruence, prior organisation CSR affiliation, brand affiliation, cynicism and disidentification. This also supporting objectives #3 *'To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation* and #4 *'To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.'*

Supporting the research aim and responding to other *key issues*, this section has contributed to disidentification and individualism vs collectivism in 5.3.1 Self-centric. Available finance and beneficial social image, along with prevalent values featured in 5.3.2 Life-stage. Additionally, there was some positive support to evidence of CnSR and interestingly, there was the opposite to a perception of inability to contribute. However, there was discussion regarding a lack of CnSR in 5.3.3 Ease and effort, along with narrative responding to disidentification, situation and context being relevant and moral disengagement being pertinent to unethical decision making. 5.3.4 Perceived personal importance included exploration into brand-consumer 'fit' and further brand affiliation, coupled with peer affiliation, approval or recognition. Finally, 5.3.5 Consequence added to the *key issues* of awareness, disidentification, generation me vs we, inability to contribute and cynicism / moral disengagement discussions.

The relevance of 'convenience' and 'indifference' included apathy towards this topic suggesting a contrast to the general belief that CSR and CnSR is more ubiquitous and resonant to Millennial consumers in the 21st century (i.e. Forbes, 2018; Nielsen, 2015; Deal et al., 2010; Cone, 2008). And if this is the case for this demographic, the data suggests identity formation or even narcissism (Pane, 2013) is a more dominating factor influencing their behaviour with a higher value priority. Indeed, indifference and inconvenience to social responsibility behaviour infers individualistic (McCarty & Shrum, 2001) and egoistic tendencies (Schultz, 2015); personal ego, identity or even self-obsession appears to be a priority value. What this priority of self and shared-identity in regard to their peers illustrates is the myopic, immediate proximity focus of their worlds. A priority where the immediacy of social advocacy is primary; and a sense of moral reasoning or empathy is not always the central tenet to their respective groups.

Additionally, the various conversations regarding the hypothetical 100% green company contradicts CSR Wire (2010) and Nielsen (2015) who believe that Millennials switch brand affiliation regarding CSR attributes, a contradiction highlighted by the majority of participants. Quotes mentioned how a transition would be positively acknowledged albeit without great enthusiasm and in appreciation that the effort would be absorbed by the brand and not themselves. However, anecdotes depicting Lush and Body Shop as bastions of shared (animal welfare rights) values *were* evident with extended narrative of how their presence and patronage was fundamental to consumption by those of a similar priority. Furthermore, such patronage reflected that the individual was appeasing their value priority and making an effort, in this case regarding animals; supporting Barnett et al. (2005).

Thus, as Marin and Ruiz (2006) questionably suggested, the stronger the brand value, the greater the attractiveness to the relevant consumer; however, some examples offered demonstrate that this isn't necessarily straight-forward. What is significant relates to the Deloitte Millennial Survey (2017) that expressed 'surprisingly' the environment had slipped from the top to the bottom of the list of Millennial's concerns in three years; their unanswered and undeliberated question being 'why?' where this section and the following two themes suggest some potential reasons.

5.4 Self-reasoning and justification

Even within a modest sample size of 18 participants their narrative, directed by a semi-structured format, was notably varied in depicting how their reasons for CnSR or generic behaviour and consumption was explained. As participants reflected on their habits and expanded upon their reasons therein, many comments were made that proffered a sense of justification in what could be attributed to mitigating their choices. Selected authors have alluded to this (see Belk, Devinney, & Eckhardt, 2005; Enginkaya, Ozansoy, & Ozarslan, 2009; Szmigin, Carrigan, & McEachern, 2009; Bénabou, & Tirole, 2010; Eckhardt, Belk, & Devinney, 2010) with discussion regarding both corporate and consumer approaches to environmentally or socially responsible behaviour. However, most of these papers lean towards the corporate rhetoric rather than the consumer, a gap this research intends to contribute to. Many topics were covered, and examples were offered by the participants and equally the rationalisation behind their choices was as diverse. It was noted that their stories were delivered with varying enthusiasm and self-reflection; all offered insight into how they perceived their own consumption and behavioural habits and reasons therein with a range of both introspection and pragmatism.

Appreciating the influence of context on any given behaviour (Bray, 2010), the questioning aimed to explore specific examples in their lives and (unless stated) emphasised that they spoke for themselves. The value priority discussion and analysis from before (5.2) looked at how they perceived CnSR as being influential in their behaviour (or otherwise) and the following looks further as to how this connects to actual situations. Maio and Olson (1998) and Seligman and Katz (1996) stipulate caution regarding the stability of values in this discussion, stating that situation or context dictates importance. This suitably contradicts Schwartz and Rokeach's notion that values are able to transcend specific situations as *'guiding principles in people's lives'* (Schwartz, 2015, pg2). Their inference being that, if the value priority is intrinsically prominent to the individual, then it should manifest in behaviour and attitude in the examples, situations and context that they share.

Accepting their homogenous characteristics and preferences the single common dominator for the 18 was that they were all university under-graduate *student*

Millennials and this connotation was raised by almost all at one or more times in the interviews (but consciously not by me). Many acknowledged this as a life-stage and accepted or used this as justification in that perhaps it restricted their options or knowledge.

5.4.1 Generational separation & external context

As Erikson (1963) discussed regarding life-stages, the expectations are that these Millennials may be enduring 'crises' of a psychosocial nature; where their evolutionary psychological needs can find conflict to those of society. In some cases, resentment of older generations manifested in that defensiveness appeared to offset responsibility. There was a perception of blame appropriated to previous generations for the (environmental) situation of the world today and who are in-turn viewed as perpetuating pressure on Millennials to rectify or sacrifice accordingly. Alex was vocal about how she viewed her generation with mixed emotions yet added, *'I do think that comes from this situation that the last generation put us in.'* Whereas Mollie was keen to distance herself and her peers from her elders with stating that ethical purchasing was only practiced by 'older people'. This antipathy was certainly raised with disdain and intonation that it shouldn't be the sole responsibility of their demographic to resolve the situation. Alex continued in defence of Millennials, she spoke of how older generations do not understand the needs or aspirations of younger people today, to simply survive or exist in a society that appears to have forgotten them; a view similarly supported by BBC News (2010A), Hoey (2008), and Pierce (2007). The influence this conflict between generational understanding being, that it has the propensity of harbouring resentment or cynicism as per Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013). Additionally, as Beckmann (2007) suggested for a deeper understanding of consumption, not simply behaviour but politics and influential others should be taken into account. Shauki (2011) too considers political persuasion as pertinent and supports the social implications to consumption choice which was evident in discussion. To note, politics wasn't discussed, primarily because power issues were considered along with any potentially uncomfortable situations regarding their allegiances or perceived notion of being categorised. Although the societal events that this demographic have witnessed through their formative development are significant,

including; increased globalisation, demographic multiplicity, technological ubiquity, societal 'upheaval' i.e. economic recession and more recently the Trump administration and the Brexit situation. All significantly sizeable to suggest they may become more socially aware as suggested by do Paço et al. (2013) and Ng et al. (2010) or the 'defining moments' proposed by Meredith and Schewe (1994) and Ryder (1965); significant happenings that are considered to remain with the individual into adulthood.

Although these external events are perhaps significantly permanent, the constraining 'student-life predicament' that they shared was acknowledged to be temporary by some. And as they aged and/or became parents they expected or even hoped that they would be more engaged with CnSR with Mollie and Davina offering good examples in considering how their priorities may change.

5.4.2 Perceived financial restrictions

In response to the *key issue* of available finance vs social image, student status justification was the most popular self-reasoning to their CnSR choice-making, behaviour or mind-set with the perceived financial restrictions this imposed upon them (i.e. with examples offered by Emma / Kamile / Laura / HanNah / Sam / Maisie and Adam). With a popular preconception that ethical purchasing carries a price premium (i.e. Carrigan & Attalla, 2001), as self-professed 'quite big consumers' economic restrictions appeared to be significant. Whilst proffering an argument to their reasoning when making choices and at times manifesting as frustration to not being able to do more. Pro-ethical brands were at times mentioned as almost aspirational but unaffordable when discussing non-luxury items as Kamile commented. And Maisie equally voiced apparent frustration, '*as a student it's the budget over that preference*' with HanNah sharing similarly reasoning. The 'perception' of a price premium was also raised by Peter, although interestingly he uses the word 'perception' rather than stating as a fact with his self-reasoning. However, the more definitive was raised by some as an immediate or default response within the discussion and the choices available.

Lodes (2010) proposed and supported that Millennials are significantly price focused yet with particular relevance to everyday consumption purchases. What Lodes also suggested was that brand affinity materialised when higher priced or luxury items were considered, alluding to the committed cognitive reasoning this required. An example of this was Emma's narrative regarding her long-term acquisition of a Gucci bag as discussed earlier. However, Ross' affiliation to Dairy Milk chocolate also displayed that affinity wasn't solely related to expensive items. The questioning and exploration, looking to see how their decision making was determined (considering their perceived restricted finance) was perhaps evident with Maisie's comment '*I never go without things*' that looked to be an indicator of priority when ascertaining funds available.

Indeed, as previously mentioned, my personal knowledge of student finances is open-minded having experienced a variety of economic situations ranging from the financially stricken to those who appear to have a *healthily sufficient* supply of available funds; so, such discussion was not always accepted at face value.

Therefore, the distinction of *want vs need* in their cognitive processing when it came to financially reasoned choice priority was evidently complex and multi-faceted. Some (e.g. Mollie and Peter) expressed simple contentment with their regular choices and happy with what they 'always buy' which was again an indicator of value priority; 'habitual loyals' as per Gurău, (2012).

Some professed to always be looking for the cheapest options or what was on offer at the time supporting the *value seeking* aspect of Noble et al.'s model (2009). Discussion regarding brands such as Lush and Body Shop displayed connotations of allegiance or affinity and the rhetoric regarding shared values (animal welfare) suggested a relationship was acknowledged (He et al., 2012). This affinity said to be aspirational for organisations and feasibly regardless of any price premiums (i.e. Hamilton, 2009; Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007). Moreover, this demonstrates direct correlation to Lazarevic's (2012, p52) *brand-consumer loyalty model* that is enhanced by any brand supporting social causes being significantly important to the 'generation Y' (Millennial) consumer; albeit not all generation Y consumers from this research.

In relation to the attributed life-stage and financial implications to this demographic it is pertinent to further consider Noble et al.'s (2009) *conceptual model of purchasing*

motivations. With reference to previous discussion regarding their adolescent self-discovery the model includes 'finding yourself' and 'freedom', both appearing with relevance within the data. The following considerations are multifarious with some resonance but as mentioned earlier, the 'value seeking' materialises in multiple forms insofar that it isn't simply about minimal costs but what the purchase represents, and the benefits perceived for the individual. Moreover, the benefit of making purchase X over purchase Y would appear to be significantly biased towards the self than any particular empathetic CnSR or societal accountability for the majority, most of the time (Pane, 2013).

Furthermore, the 'generation me' attribution depicts an egoistic and materialistic preference (Gordinier, 2009; Smith et al, 2011). Coupled with perceived or actual restricted finances for some, there does appear to be a dichotomy at point-of-purchase or selection phase, alluding to the '*cash point conservatism*' of Devinney et al., (2010). A proposed inability to afford said products, yet for the majority there is no prevalence to any morality discrepancies (alluded to by Crane & Matton (2010) and previously Jones (1991)). What this does again suggest is the priority or weighting their (aforementioned - 5.3.4) *perceived personal importance* Laroche et al. (2001) raised when considering (if relevant) their own wants and needs vis-a-vis societal obligation.

5.4.3 Generation me / Generation we

As previously brought into this discussion in relevance to self-centric (5.3.1) and life-stage (5.3.2) attributes within the convenience and indifference part of this chapter, the 'me vs. we' *key issue* exploration offers further critique regarding how the generalisation is depicted in their narrative. What Bateman and Phippen (2016) acknowledged in their recent study was concurrent that it appears Millennials' own identity is more important than broader ethical considerations. This being aligned with Twenge et al.'s (2012) study that associated a propensity to be less empathetic (than previous generational cohorts). This self-focussed idealism of the 'generation me' terminology displays a partiality for the focus on materialism and image (according to Gordinier, 2009; Smith et al., 2011). Yet examples of brand materialism were not overwhelmingly evident (excluding them being a majority of iPhone owners, Ross'

desire for a BMW and designer brogues, and Emma's Gucci bag) which could be pertinent to their economic situation or self-consciousness of not raising such discussion in the context of the environmental conversation.

In taking the self-orientated perspective with this cohort there nevertheless requires the significant influence of social groups and peer consideration (as stressed by Fromm & Garton, 2013; Noble et al., 2009). As the participants flipped between talking for themselves and interjecting a joint 'we' delivery, it was evident that the consideration of them being part of a group was concurrent in their consideration and explanations. It was tenable to attribute this to a joint responsibility or accountability to their individual thoughts and behaviour, especially when it came to defensiveness or deflecting any appropriation of blame or ignominy to their less than enthusiastic narrative of the subject. At times they discussed how either they or their demographic would profess to be enthusiastic about pro-ethical issues, but this would latterly be suspected as lip-service more than any indication of behaviour when it came to be fulfilling on the claim (alluded to by Devinney et al., 2010; Carrigan & Attala, 2001). This was occasionally demonstrated through inconsistencies as per Maisie's dismissal of Coca-Cola's role in baby and child consumption of the beverage, latterly unconnected as referring to her 'respect for their size' and that they are an 'amazing company'. A similar story presented by Rosy, and also Kamile's susceptibility to her child labour associated Nestle chocolate bars. The lack of empathy (us) being overpowered by the satisfaction of the self (me) being strongly inferred.

This alone is a significant indicator that methodological studies should be transparent and take into account the context of how they approach such topics and not to accept findings without clarifying the individual's *actual* behaviour or intentions as per Auger et al. (2007).

It was the role that peer expectation or acceptance played that was interesting although an element of pride or independence (Onwezen et al., 2013) for some was apparent that illustrated strength of independence regarding the 'me' vs. 'us' topic. The inference that some spoke almost as a collective in the discussion of habits alludes to Ajzen's (1991) depiction of social norms being significant albeit this was depicted in both positive and negative discussions. This was interesting in that their narrative alluded to an insular or closed friendship group that they perceivably conceived as

their socially constructed reality or norm to adhere to. This perpetuates discussion to consider how the interrelation of internal/ external group social norms conflict or comply with personal norms; as Hopper and Nielson (1991) propose that personal norms take precedence. The example of Mollie reminiscing about previous school friends who she remembered as being *more* pro-ethically minded, solidly in the past tense with a tone distancing herself, was a good example.

She also spoke of how she and her current friends 'don't think about it' (pro-ethical options) thus differentiating the two groups value priority which feasibly connects to the rejection or out-group affiliations of Wilk (1997 in Fuat Firat, 1997 p183). Without over implicating this factor on Mollie's choice of friends it can however be read that it is feasibly an inherent character trait amongst further Millennials in future research. In addition, further exploration could focus on the correlation of the 'generation me' attribute in appropriation to the lack of empathy across a range of scenarios and perspectives, as inferred in this research.

5.4.4 Out-group distancing

Considered to be known to be prone to peer-pressure and the desire for social inclusion, Isaksen and Roper (2012) suitably described them as having a priority / placing importance on conformity. However, participants including Alex and HanNah could be considered to contravene this in distancing themselves with the term 'fashionable'. As Alex mentioned '*I don't really like my generation*' adding reasoning to her statement that they live within their 'bubble', inferring their lack of empathy and supporting a self-centric positioning. HanNah and Alex distinguish themselves from the 'mainstream', for them, their identity was perhaps concerned with associating with an out-group or sub-culture from the dominant culture that they considered to be prevalent around them (as Tajfel & Turner, (1979)). Nevertheless, it was still evident that their identity was perhaps equally important, but interestingly these 2 were possibly 2 of the most informed when it came to be reciting CnSR related anecdotes with vigour and confidence of knowledge (along with the more *conformist* Peter too). Furthermore, what may be considered from Mollie's (and Laura's conversely) examples could be correlated to a perceived moral obligation of society (or friendship group); as

a force to rebel against or be distanced from, as Wilk (1997 in Fuat Firat, 1997) discussed. Whilst also alluding to Tressider and Hirst's (2012, p109) *'habitus, distinction, identity and cultural capital'*. Thus, without revelation of any generation undertaking this life-stage / university experience, social inclusion and acceptance along with the importance of conformity appears highly significant to these Millennials (i.e. Isaksen and Roper, 2012), be that pro-environmentally conscious or otherwise.

Within the conversations, the topic of the Coke Life product that was at the time still being sold in the UK was raised, the literally green branded Coke with lower-calories than 'red' Coca-Cola, made using stevia and sugar as opposed to artificial sweeteners. Most were unaware of the product although a couple had tried it and dismissed it. What this discussion was exploring was their perception of what it was offering and attempting to achieve, and in-turn if such an openly green product (whose brand is synonymously red) was appealing or indeed, to be avoided (by disassociation). They were asked what they thought it said about some one who was drinking from the green can to gauge their interpretation and perhaps offer insight as to how they think if they were to be perceived as supporting or affiliating with 'pro-ethical' products (akin to Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Connotations to (Coke Life purchasers) in-group identity aspiration was raised by Adam, although Emma believed conscious individualisation was an antecedent. Interestingly and in support of this, Sam had consumed the product and shared that he wanted to be seen as different but accepted ignorance of the product's attributes proposing that affiliated 'image' was significant (Pratt et al., 2003; Aquino & Reed, 2002; 2003).

Alternatively, Hannah believes that the colour is not the central factor for consumers and that the green packaging was for Coke's differential branding within their range, although supporting *'...So yeah, it's all about image'*. Self-image was also evident for Alex when asked who drinks it and offering her disparaging reasoning as attempts at being 'fashionable'.

The purpose of this was to look at how they considered organisational efforts at environmentally or socially responsible product offerings and whether this created affinity or disassociation. The responses were interesting insofar that they generally, visually and verbally, expressed distancing themselves from such a product inferring out-group association. They spoke of how they thought people consuming it were

'trying' to be green or pro-ethical, or that it was simply for image or an outward display of pro-ethical values (Piron, 2000; Griskevicius et al., 2010) without being overly convinced of any truth in such portrayal. Acknowledging that many were Coca-Cola consumers (primarily the Diet Coke variety) Coke was used as one of the international renowned brand examples within the discussions (see Appendix 8). In-turn what this line of enquiry was looking for and demonstrated was akin to Eastman and Liu (2012) and Gurau (2012) that these participants were clearly brand conscious, publicly self-aware and the connection this has to self-identity and affiliation. Furthermore, this supports Brisman's (2009) conclusions regarding extrinsic identity and environmental-elitism, the notion that such products have become status symbols representing a façade that the consumer wishes to portray.

In contrast, Rosy spoke of herself and her peers as to their attitude/propensity for shopping and the 'high esteem' of brand association. As someone who vocalised a preference for animal welfare this was correspondingly a feature for her and others too. The UK cosmetic company Lush was a favourite for Annie, Laura and Rosy, a brand that has a high profile for its ethical values, specifically animal rights. This proposes Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) shared value correlation and connection being beneficial for increased advocacy and purchase being evident. As per the examples mentioned previously, these participants spoke unequivocally with pride that this was a brand that reflected well on them and their 'in-group' affiliation therein. This finding resonance with Tressider and Hirst (2012, p109) with their explanation that *'consumption identifies to the rest of the world the type of person we are and identifies the groups, class or tribe we belong to'*, all pertaining to image and self-identity. Additionally, the distancing from Coke Life and alternatively, affiliation to Lush illustrates the symbolic meanings (suggested by Holt & Schor, 2000, in Brisman, 2009) and 'capital' (Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Holt, 1998) attributed to such commodities. The notion that brands and products act as status symbols is perhaps nothing new (e.g. Eastman, Iyer, & Thomas, (2013); Grotts, & Widner Johnson, (2013)), yet the relevance to this research is how the positive *or* negative association of brands' efforts with CSR product affiliation to the individual's CnSR identity is.

5.4.5 Influence of others

The influence of others and peer affinity became apparent to some who demonstrated their brand affinity in wearing items of clothing that they had championed as favourites at the time of the interview, like Ross sporting Adidas as the producer of his beloved Manchester United FC (previously reported by Solomon & Schopler, 1982). Indeed, Bray (2010) accepts that context too can re-prioritise drivers that would befit the social inclusion concept i.e. image when buying a car or fashion when choosing clothes (Hamilton, 2009). Furthermore, it could be deduced that those with 'high' public self-consciousness are more aware of the impact their choices or affiliations have externally such as social acceptance, and additionally the significance such choices have for self-esteem and acceptance (be it fashion clothing or vegetarianism) (Lee and Burns, 1993). Adolescents' requirement to 'find themselves' at this pivotal life stage is evidently troublesome and exploratory whilst coherently redefining internal value priorities and negotiating independent living for the first time (Isaksen & Roper, 2012).

However, regardless of the *fashion* or *anti-fashion* positions amongst them, any discussion relating to self-identity preference regarding consumption would appear to self-affirm the proposition that this is perpetuated to appease a more favourable social image and/or affinity to peers (e.g. supported by Tsai, 2005; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). So, it could be considered that self-reasoning and justification are characteristics with consideration to social responsibility behaviour where identity is involved, and effort and enthusiasm (Convenience and indifference) is not an issue with appropriated purchasing. Holbrook's (1999) consumption values of *status* and *conformity* could be evident here with the requirement to blend in with their selected peer group; believed to be strongly influenced by the individual's ego (Parment, 2013). Accepting the role that their peers play in shaping their identity (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Parment, 2013) and furthermore behaviour, it was also suitably acknowledged the influence of their upbringing and family life was when reflected upon (supporting Matthies, Selge, & Klöckner, (2012). This can be considered to support Maio and Olson's (1998) proposal that values are cultured by our social environment. There were a selection of anecdotes recalling home-life and the influence that their parents had in being, primarily active in regard to CnSR - no-one mentioned that their family

completely abstained. Conversely, yet perhaps in support, other participants who spoke of the recycling at home did not always report that this had transcended into their everyday behaviours as per Lottie's recollection compared to her current student accommodation scenario. This suggesting that the parental influence is acknowledged but personal preference (and low value priority) remain the key antecedent, particularly when lifestyle and circumstances change. It could be proposed that the perceived extra effort related to such behaviour is too much (such as the apathy discussion previously 5.2) and in this case it is easier not to do something that was engrained at home than to uphold any family behaviour now that independence is achieved. For some, clearly there are other events in their lives that take precedence, including time being a valuable resource (e.g. Mollie, Sam) yet as Prensky (2005) suggested that they will invest time should the topic engage them.

A factor that did appear to have an influencing role to this group and their self-reasoning of their consumption choices was that of celebrities. A concept maybe incomprehensible by older generations but the rise of celebrity culture and especially social media influencers is an industry predicted to rise from \$2bn in 2017 to \$10bn in 2020 (Social Media Today, 2018). As the ubiquitous nature of Millennials and their smart phones, information is immediate and constantly refreshed (Schmeltz, 2017; Weber, 2015). To fairly accept their (social) media feeds are interspersing news stories and celebrity influencers' content then it would seem feasible that the harsh 'reality' of the outside world events, something that Cileli (2000) claimed increased competitive and individualistic traits, is appeased by consuming recommended products or endorsements that fulfil these personas. As Davina justified as she stated *'if they're not talking about it, we're not talking about it'*; Ross too supported, *'...if David Beckham started, I'd probably, as weird as it is, maybe then I'd try it'* (in reference to Coke Life) supporting McCormick, (2016). The power of such 'celebrities' is clearly evident for some and reinforces the predictions about the increase on marketing spend in the coming years to reach a generation that has only known instant accessibility to information and entertainment alongside friends, family and peers (Fromm & Garton, 2013; Twenge, 2006). What should be acknowledged is that no-one mentioned any pro-ethical sources of information that they 'subscribe' to, just that they implied the topic of CSR / CnSR wasn't abstract to them on the platform. This omission could suggest a simplistic marketing recommendation with Annie's example, *'I think (if) Coke*

want to go more environmentally friendly, they have to shove it in your face until you get sick of it and it would just stick in' whilst inferring however, it wasn't something she looked forward to. Furthermore, Lottie also reasoned that the responsibility is with others rather proactive investigation on her part suggesting she was assigning blame or accountability elsewhere (Detert et al., 2008).

Authors' discussion of Millennials and CSR in particular, has often cited their engagement and propensity to be vocal or active when there are apparent misdemeanours or lack of action (e.g. Lauritzen & Perks, 2015; Neilsen, 2015; Cone, 2015; CIM, 2009; Bernhart, 2009; Noble et al. 2009). With such accepted belief that this is significantly pertinent to organisations it questions why these participants weren't particularly representative. It could suggest a hesitance in 'speaking out' or *being the influencer* to their peers due to not being 100% comfortable of their knowledge or views, or alternatively the low value priority may infer general apathy. Moreover, the general lack of definitive pro-ethical awareness demonstrated by this group, accepting they are delivered a constantly abundant digital media stream is relevant but clearly not sufficiently influential and perhaps still unclear as to explain the indifference to the topic translating into behaviour, supporting Pane (2013). However, a minority self-proclaimed that they felt they *were* aware of such topics (Davina - '*you always hear on the news*'), although usually accepting this was as far as their enthusiasm or interest had relevance or at times feeling powerless compared to organisations, further supporting Forte's (2004) narrative regarding their perceived lack of 'locus of control'.

Furthermore, as Castelló et al. (2013) suggested, these social media platforms that are omnipresent for this group *should* be a method of communicating with resonance for them, yet the findings of this study strongly suggesting that this just isn't happening. And as Pomering and Dolnicar (2009) proposed '*are consumers even AWARE of CSR implementation?*' it would suggest perhaps for some, yes, but only superficially and without significance. Likewise, to reconsider Prensky's (2005) recommendation that this generation should be *engaged* or risk being *enraged* to return loyalty and interaction, findings indicate that this too isn't happening for those organisations wanting to connect CSR to CnSR shared values. Within these participants, Kamile's

unprompted suggestion of a personally directed, pro-active communication from Nestle, perhaps alluded to some truth in Prensky's proposition.

5.4.6 Summary of Self-reasoning and Justification

To summarise, this part of the discussion has lighted; 'Generational separation & external context', 'Perceived financial restrictions', 'Generation me / Generation we', 'Out-group distancing', 'Influence of others' and the 'Ease of facilitation'. This theme has continued the support of the research aim regarding the exploration as to 'if', and indeed 'why' the ethical topic is or isn't a priority for them and objectives #1 and #2.

This section has responded to the *key issues* including ethically 'superior' others, generation me/we, situation and context and moral disengagement in 5.4.1

Generational separation and context. Disidentification, perception of an inability to contribute, brand affiliation and available finance were discussed in 5.4.2 Perceived financial restrictions in addition to narrative exploring what values are pertinent. 5.4.3 Generation me / Generation we contributed to the relevant *key issue* and further presented finance, beneficial social and external image or recognition as notable factors. 5.4.4 Out-group distancing considered the brand-consumer 'fit' as disassociation, adding to disidentification insight with more contribution to moral disengagement, individualism and discussion exploring whether they care. 5.4.5 Influence of others completed this section and contributed to the prevalent values research aspect. External recognition or approval, particularly from peers featured, along with the brand-consumer 'fit' once again, but contrary evidence to a proliferation of CSR marketing communications was included.

Herein, it is pertinent to consider and revisit Noble et al.'s 2009 'conceptual model of purchasing motivations of college-aged Generation Y consumers' (figure 13) to consider further parity.



Figure 13 Conceptual model of purchasing motivations of college-aged Generation Y consumers. Noble et al. (2009, p619)

The participants' life-stage regarding CnSR justification was represented by self-reasoning that manifested where they were evidently processing the *socialization issues* of newly found *freedom* from home along with identity issues relating to *finding themselves*. Noble et al.'s next phase included affinity and identity issues concerned with peer/societal group or individual compliance or differentiation relating to *blend in/stand out*. The prior discussions have illustrated the propensity of identity as a significant antecedent with both behaviour and consumption choice (significantly above the initial financial barriers). Moreover, *brand personality* was evident with Lush, Body Shop and Apple affinity being the most significant to having both a personality and offering *comfort* with convenience, brand status or values and peer compliance. Conversely, the negative connotations of cynicism and scepticism were also evident regarding the Coke Life case study in discussion. *Fashion knowledge* related to the propensity of being social media focussed with influencers playing their part, similarly the anti-fashion or sub-tribe or alternative culture was also evident. Lastly, *value seeking* was complicit to the dominant narrative especially related to restricted finances, but as other authors have discussed, value relating to higher priced goods was again indicative to the purchase of Apple products that on the whole they justified almost as a necessity.

5.5 Distrust

In response to the *key issue* exploring any correlation of cynicism or moral disengagement to unethical decision making, the final section of the discussion looks at the apparent propensity of narrative that infers cynicism / scepticism and questioning of fact or motive be that of an organisation, the media or others in their lives.

As mentioned in 2.1.3, Fassin and Buelens (2011) provided their review that the marketing of CSR could be approached from three perspectives;

1. *Negative* - 'we have to'
2. *Positive* - 'we want to' and
3. *Pragmatic* - 'it's in our interest to'

Highlighting that perhaps morally, only #2, 'we want to' offers any genuine inference of discussing the topic from a pro-ethical, socially responsible standpoint. With this in mind, the participants shared occasional views and stories of how the three classifications were evident and will be acknowledged where relevant. For clarification, the 3 perspectives were not discussed with them at any stage.

5.5.1 Questionable motives

Regarding 'why' an organisation pursues green or ethical product development, Kamile offered an example pertaining to Fassin and Buelens' #1 or #3. Her conclusions of why Coca-Cola had diversified their product portfolio, perceived a responsibility regarding the obesity crisis, '*maybe they were pressured*'. Although her insecurity of factual knowledge bodes strongly pertinent to how information is perhaps not reaching consumers convincingly. When researching the communication aspect, Du et al. (2010, p10) stated how CSR was a challenge insofar that to 'convey favourable motives' was inherently to reduce consumer scepticism, troublesome when considering Fassin and Buelens three perspectives if prevalent. In resolution, authors such as Parguel et al. (2011) and Hildebrand et al. (2011) stressed that transparency and sincerity were imperative for consumer congruence. Accepting that such top-level advice is easier

said than done, the participant responses illustrated how they perceived such transparency.

Lottie commented on MacDonald's recent supply chain marketing campaign that is feasibly aligned to Fassin and Buelens #3 in that with public concern on the rise, and that it's in their interest to clarify their food sources. However, she stated without hesitation that their repeated efforts are not resonating with her *'I don't trust them'* and perhaps she feels a lack of sincerity to their rhetoric, apparently linked to her brand preconceptions and their efforts to improve their corporate image (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009). HanNah too, offered some praise at first, with some belief in their message; although she concluded that her rhetoric stimulates a memory in questioning their prior business practices - directly as a repercussion to their marketing transparency efforts (a contentious factor proposed by Parguel et al., (2011) and Hildebrand et al., (2011)).

Interestingly, Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri's (2010) findings suggested that the more environmentally aware an individual is, the less likely their cognitive ability to absorb an institution's CSR offering as being transparent. However, when considering the HRS self-rating of both Lottie and HanNah, they both scored themselves low on how pro-ethical they considered themselves to be. This would propose that Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri's suggestion is not limited to those who are 'more aware' and convincing transparency or legitimacy is more widely problematic.

Similarly, Daisie (mid on her self-rating) stated how her distrust is widespread (*'you can't really trust any of them'*) and the efforts she makes to side-step corporate communications.

5.5.2 The 21st century context: exuberance, fluctuations, inconsistencies

For some, their distrust appears to stem from marketing enthusiasm or their perception of what they may consider excessive communications (a *key issue*). Akin to the findings of Chylinski and Chu (2010, p799) as *'a process of related cognitive, behavioural, and affective reactions expressed by initial suspicion, defensive attempts, and eventual alienation of the consumer'* (see also Vice, 2011); which further suggests

the propensity of potential consumer 'disidentification' (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004) from the organisation. Emma illustrated with her own exuberance *'stop banging on, we've heard it'* quickly followed by *'what else are you trying to hide...?'* again insinuating a cynical questioning of motive or association to greenwashing (Piercy & Lane, 2009). This is similar to Daisy's uncertainty when considering her uncertain loyalty to global corporations relating to their fiscal responsibilities and how she should react insofar that boycotting company X transfers her to the unknowns of company Y.

This suspected uncertainty regarding trust propagated by marketing clearly risks rejection of loyalty and patronage (Stanaland et al., 2011). Daisy also displayed doubt and hesitation concerning large international corporations in what could be considered a homogenous view of the sector, coupled with her insecurity of her own knowledge; previously proposed by Caruana and Crane (2008). However, this wasn't ubiquitous within the cohort as Rosy shared when the proposed hypothetical situation of Coke moving to be more environmentally conscious, sustainable and ethically responsible; *'I think it would make me think of them as less of a big scary corporation...'* Yet for Laura and Lottie, they considered (albeit with some hesitation) that no amount of marketing can change some people's preconceptions, alluding to discussion by Pomeroy and Johnson (2009).

This supports Shauki's (2011) suggestion that an organisation's reputation is constructed by an individual's historical empirical interpretation. Therefore, the concept of brand repositioning can be considered a slow and troublesome strategy where some consumers may be an unsurmountable or incredibly challenging proposal (as implied by Holt, 2002). Moreover, Thompson's (2004) proposal that corporate communication is a 'powerful tool' that has the ability to 'create' a desire to ethically consume is questionable for most of these participants.

With evidence that participants could recall specific socially responsible related campaigns (e.g. MacDonald's and Coca-Cola) it was also interesting that most struggled to affiliate any further communications from a list of other brands shared with them that have also engaged with CSR (Appendix 8). Where Rolland and Bazzoni (2009 p259) stated a 'strategic necessity' for organisational transparency and consumer

reassurance to be available online, these Millennials were overwhelmingly unaware. Moreover Du et al.'s (2010 p14) declaration that this proliferated an *informal, yet credible* medium would suggest that perhaps an opportunity is being missed (although acknowledging the scepticism discussion).

What could be considered *as a route* to the cynicism and distrust (Helm, 2004) for these participants, feasibly relates to Quinby's (1999) 'technoculture'. An interesting term, in what was alluded to in the last century (prior to absolute online ubiquity and the rise of the social media global corporations), as the profusion of multiplicitous, conflicting information available today (Lee, 2016). The distrust this fosters in who or what to believe therefore becomes inherent and the norm, supported by Bertilsson (2015). Moreover Beck's (1999) understanding of constantly evolving specialist opinions being the antecedent to contradictory viewpoints could never have predicted the dubiously intentional yet widely reported statement of Michael Gove MP with his infamous Brexit campaign quote '*People in this country have had enough of experts*' (FT.com, 2018b).

Adopting a more placated viewpoint temporarily, these troublesome and conflicting communications that consumers may struggle with illustrates perhaps the opportunities missed by organisations in not orchestrating such messages to a perfect science (Tsai, 2008). Moreover, it proposes that it is more aligned to Frandsen and Johansen (2011) who suggested any perceived complexity or duplicity of message (associated to CSR), feasibly impedes interpretation. In a selection of quotes relating to a global brand with what could be considered as having a very strong online presence, Coca-Cola, participants offered narrative inferring confusion and frustration with Peter notably using both the terms '*don't trust*' and '*more sceptical*'.

Furthermore, if the troublesome nature of corporate communications were to be more proactive in getting their messages across, i.e. through direct mailing, this too could be met with scepticism as Kamile shared, '*who leaked it ... what do they want from me!?*' adding a modicum of paranoia to the issue.

In what could be interpreted as invading personal spaces and/or personal data infringement (acknowledging the Cambridge Analytica Facebook scandal (Meredith,

2018) hadn't happened at the time of interview) Kamile elicited concern and almost anger in her tone relating to a brand she professes limited allegiance to (see Smith (2011)).

With an acceptance that *'cynicism towards multinational companies is based on a belief that a corporation cannot be altruistic without expecting a return on investment'* (Lee & Fernandez, 2009, p175) this research finds resonance. Moreover, it can also be considered that proactive information divulgence regarding the organisation's CSR commitments does not necessarily reduce scepticism, a suggestion offered by Pomeroy (2009). In their discussions relating to Coca-Cola's literally green Coke Life product, Adam, Maisie and Laura all offered support to this.

5.5.3 Image, identity & 'fit'

In response to the *key issue* of brand-consumer 'fit' and identity implications Laura also spoke of Coke Life and their brand extension, sharing her uncertainty based on insufficient knowledge, *'Yeah I tried it, it was alright. I didn't, I didn't trust it.'* Likewise, Peter added how he is somewhat aware of market changes, and in relation to hybrid automobiles he considered, *'I feel that's more of a marketing ploy.'* Here he again shares an uncertainty to his deductions although his belief is cynical with his disparaging comments relating to this rise in popularity and a company's image; similarly, Rosy spoke of Coke Life, *'it's a bit of a gimmick'*. For it to be considered less of a marketing ploy (Pomeroy and Dolnicar, 2008) and more inherent to the organisation corporate identity, befits the distinct possibility of falling short into corporate image; *how the organisation wishes to be perceived*, though not necessarily what the organisation actually is (Fassin & Beulens, 2011; Balmer, 2006).

However, Peter also discussed the hypothetical discussion of other brands going green, where he suggested that transparency and genuine relevance to an organisation's core operations could indeed sit comfortably with his future purchase intentions. A view offered by Pirsch et al. (2007) in that core, institutionally connected or affiliated messages convey a resilient loyalty and greater resonance for the consumer. However, this didn't resonate without caution for Maisie who, stemming from a farming

background, was not 100% convinced of MacDonald's UK supply chain marketing efforts' success.

With farming a significant part of Maisie's values and character she spoke with concern regarding the topic. And with MacDonald's having a tangible correlation to the industry it's evident that a feasible shared identity would benefit the fast food chain and purchase intention or loyalty; akin to the shared identity and cultural habitus of Consumer Culture Theory of Holt (2002). Maisie's perhaps cautious but neutral narrative befits some resemblance to Maignan and Ferrell's (2004) declaration of corporate benefit between the CSR 'positive' organisation and the 'pro-ethical' consumer, yet her enthusiasm is not evident in her tone of delivery. Whereas for Rosy (a vegetarian), MacDonald's clearly had a challenge.

Shared identity and brand affiliation *were* evident though, even when the brand in question had been associated with negligent CSR practices as per Laura's discussion of Apple's involvement with sweatshops. She reflected on a self-cynical perspective that correlates to her extrinsic identity, *'I think after so long the strength of people's brand loyalty to a certain brand won't differentiate that much, they'll still go back to that brand'* depicting the strength of her affiliation to Apple. This segues into Bertillson's (2015) Millennial research into consumer cynicism where he presented a tripartite listing:

- 1) Market cynicism - related to their perception of the central morality of brand values and/or corporate messages,
- 2) Peer cynicism - related to their perception of their own social group's morality and consumer choices, and
- 3) Self-cynicism - a direct reflexive disbelief in their own consumption habits and moral judgements.

With previous discussion acknowledging market cynicism #1, Laura befits Bertillson's self-cynicism #3 in questioning her own moral positioning in correlation to her corporate affinity. This is also aligned to Sloterdijk's (1987) *enlightened false consciousness* insofar that she 'believes' she has sufficient knowledge yet/and

continues to consume in morally questionable ways. With reflection and considering Bertillon's peer cynicism #2, during the interviews they were asked about how they considered their peers' social responsibility perspectives or priorities along with how they may identify anyone as being highly engaged with CnSR. With relevance, they were asked who they thought would buy the Coke Life product as an extrinsically green, 'everyday' consumer beverage; Daisy offered that people, '*are trying to be healthy.*' Her intonation with the word 'trying' suggested some scepticism where Alex was more forthright in her association of it having a contemporary, favourable connotation with Hannah and Kamile apportioning '*it's all about image*' and '*an image of being healthy*' respectively. This shares parity to Tsai (2005) along with Piacentini and Mailer, (2004) insofar of the positive correlation of a more favourable social image and/or affinity to peers. Going a little further, Rosy discussed her perception of students carrying tote bags saying that they were feasibly perceived as pro-environmental but readily questioned that it was the practicality of the product rather than the sentiment behind it.

Her cynicism as to their purpose could be considered questionable; it is a bag after all and the practical nature of being a suitable size for transporting academic files would be perfectly reasonable. Her intention could be that she suspects they may have other apparel and only use the tote bag for this purpose, being perceived as environmentally conscious and a desired CnSR image (Solomon & Schopler, 1982).

5.5.4 Resentment and social pressure

Peter explained what he thought about Toyota hybrid cars and their consumers' motivations, particularly his view of the popularity amongst celebrities, '*more for the celebrity's image than it is for saving the planet... I don't really trust it!*' His distrust could be construed to have an air of resentment, jealousy or maybe factored by a dislike of the celebrity he has in mind, this was unclear, yet resentment in particular was evident by others. With a dual inference, there was resentment that some felt pressure to comply or do more (a 'moral reproach' that can infer behavioural change as per Monin (2007 p60), along with resentment to the voice in question (i.e. Pomeroy & Johnson 2009, and Skarmeas & Leonidou 2013). With further support of Bertillon's

#1, market cynicism, Maisie and Laura clarified her perspective that the emphasis was on consumers when the corporations had the power, with Laura adding resentment in that she felt societal pressure to adhere. With subtleties of defensiveness to her tone, Laura depicted most clearly what others alluded to; not solely in their actual rhetoric but also through body language and self-questioning authenticity or justification as to their behaviour, questioning their duty or culpability (Dean et al., 2010). Furthermore, what this could be construed to reflect is essentially their motivation to behave or consume (perceiving a social norm responsibility) is fundamentally guided by their value priorities or *perceived personal importance* (Laroche et al, 2001) regarding the issue.

5.5.5 Distrust (and some positivity)

The academic discourse with recognised reliability pertaining to Schwartz' *self-transcendent* classification being strongly associated with pro-environmental behaviour (Schwartz, Sagiv and Boehnke, 2000) is somewhat lacking from the quotations thus far. However, as applicable and with transparency; when the hypothetical situation of the participants' favourite brand increasing their environmental / CSR operations, product and delivery, they offered a range of insights as previously highlighted. Acknowledging the suppositious nature to the proposal it is appreciated that their comments should be considered with caution of authenticity as to how they would actually react (the well discussed attitude-behaviour debates of Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Padel & Foster, 2005; Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Chan, 1999; Guagnano, Stern & Dietz, 1995; Maio & Olson, 1994; Newhouse, 1990; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), yet still worthy of reflection and discussion. The purpose of exploring this enquiry was (in part) the notion of shared identity by connecting the proposal to a brand that they had expressed affinity to and supporting the research aim and objectives #3 and #4. Akin to the commitment or trust elements of Relationship Marketing Theory raised by Morgan and Hunt (1994) and also how the shared identity connotation that befits the notion of 'partners' rather than an 'us and them' relationship. 5.5.5.1 and 5.5.5.2 offer two perspectives whilst exploring this narrative.

5.5.5.1 Attitude-behaviour considerations

Adam offered positivity to the hypothetical brand advances in CSR *'it would be (a) good move'* although with the caveat of adding some concern over the brand image continuity that he clearly values (the desired affinity of Caplan, (2005)). Maisie was also positive, although admittedly not actually suggesting that it would increase her patronage questioning Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006. p154) in that *'values driven, egoistic, and strategic attributions'* mediate *'the relationship between fit and purchase intent'* of an individual.

Although Maisie clearly required some further substantiation, perhaps inferring a modicum of scepticism before she is entirely convinced that it is inherent to the organisation (Ellen et al., 2006). With authors such as Ahearne et al. (2005, p577) who claim *'(T)he stronger the C-C [consumer – company] identification, the stronger the customer's exhibition of in-role behaviors supportive of the company'* (similarly by Marin & Ruiz (2006)) some participants offered support. HanNah saw it as a win-win situation pertaining to her value priority coupled with an ease in decision-making that also rewards her in fulfilling a desire to do more. Although others were less than committal, Annie's perception was that it would be good creating interest as to what the new products may be before adding *'it literally wouldn't change my opinion'*.

Whereas conversely, any negative corporate associations appeared to have more of an impact, with direct relevance to many authors, specifically Stern (2009) and Jones et al. (2009), i.e. Annie's hypothetical rebuttal of Primark due to their supply chain discrepancies. It was unclear as to how much unethical practice a business would need to be associated with for Annie to fully walk away. Although not directly correlated to Bhattacharya and Elsbach's (2002) proposal of *disidentification* Annie did allude to distancing; as per Bhattacharya and Elsbach's definition as a *'cognitive separation between a person's identity and his or her perception of the identity of an organisation'* (2002, p28). This feasibly displays a disproportionate alignment of Primark's CSR values to Annie's CnSR, verbally if not actually.

Emma was similarly neutral or uncommitted to any significant positivity with such a CSR transition, she reflected *'I'd probably like kind of go like 'well done Starbucks''* yet adding *'I don't think it would change me'*.

Mollie too appreciated the morality shift of such a drastic organisational change but is openly self-cynical in that it wouldn't impact on her consumption choices either '*I think obviously it's a good thing...but it probably wouldn't change my opinion*'; all examples clearly challenging the Forbes (2018) and Nielsen (2015) headlines to the contrary.

The consequentialist discussions relating to consumer (in)congruent CSR communications from authors such as Barnett et al. (2005) and particularly the shared value proposals of Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) found resonance with those of an aspirational CnSR propensity. Alex spoke with inference of extra patronage '*I can see that they are conscious of what they are doing and I think it would only encourage me to go to them even more.*' Whilst Davina considers with some hesitation as to what effects it would have on her own attitude to social responsibility; '*Um probably would encourage me more to err*' with similar narrative from Daisie. Conversely, Haslam (2004) raised that if group membership or affiliation is not apparent to the consumer then communication can be considered coercive or manipulative, extended to insinuating a negatively interpreted asymmetric power relationship. This found resonance with Peter who wanted to support such an initiative yet sceptical to what their motive is and requiring convincing.

Displaying some business knowledge, he also stated the change should be inherent to the company (as per the centrality of Balmer's *corporate identity*, (2006)).

Acknowledging that the participants were all students within a business school, their studies / degree courses were varied, most were not purely business specific. Overall, Ross wasn't as knowledgeable to business attributes as Peter and his initial reaction to the proposal was '*maybe they didn't want to make as much money*'. He added that he wasn't concerned about the product or service on offer after any 'change', with humour in his facial gestures, it was the brand's financial ramifications that prevailed in his narrative. This was a view echoed by Sam who was equally as preoccupied with the business perspective, '*Yeah Green's nice but it's costly*' evidently still supporting the perceived price premium association (e.g. Öberseder et al., (2011)).

5.5.5.2 Product attributes prevail

As Holt (2002) discussed, as a caveat to the shared identity and cultural habitus of Consumer Culture Theory, the heterogeneity of individuals infers they make decisions

within their own sphere of purchasing, feasibly influenced by personal / contextual reasoning and perceived personal importance (Laroche et al., 2001). Adding that this happens consciously or otherwise, Holt was inferring the vulnerability of the brand affinity strength and association. Moreover, where Mollie and Adam had previously disclosed, their concern was what would happen to the product they know, love, and have become accustomed to. Rosy shared her position on how the increased environmental approach could change how she sees global corporations' propensity for capitalism, however initially clarifying that the product attributes (of Coca-Cola) are paramount to her. Amongst others, Rosy's preconception was that pro-environmental products are inferior or more expensive, a view that was counter-argued by Davina who believed the product wouldn't change albeit with some mixed conviction in her rhetoric.

She further considered positively on how this would reflect on her own identity or image, *'if you were wearing that brand you'd be representing them beliefs as well'* a view echoed by David earlier (*'you feel better about having the brand'*). This was also alluded to by Lottie, however, she appeared indifferent and distanced herself from the discussion, whilst simultaneously considering how the new corporate image would reflect on her as a consumer adding further ambiguity to any generalisations. Therein, the pre-standing consumer affiliation to the quality of a brand's product offering was evident in this research yet not previously alluded to in the literature; whereas the 'fit' and positive identity association is (i.e. Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurău, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2006; Aaker, 1997).

5.5.6 Summary of Distrust

The Distrust section of this discussion has highlighted the 'Questionable motives', '21st century context', Image, identity & fit' and 'Resentment and social pressure' areas of data analysis. The Distrust (and some positivity) concluding discussion also presented 'Attitude-behaviour considerations' and the notion that 'Product attributes prevail' as two significant topics of relevance offering alternative viewpoints from the majority narrative.

This theme responds to the aim exploration and objectives #3 and #4 regarding organisational CSR efforts and Millennial narrative that could assist said efforts in the future. The *key issues* that were covered in 5.5.1 Questionable motives included the correlation of cynicism and/or moral disengagement to unethical decision making, where distrust was particularly relevant. With brand-consumer 'fit', previous CSR efforts and disidentification were also being discussed. 5.5.2 The 21st century context included incongruent and a proliferation of marketing communications and their reflection of previous CSR efforts adding to cynical discussion all contributing the research aim and objectives. Incongruence of marketing, previous CSR efforts, disidentification, 'fit' and affiliation featured in 5.5.3 Image, identity and 'fit'. Coupled with beneficial social image, brand or peer affiliation and external recognition as contributing debate. 5.5.4 Resentment and social pressure looked at the *key issues* of ethically superior 'others' and proposed that disidentification and moral disengagement were pertinent to the discussion. The alternate voices in 5.5.5 contributed to prevalent values and brand affiliation / 'fit' key issues in 5.5.5.1 Attitude-behaviour considerations. Whilst also proposing within the hypothetical pro-ethical brand development discussion regarding 'do they care?' their response was not particularly enthusiastic with overall indifference but proposing it would be a positive initiative. The final sub-heading 5.5.5.2 Product attributes prevail depicted the relevance of brand affiliation whilst debating the available finance and / or beneficial social image exploration.

Distrust was evidently widespread and could be considered engrained in these participants with their perspectives on various topics but with visible emphasis to CSR marketing efforts. Central to the principle of this theme, the questioning of brands, corporations, the media, government or social norms was endemic from the participants for all manner of ethical or pro-environmental rhetoric. With acceptance that they were undergraduate university students where 'questioning' is inherent to their education, not once was a CSR or CnSR related university anecdote raised. Their context was relevant insofar that the external environment was reflected upon, Erikson's life-stage crises (1963) impacting on their view of the world they were part of – but perhaps, distanced themselves from. With the majority of individualistic attributes alluded to, resentment of this external world and the predicament they

consider to be situated within, interestingly highlighted their focus on self-enhancement or their peer affiliated identity, as opposed to self-preservation or self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943) through 'making the world a better place'.

When Press and Arnould (2011, p663) proposed whether indeed a CSR initiative is actually '*worth it*' with its own connotations of cynicism, the final quote was from Davina. During each interview they were asked their opinions on a selection of brands, culminating in asking them to rank them on environmental reputation; akin to the RepTrak annual ranking. RepTrak is presented by the Reputation Institute and their proposition is that they are '*the gold standard in reputation measurement and management, providing a specialized measurement of how the stakeholders — the general public, investors, employees — perceive major brands.*' (Reputation Institute, 2018). So, when Davina was asked to rank the brands that had been discussed she responded; '*And they've not paid to be put up on this list?*'

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored how the generation affiliated to the term 'Millennials' perceives personal and corporate social responsibility as a value priority in their lives. The aim of the research was to offer insight that will benefit both further research and professional practice, true to the DBA ethos. This chapter offers an overview of how this was approached, researched, and conclusions made that will benefit the reader as a concise synopsis of the thesis.

Previously, the respective chapters have summarised the key points and herein these are assimilated in a coherent manner to appreciate the project throughout its journey.

This chapter will follow the steps taken and then offer conclusions to its findings, followed by considerations for further academic inquiry, policy consideration and feasible industry application. Recommendations are made that are the most significant output from this research that intends to influence future exploration into both communication to this demographic and adolescent Millennial perceptions of social responsibility.

The research limitations are stated along with discussion regarding the authenticity or generalisation of the results. And finally, personal reflections are disclosed to complete the thesis.

6.2 The research problem, purpose and how it was addressed

'An exploration of Millennial perceptions and value priority of CSR and CnSR'

What this research held foremost was to investigate how future, professional adults considered prosocial or ethically conscious behaviour to be relevant in their lives. This was to explore their perceptions and account of how they behaved and consumed along with how they considered global brands' CSR efforts. The purpose being that in the UK and beyond, there has been a sizeable cultural shift towards environmental and ethical concern over the past 20 years emanating from multiple sources; politicians to

pop stars, campaigners to corporations. As someone who has worked with the 18-25 year old demographic for over 20 years, it was becoming evident that the Millennials I had been encountering (the previous 10 years within a university Business School) were contrary to what I was reading about them (i.e. see Deal et al., 2010; Deloitte 2017). Moreover, rhetoric pertaining to them being conscious of such topics and it being prevalent to their decision making and behaviour did not sit comfortably to my own everyday experiences with those around me. The connotations therein, suggested that any 'taken for granted' assumptions about this demographic that impacted on business cultural change and/or marketing narrative was misrepresentative from a more complex reality. For example, businesses that believed investing resources in becoming more ethically responsible with the intention of connecting to this age group or organisations that considered emphasising their CSR efforts to appeal to their emotions through marketing channels would need to do more research into the prosocial value priorities of this generation.

The aim has been to explore through narrative how this age group placed socially responsible behaviour and personal consumption as a priority value in their everyday lives (or not). Furthermore, the interviews discussed globally recognised brands that they each had an opinion on. The conversations were broad and culminated in what the individuals knew or felt about the brands CSR reputation; responses were predictably varied with a selection of knowledge, advocacy or indeed, contempt. Through discussion points relating to their actual behaviour (consumption or otherwise), self-reflection was encouraged to see how they consider their actions including the reasoning as to why they did it. This (on the whole) revealed their previously unconsidered perspectives relating to their actions and furthermore exposed how significant it was to them or their motives for such behaviour.

6.3 A brief summary of what has been covered in this thesis

This thesis has attempted to provide the reader with a complete, transparent overview of the research process in the exploration of the volunteers' views on the topic. The Introduction (1.0) offers an overview of the research, including the focus and parameters that were determined from the outset. The context (1.1 and 1.2) is

explained along with the aims (1.4) and objectives (1.5) that determine this research.

The objectives being;

1. To locate both literal and 'non-literal' narrative from the Millennial participants that could illustrate their *consumer social responsibility* (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority.
2. To explore the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set that potentially assists further research relating to the topics.
3. To explore narrative from the participants that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation.
4. To evaluate the participants' social responsibility narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic.

The Literature Review (2.0) covers the relevant topics of; CSR, marketing of CSR, ethical consumption, the Millennial demographic and the study of values. What culminated from this review was that the demographic was represented with conflicting prosocial attributes from various sources and initial experience of them being more complex was confirmed. Similarly, academic discussion regarding CSR and the marketing of CSR lacked specificity in relating to this age group, especially from the consumer perspective (a gap this research intends to contribute to) - this was also relevant to ethical consumption and behaviour in general. The values discussion offered relevance; including insight and reference points to assist the understanding of individual motives and drivers when considering ethical decision making. Each of the section summaries review, and present *key issues* as gaps in knowledge or areas for further or specific study to guide the exploration within this research – these *key issues* are in turn, accumulated in the chapter summary (2.5).

The Methodology (3.0) chapter explains my personal perspective of reality and knowledge along with explaining to the reader the methods that best fit this research. Pursuing the interpretivist domain, it explains how interviews were used (guided by both the aim and the key issues from the literature) followed by analysis of the transcribed narrative with coding/theming offering scope for interpretation and discussion. The data analysis (4.0) highlighted that beyond the value priority topic, 3

significant themes emerged: Convenience and Indifference, Self-reasoning and Justification, Distrust.

The Discussion (5.0) follows and reconsiders the earlier literature dialogue (2.0) with the premise of contextualising the new research findings alongside existing, accepted published writings. Clarity as to how each section discussion supports the aim, objectives and *key issues* is presented and referred to throughout.

And finally, the Conclusion (6.0), this conclusion that intends to offer the reader an overview and synopsis of the DBA research journey in its final stages, highlighting key findings and the contribution to knowledge and practice.

6.4 The research conclusions

The data analysis (4.0) within this research has highlighted three themes relating to the participating Millennials' narrative, that further assists exploration of their value priority and their approach to CSR and CnSR to meet the research objectives:

- Convenience and Indifference
- Self-reasoning and Justification
- Distrust

The caveat to the following conclusions and synopsis is that they are specific to the participants of this research and at the time the interviews took place:

1. Most of the Millennial participants had a low value priority to CSR & CnSR

2. These full-time undergraduate Millennials' CnSR value priorities appear susceptible to their life-stage, possibly still in formation as external identity is currently the significant antecedent and value priority

3. For these Millennial participants, empathy is likely to be more 'locally' focused such as UK animal welfare rather than international (human) labour or socio-economic conditions

4. The Millennial participants demonstrated a degree of cynicism / scepticism to CSR & CnSR exacerbated by what they see as constantly changing corporate or societal rhetoric, that is sometimes contradictory, or hypocritical

5. Organisational strategy to improve CSR reputation may gain some respect with these participating Millennials, but new or increased patronage is not necessarily likely

6. The Millennial participants' views on preferred CSR marketing communication are conflicting and there is no census of opinion. However, Distrust in 'powerful global brands' is a significant issue.

6.4.1 (1) Most of the Millennial participants had a low value priority to CSR & CnSR

As the central tenet to this research (objective 1) the data concluded that for these participants the concept of social responsibility (personal and corporate) was not significant to their priorities. Befitting Devinney et al.'s (2010) 'myth of the ethical consumer' they explained how little this impacted on their thoughts and actions against the common perception portrayed in previous findings. Explorations portrayed the deontological insignificance and furthermore the consequence of their inaction was minimal i.e. HanNah's '*we understand why it's a good thing but...*' where the 'but' symbolises the self-reasoning or justification. In addition, this contrasts to Harrison et al. (2005) who claimed that consumers (to varying levels) are aware of the consequential nature to their purchasing. These participants offered apparently empathetic quotes relating to child labour and suicide nets, yet these were not deemed sufficient to alter their habits and patronage. With appreciation of the conversation context (1-2-1 dialogue) this also looks to challenge Harrison et al. (2005) to some degree, whose belief that their impact of the external world's social norms does dictate behaviour choice. Mollie added, '*I don't think like our generation really thinks about it very much at all, well I don't personally, and like my friends I know, they don't either*' a reflection of a bigger picture, echoed by others.

The participants offered a multitude of discussion points displaying indifference with key factors including (in)convenience, self-reasoning and perceptions of an external locus of control (i.e. Forte (2004)). Additionally, their social environment was pertinent

including the role of their earlier home life and the significance of their parents' influence. For example Kamile considers, *'when you're young, you don't really care; but then again, your parents buy you clothes when you are small, so yeah it depends on them on how they save the planet so...'* and Mollie supports, *'it really does depends on how you've been bought up, towards it ... it's a lot about how, I suppose about how your parents are'*. This can be read to support Maio and Olson (1998) who proposed that our values are 'cultured' by our social environment and significant others. Although with acknowledgement of heterogeneity, as Lottie and others digressed it didn't always transcend into a value driven behaviour whilst away from home at university i.e. recycling efforts in their accommodation.

6.4.2 (2) These full-time undergraduate Millennials' CnSR value priorities appear susceptible to their life-stage, possibly still in formation as external identity is currently the significant antecedent and value priority

Accepting that this isn't a longitudinal study, the participants offered many points of reference that suggested a transitional period to their lives with references to 'at the moment' or 'that's what I think right now' along with the narrative 'maybe when I'm older'. In support of objective 2, the conversations highlighted that these university students were living through late adolescence where their internalised values and beliefs were unclear or undefined regarding many aspects. This was arguably reasoned with the transient nature of their temporary accommodation, social circles and perception of their as yet, undefined role in society. As an example, in continuation from Lottie's comments above regarding university accommodation it was inferred that this independence was an exploration or test of their ethical conscience or rebellion whilst finding their own identity. Having recounted home-life social norms including recycling and negating waste / energy usage, significantly, they didn't automatically bring these behaviours into their student lifestyles.

As Erikson depicted in 1963 there is conflict between their psychological needs vs. those of society and it appears, they aren't yet settled into adult life. Student finances were also a determining issue when justifying or reasoning their purchase choices, pro-ethical or otherwise (alluded to by Lodes, 2010); along with an approach to behavioural aspects being driven by apathy, external influence or pre-determined habit.

However, enthusiasm was projected by those who proudly identified to be vegetarian in claiming such a socially accepted classification. This could be attributed to what Stryker (1980) and Turner et al. (1987) propose as inherent to how these individuals self-classify their identity in objectifying this life choice, at this time in their lives. Furthermore, the interview conversations allowed them to reflect on externalising how this classification was perceived by someone else as their narrative materialised. This could be in support of Hardy's (2006) belief that when values are pivotal to an individual's self-identity there extends a sense of responsibility to act coherently and behave appropriately.

However, as was regular amongst all participants, their inability to offer any details of CSR misdemeanours or tragedies (e.g. gas explosions or suicide nets) supposes an element of external identity duplicity or 'lip-service', perhaps derived from a lack of awareness. Supporting this, Alex distanced herself from her peers, *'nobody seems to care about what's going on politics wise or globally or they're more bothered about what Kylie Jenner's doing with her lips this week that's all I tend to see on like my Facebook feed'*. Yet, HanNah's spoke of her peers; *'Well we're a mouthy group, our generation'* and added *'we're not very quiet when we want things to change'*. A proposition that they were outspoken and perhaps in reference to social media usage, however a contradiction in that this was rarely ratified, *'a lot of them are very, very lazy and don't do anything'*. In what could be considered supporting an identity or image as motivation, the vocal, 'mouthy' attribute particularly relevant to the visual longevity and extrinsic portrayal via social media.

Alex's comments support Laroche et al. (2001) who proposed the perceived personal importance of ethical issues relates to the priority the individual places upon it when considering their own role in society. Unmistakeably subjective and contextual, such moral framing appears to be constantly evaluated when identity decisions conflict. This was evident with the data offering examples such as brand affiliation, fashion or peer/media/celebrity influence; previously raised by Crane and Matton (2010). Moreover, Westerman et al. (2012) offered that any self-identity fixation could suggest narcissistic or self-obsessed tendencies, that inferred the 'generation me' connotation (Greenberg & Weber, 2008) as a priority. In-turn this proposes that chosen priorities are perpetuated for a more favourable social image and/or affinity to peers (e.g.

supported by Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Tsai, 2005). Therein, it is suggested that traits such as convenience and self-reasoning are characteristics evident to the vegetarian classification in externalising a social responsibility identity. Holbrook's (1999) consumption values of *status* and *conformity* are also evident here with peer group advocacy. And with pertinence, believed to be strongly influenced by the individual's ego (Lueg and Finney, 2007; Parment, 2013) – 'generation me' pertaining to their current, life-stage value priority.

The egoistic (Schultz, 2005) proposition is arguably not a favourable attribute for this cohort and the negative associated behaviours (Schultz & Zelezny, 1998). Whereas, superficially, it could be suggested that the animal welfare advocates indicate empathy; reinforcing or with debate over identity prevalence, questioning previous conclusions (see Schultz & Zelezny, 1998; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002; De Groot & Steg, 2010). Those that vocally supported animal rights (Annie, Laura and Rosy), offered brands that have high profiles for their ethical values. This supports Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) shared value correlation and significantly beneficial for advocacy and purchase. Speaking with pride, they portrayed that their affiliation to the brands reflected well on them advocating beneficial social identity by association. This having relevance to Tressider and Hirst (2012, p109) with their account that 'consumption identifies to the rest of the world the type of person we are and identifies the groups, class or tribe we belong to', again inferring image and self-identity as important influences for these Millennials. Furthermore, narrative distancing from negative attributed brands and allegiance to positive associated ones illustrates the symbolic meanings (suggested by Holt & Schor, 2000, in Brisman, 2009) and 'capital' (Holt, 1998 and Thompson & Arsel, 2004). This inference to status symbols is perhaps unrevelatory, yet how the positive or negative association of such brands reflects the individual's 'CnSR identity' is, supporting the research aim and objectives.

In summary, the overall indifference and lack of empathy is incongruent to Eisenberg's (1986) belief that prosocial moral reasoning manifests during adolescence. Although not unanimous amongst the participants, the observation was that more distant events were unimportant, and concern was minimal. As Eisenberg (1986), Batson (1998) then Hoffman (2000) suggested, affectual cognition of moral principles is only superficial, it requires the catalyst of the individual's emotion for action or change in

perception to manifest. In-turn this proposes that these Millennials are perhaps too young to have experienced the emotion first-hand; at this life-stage and transient development.

6.4.3 (3) For these Millennial participants, empathy is likely to be more 'locally' focused such as UK animal welfare rather than international (human) labour or socio-economic conditions

With contribution to objectives 1 and 2, and continuation from the previous discussion, the *distance* of ethical issues (e.g. child labour and suicide nets) was considered as a factor to their reasoning in negating pro-action against such related brands. In contrast, for those that professed to supporting animal welfare their advocacy of brands that *fit* (Lee et al., 2011) and are deemed congruent to their values, the data found adherence to Low and Lamb Jr (2000) (see also Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) who describe the benefits to social capital that this can bring. From the brand perspective, this highlights correlation to Lazarevic's (2012, p52) *brand-consumer loyalty model* insofar as a brand supporting social causes being significantly important or relevant to those whose values align. With inference of cynicism, Brisman (2009, p5) offered '*concern for environmental protection is a subterfuge for the pursuit of self-interest*' connecting pro-social image to peer advocacy or influence within the demographic. The role of their peers or respected others was acknowledged and is significant (as offered by Beckmann (2007)) with no strong narrative to support that any of the participants were prepared to take the lead or initiative. Furthermore, the conclusions propose that the animal welfare connotations play a clear role with image and identity; reflecting how such internal values are externalised when being seen to adhere.

However, their rhetoric offered transparency regarding the lack of *human* empathy on purchasing decisions, Laura states; '*You can say as much as you want about sweatshops and suicide nets but you're not in that situation, you're not in that sweatshop or that suicide net, you don't know what that's like. For you it's just about the best quality at the best price*'. Her tone depicting a collective perspective it offers correlation to Hoffman's (1987) proposal that a lack of consideration (regarding empathy) involves the individual's cognitive process of moral disengagement that in-

turn pertains to unethical behaviour. The relevance here being that the examples offered by Laura were geographically removed from her reality, the animal welfare narratives portrayed rabbits (animal testing) or cows, chickens and pigs (vegetarianism) – animals familiar to a UK resident. This correlates to Thøgersen and Grunert-Beckman (1997) who suggested that if a pertinent value is salient, an individual is more likely to engage, act or 'care' or Schwartz's (2016) discussion that values require activating before having influence. In cross-reference back to the necessity of moral principles requiring emotional activation (Eisenberg, 1986; Batson, 1998, and Hoffman, 2000) the immediacy or context of familiar animal concern supports this conclusion.

Thus, a stronger connection between the empathetic concerns of (relatable) animals over (distant) humans was evident to the behaviour of these participants; an observation that has previously been alluded to but not particularly focussed upon (e.g. Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Eisenberg et al., 2004; Batson, 2011).

6.4.4 (4) The Millennial participants demonstrated a degree of cynicism / scepticism to CSR & CnSR exacerbated by what they see as constantly changing corporate or societal rhetoric, that is sometimes contradictory, or hypocritical

The indifference or apathy discussions adhere to Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) insofar as questioning their awareness of CSR implementation. Similarly, for those who are cognizant, there is resonance to both Berry and McEachern (2005) and Beck (1999) that they display confusion or even suffer from changing or perceived contradictory rhetoric from *specialist* sources. Responding to objectives 2, 3 and 4, a relation to cynicism and scepticism was inferred that the rapid proliferation of updated or contravening information that was readily available to them, fostered a separation of cognitive approval; feasibly derived as a coping mechanism in comprehending something they struggled to accept as the 'truth'. This is clearly troublesome for communications relating to the belief that transparency is good (i.e. Pomeroy, 2009; Vaccaro, 2010) negated somewhat by the request of the *little and often* approach supported by Maon et al. (2009).

Deloitte (2017, pg14) recently claimed they felt accountability towards the world's challenges whilst harbouring minimal influence, this research added an alternate

perspective in that *resentment* of these feelings was evident, sceptically questioning their elder's accountability for society's misgivings. This furthermore suggested a perspective of condescending and hypocritical delivery of pertinent communications, provoking strong emotions that suggested disengagement.

The relevance of this is that although they are generally open to discussion and opinion on CSR & CnSR topics, they will inevitably be unprepared to act upon or accept responsibility to proactive messages with any immediacy. With specificity to the individual this is mostly likely to be due to scepticism or indifference. This could be in part a result of what Erikson (1963) referred to regarding this life-stage where they encounter 'crises' of a psychosocial nature, with conflict of external events and sense-making their own values in context to those of societal norms. Moreover, with support from Beckmann's (2007) and Shauki (2011) who stated that politics and external events impacted on consumer behaviour and individual sense-making, this generation has witnessed the proliferation of globalisation, technological ubiquity, and high-profile political events such as the global economic recession, Trump administration and Brexit scenario. The significance of these unavoidable occurrences infers 'defining moments' (Meredith & Schewe, 1994; Ryder, 1965) and their social awareness (do Paço et al., 2013; Ng et al., 2010) feasibly 'character building'; although as yet undecidedly good or bad.

Coupled with the resentment of their elders, the arbitrators and those perceived as responsible for the situation, the resulting defensiveness and consideration to offset responsibility was inferred, e.g. Alex, *'there are the ups and downs of this generation and I do think that comes from this situation that the last generation put us in.'*

Daisie raised her thoughts on corporations and states how her cynicism or scepticism is widespread, inferring the efforts she makes to side-step this;

I don't think any of them, any of the big brands are completely transparent you see, you can't really trust any of them more than others I'd say... coz you think 'why should I trust you?' - I try to do everything from independent or smaller cases, like and with banks and stuff I think they're all just as guilty as each other.

Furthermore, for some the cynicism or scepticism emulates from marketing exuberance or their perception of what they may consider excessive communications. As Chylinski and Chu (2010, p799) described *'a process of related cognitive,*

behavioural, and affective reactions expressed by initial suspicion, defensive attempts, and eventual alienation of the consumer' (see also Vice, 2011) this feasibly transpires into 'disidentification' (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004) from the organisation. Emma infers greenwashing and illustrates with energy in her delivery;

...sometimes though you kinda get a bit sort of 'stop banging on, we've heard it do you know what I mean? You only have to tell us once and then we've got it so I think if it is overkill you kinda get a bit right oh so, what else are you trying to hide.

Responding to objective 4, problematic then for marketers especially when Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri's (2010) suggested that the more environmentally aware individual's cognitive ability is less likely to absorb an institution's CSR offering as being transparent. Both Lottie and HanNah placed themselves low on how pro-ethical they considered themselves to be and still offered scepticism to marketing transparency. Suggesting that Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri's proposal is not only those who are 'more aware' and persuasive transparency is more widely an issue. Furthermore, the concept of brand repositioning (to be more ethically minded) can be considered uncertain where some consumers may be harder to convince (as implied by Holt, 2002). And with additional significance, this questions Thompson's (2004) 'powerful tool' of marketing communication that can 'create' a desire to ethically consume is questionable.

The antecedent or catalyst to this for these participants appears to relate to Quinby's (1999) 'technoculture'. Quinby's foresight and prediction that an abundance of contradictory information would be, and has proved to be evident, has left them confused and uncertain as who or what to accept as truth (Bertilsson, 2015). This also supports Beck (1999) and the individual's comprehension of changing rhetoric, contrasting and contradictory that is a significant facilitator of cynicism and scepticism.

6.4.5 (5) Organisational strategy to improve CSR reputation may gain some respect by these participating Millennials, but new or increased patronage is not necessarily likely. Within the value priority discussion exploring their views on CSR, alluding to *the key issue* of 'do they care?', the research proposes a response to Press and Arnould (2011, p663) who suggested whether CSR initiatives are actually '*worth it*'. Industry or societal

perspectives announcing that Millennials shift brand allegiance regarding CSR association (i.e. CSR Wire, 2010; Nielsen, 2015) was not supported by any data within this research, contributing to objectives 3 and 4. Approached from a hypothetical 'positive' perspective, the participants were asked how they'd feel about a favoured brand of theirs improving their green or ethical business practice (as 5.3.6). They were generally nonchalant as HanNah offered, *'Well that would be great, because, I wouldn't have to actively do anything...'* the inference suggesting the convenience trait once again. However, Kamile offered a different perspective querying the reasons for going green and demonstrating apathy due to mistrust;

...and I would look and say maybe OK, it's really green, why would it become such a green thing? um you know? Maybe 'well done, its super good' but what are the reasons? So maybe if I would have that relationship I would be interested, and I would like analyse why they did it, how they did it... Whereas now, I don't really care.

Peter whilst initially optimistic turns suspicious *'I think that would be a very positive step, I think so long as, again I get sceptical with it just being for the purposes for a marketing campaign'*. Expressing disengagement or disapproval, he continues that brand relevance is pertinent continuing that there are alternate corporate motives, *'I feel like that's more of a kind of, out of step, just, when an organisation's only responsibility is to make a profit'*.

This raises questions to any belief akin to the Chartered Institute of Marketing who stated that the CSR benefits to brands include customer loyalty, affiliation, authenticity and crucially, purchase (CIM, 2008, supported by Neilson, 2008 & Liu & Zhou, 2009). Additionally, the *attitudinal loyalty* brands strive to create for (particularly younger) consumer allegiance that perpetuates longitudinal purchase regardless of either price or availability concerns (Bandyopadhyay and Martell, 2007) is questionable. Current practice therefore would be unlikely to generate further customers unless the way CSR was marketed was modified in appreciation of the cynicism and mistrust it generates. Further concerns relate to affinity of brand identity in any corporate CSR shift as Adam explained;

I think it would be something the public would like as long as they keep their core image they have branded over the years like someone could recognise Converse pumps from a distance they need to do even though they will be changing the product and the materials used to make it more environmentally

friendly they need to keep the image of the product similar in order to sustain a respect for the image with the loyal customers who buy the products that they like the design of.

Acknowledging there was an anomaly, Alex was positive to the concept and suggests that information transparency is significant to the congruence of acceptance (see Tench & Jones, 2015 and Palfrey & Gasser, 2008) she also suggested that a price premium is acceptable;

I would be able to see what they were doing and the good that they were doing, so I think an increase in price wouldn't bother me for what they were doing with their products and how they were producing them and treating their staff – it would be something that would, probably would make me go for them a bit more

Although it is evident Alex defers from the definitive to the probable as she reflects on her rhetoric at the end. This bares significance to the positive brand association > self-identity or perceived 'fit' (Lazarevic, 2012) it would create. Lottie concurs albeit with indifference, *'I don't think it would make a mass difference, but I don't think it would do them any harm so it's sort by association, you'd feel good using it, but it wouldn't make me think 'I'm definitely gonna stay with them because of that''*. Rosy again suggests indifference, outlining her more significant priorities, *'it wouldn't change whether I bought their products or not, the only thing that would change that is whether it tasted as good, coz if it didn't I, I'd just not buy it'* suggesting a preconception of 'green' products being inferior to the original incarnation. And Annie too suggests that curiosity of new product development would be the appeal;

...probably in a good way, I wouldn't shop there more but I wouldn't shop there less. I'd probably go there and see what their new range was, but I don't think it would make me change

6.4.6 (6) The Millennial participants' views on preferred CSR marketing communication are conflicting and there is no census of opinion. Distrust in 'powerful global brands' is a significant issue

Responding to objective 4 and with implications for corporate strategy, observations were made. Linking to previous discussion, perceived *power* of both global corporations and their marketing (Caruana & Crane, 2008) was an issue. And furthermore, the concept of Morgan and Hunt's (1994) relationship marketing theory,

'partners' in the exchange process was met with hesitation, arguably in the light of recent data handling exposés - especially within the realm of Millennial favoured social media channels (e.g. Paulin et al, 2014; Hanna et al, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2008). As Hume (2010) recommended in regard to CSR communications to this audience, the prerequisite is to appeal to their 'self-interest' and to be 'convenient'; two areas that comply with the characteristics of those interviewed and social media usage. Yet, where communications were deemed unaligned to the individual or group, narrative could be interpreted as a manipulative or a coercive disproportionate power relationship (as suggested by Haslam, 2004), the antithesis of partnership building. Indeed, defensiveness in questioning such relationship perceptions has reinforced further consumer antecedents supporting scepticism rather than a favoured *critical friend* (i.e. see Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013; Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009; and Soper, 2007).

The data presented a selection of global brand insights that were associated with unfavourable CSR association i.e. Kamile, *'I'm not really fond of big corporations like Coca-Cola, Nestle, Starbucks um I would prefer to go to a local'*. Whilst Peter inferred a desire to improve his own CnSR, *'I want to buy more responsibly, um in terms of trainers I think I'm trying to avoid Nike more - Coz they've got a bit of a bad reputation'* basing this anecdote on negative brand association, other brand mentions included Apple ('tax scandal' by Daisie / 'personal data' from Peter again) and MacDonald's ('don't trust them' from Lottie). Accepting these as examples, they were often 'light on detail' in their delivery and the relevance here is the communication efficacy.

However, the findings acknowledge that participants *could* recall a couple of specific socially responsible campaigns e.g. MacDonald's and Coca-Cola. Nevertheless, it was interesting that most struggled to affiliate any CSR related information for a list of other global brands presented to them (Appendix 8). Where Rolland and Bazzoni (2009 p259) identified a 'strategic necessity' for organisational transparency and consumer reassurance to be available online, these participants were evidently unaware. Where Du et al. (2010, p14) declared that this proliferated an informal yet credible medium the data suggests that perhaps an opportunity is being missed.

The applicability and context of social media and convenience of smart phone ubiquity appearing pivotal in contributing to their self-identity. Therefore, if the individual has

not chosen to be aware of such ethical issues (by selection of information feeds) their knowledge of such issues will be lessened. The connotation being, as Rallapalli et al. (1994) proposed, such knowledge is feasibly linked to the individual's behaviour; inferring an ethical disposition being an antecedent to related actions - or not. Scepticism features again with Lottie discussing MacDonald's, *'I think it's interesting because at the moment, ... like on the TV advert about how healthy and local and green it is, but I still don't buy it - coz I've seen the products before and I don't trust them.'* Without hesitation she states that their repeated efforts are not resonating with her and perhaps she feels a lack of sincerity to their communications, apparently linked to her brand preconceptions.

The research also offers a dichotomy to common perceptions relating to how Millennials are engaged with CSR and have a propensity to be vocal or active when there are apparent transgressions (e.g. Lauritzen & Perks, 2015; Nielsen, 2015; Cone, 2015; CIM, 2009; Bernhart, 2009; Noble et al. 2009). Appreciating this broadly accepted belief that is significantly pertinent to organisations, it questions why these participants weren't overtly representative. And as Castelló et al. (2013) proclaimed, the social media platforms that are omnipresent for this group *should* be a method of communicating with resonance for them, yet the findings of this study strongly suggesting that this just isn't happening. Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) proposed *'are consumers even AWARE of CSR implementation?'* thus it would suggest perhaps for some, yes, but only superficially and without significant behavioural change. Their insecurity of factual knowledge again bodes strongly pertinent to questioning the efficacy and how information is perhaps not reaching consumers convincingly.

With reference to Peter's earlier quote and others', the acceptance that *'cynicism towards multinational companies is based on a belief that a corporation cannot be altruistic without expecting a return on investment'* (Lee & Fernandez, 2009, p175) this research finds resonance. Moreover, it can also be concluded that proactive information regarding an organisation's CSR commitments does not necessarily reduce scepticism, as noted by Pomeroy (2009).

Resentment was also evident; some felt pressure to comply or do more (a 'moral reproach' that can infer behavioural change as per Monin (2007 p60), along with

resentment to the voice in question (i.e. Pomeroy & Johnson 2009, and Skarmeas & Leonidou 2013). In support Maisie offered;

I just think there's a lot of emphasis at the minute on individuals doing it when there are massive companies that could use their size for good when there's not a lot else that's so good about them being so big.

And Laura goes further;

And I know that they're multi-million pound companies, dollar companies whatever. But I think they're, what they do as companies for the environment, for ethics, they don't do enough. And to be honest, I think they're all about just making profit.

Thus, this resentment alludes to Haslam (2004) who proposed that if group membership or affiliation is not apparent to the individual then narrative can be considered coercive or manipulative, extended to insinuating a negatively interpreted asymmetric power relationship. The conclusion therefore proposes that brands, particularly global corporations, have significant considerations regarding their purpose or significance beyond their product or service offerings and communications when targeting Millennials. Demonstratable efforts, brand alignment and clear, resonating communications appear appropriate areas for efficacy to this cohort.

In review, objective 1 regarding *exploring Millennial narrative that could illustrate their consumer social responsibility (CnSR) behaviour, perspective and value priority* has been met through conclusion 1 in that most of the Millennial participants had a low value priority to CSR & CnSR.

Objective 2, *exploring the context and antecedents of the participants' social responsibility mind-set to assist further research* has been met with conclusions 2 in that their CnSR value priorities appear susceptible to their life-stage, possibly still in formation as external identity is currently the significant antecedent and value priority, conclusion 3, empathy is likely to be more 'locally' focused such as UK animal welfare rather than international (human) labour or socio-economic conditions, and conclusion 4, a degree of cynicism / scepticism to CSR & CnSR is exacerbated by what they see as constantly changing corporate or societal rhetoric.

Objective 3 *exploring narrative that could elucidate their opinions on organisational CSR efforts and/or reputation* was met again with conclusion 4 and conclusion 5, Organisational strategy to improve CSR reputation may gain some respect, but new or increased patronage is not necessarily likely.

Finally, objective 4, *evaluating narrative that could benefit CSR strategy and communication decisions that aim to resonate and/or create advocacy with the demographic* was met again with conclusion 5 and conclusion 6, The Millennial participants' views on preferred CSR marketing communication are conflicting and there is no census of opinion. However, Distrust in 'powerful global brands' is a significant issue.

6.5 Contribution to knowledge

A disclaimer that with the accepted limitations (6.9), the findings demonstrate that further research could consider alternate participants to explore relevance and comparison. However, the relevance of the findings within the boundaries of this research applies to both practice and theory with varying application and offer response to the purpose and beneficial outputs this research intended to achieve (1.6).

6.5.1 Practice

With pertinence to **marketing and CSR**, this research demonstrates the complexity of information transference to this cohort insofar that CSR as a USP is not automatically likely to transfer into patronage or advocacy for the Millennial generation (conclusion 5 and discussion 5.3.6). Combined with apathy or indifference for the majority, it is noted that existing product attributes or qualities prevail (5.5.5.2). Therefore, the significant, inherent organisational changes required to become more ethical would not necessarily be financially rewarding or resonate with this demographic. This additionally questions the accepted acknowledgment of marketing transparency (as proposed by authors such as Parguel et al, 2011 and Hildebrand et al, 2011) in that the research highlights this will not necessarily favour positive attributions for the majority displaying sceptical or cynical tendencies. Moreover, Vaccaro and Patino Echeverri's (2010) suggestion that the more environmentally aware individual is less likely to absorb an

institution's CSR offering as being transparent, this research expands with further implications that this also applies to those who are less aware. The findings offer that 'little and often' could be explored, perhaps with connotations to the proliferation of updated or contravening newsfeeds - so some repetition helps convince them and is less likely to confuse them. Most pertinently, as per Gurău (2012) and Lazarevic (2012) this research supports that communicating to Millennials as a homogenous group has the propensity to be ineffective and more segmentation is required to be effective.

With relevance to their life-stage development through adolescence, the participants attitude to the topics of CSR and CnSR varied from rejection (including feelings of pressure to adhere), to apathy and indifference, with the minority vocal, other than superficially on social media, or proactive to make a change.

This research finds no resonance to the findings of Millennial commentators i.e. Cone (2015) who claim that over 90% Millennials would switch brands to those representing a socially responsible cause. Similar discourse has also been perpetuated by academia and industry alike e.g. CIM, (2008); Neilson, (2008) and Liu & Zhou, (2009). The concept of organisations making significant changes to be *holistically green* or introducing ethical practices throughout is not to be taken as definitively positive. Admittedly some respect could be gained, it was noted herein that added patronage is unlikely by this generation at the moment, but they are transient and value priority can develop, perhaps as moral activation is experienced (Eisenberg, 1986; Batson, 1998, and Hoffman, 2000). Moreover, the product attributes are paramount as their current priority; be that physical, practical, financial or established brand image association. Convenience and visibility of any socially responsible initiatives, including clear, relevant internal communications, and the proximity of recycling facilities, may be significant for employers. If an organisation's strategic direction is to improve its ethical practises (i.e. CSR) and they employ a significant proportion of Millennials, then this research begins to offer insight as to how to gain their approval and advocacy.

6.5.2 Theory

There are socially responsible **behavioural** outputs from this research that should be considered for theoretical consideration regarding; behavioural economics,

consumer / ethical behaviour, tribes or social group advocacy etc. The significant impact of conflicting social and personal norms was evident with their behaviour (Stern & Oskamp, 1987); where guilt and pride were expressed with similar weightings in connection to social responsibility actions i.e. paper recycling on campus and perceived consequence (e.g. Fransson & Garling, 1999). Supported by discussion in sections 5.2.4 Individualism over collectivism, 5.4.3 Generation me / generation we, 5.4.5 Influence of others, and 5.5.3 Image, identity and 'fit'.

In regard to **values** theory this research attributes Forte's (2004) weighting regarding locus of control as a determining factor to these participants (also Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991), see 5.2.1 and 5.3.5, along with connotations suggesting a lack of empathy (5.2.2) that is significant to moral disengagement (Hoffman, 1987). Moreover, their primary individualistic and self-orientated disposition (Triandis, 1989) was evident with independence paramount to their characters with collectivism only apparent for close, in-group relationships. Overall, this research appreciates that although their values are acknowledged as relatively stable throughout their lifetime (see Rokeach and Schwartz), this research supports that they are not formed with sufficient influence until late adolescence (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) – conclusion 2 and 5.3.2 in discussion. The findings suggest that for most of those interviewed, this formation is still happening and is likely to be attributed to their life-stage situation although further (longitudinal style) research could explore this.

This also has connotations in relation to **marketing communication** theory. Their late-adolescent life-stage and identity formation has proposed that affinity aligned to brand communications is tentative regarding socially responsible topics. With social responsibility being low within their value priorities, externally perceived brand CSR advocacy is conflicting with personal identity; particularly status and esteem qualities (Holbrook, 1999) considering their peer groups' influence. Moreover, these 2 consumer motivations Holbrook (2006) latterly referred to as *social value* that arise when one's own consumption behaviour serves to influence the responses of others. Thus, this research finds that the *social value* of CSR advocacy is effectually vulnerable in respect of the individual's socially responsible value priority and identity concerns (as per 5.2.3 and 5.5.3). Additionally, the added

factor from some participants that pertains to an anti-global corporate rhetoric is relevant (5.5.1 and 5.5.2). Power, distrust and responsibility are serious considerations for marketers with cynicism and scepticism prevalent (supporting Bertilsson, (2015)) – conclusion 6.

Also, **methodological** significance, insofar that theoretical research regarding CSR or CnSR has already been suggested as vulnerable (Beckmann, 2007; Press & Arnould, 2011; Öberseder et al., 2011). The approach outlined in this thesis appears to have revealed multifaceted insights from the participants that have enabled a depth of understanding and sense-making that has pushed the boundaries of previous value related socially responsible research. From the recruitment and requirement to obtain the views of 'neutral' voices this research has facilitated an exploration to what could be considered the 'middle' perspective, rather than the spectrum ends of pro-environmentalists or self-proclaimed non-engagers. 'Everyday' (Millennial) consumers offered insight through *relaxed* conversation that was particularly conscious to not portray bias or judgement regarding the topic. This allowed and encouraged discourse to explore their thoughts, actions and beliefs; by reflecting on their upbringing, their peers and their relationships with brands, a holistic narrative was available for analysis and interpretation. To my knowledge this has not been achieved before, see chapter 3 Methodology for transparent discussion, reasoning and reflection.

In relation to **pedagogy** there are implications as to how undergraduate students absorb information with hesitance or distrust. Working at a University that encourages new thinking regarding teaching approaches it is apparent that more traditional theoretical understandings of pedagogy could or should be revisited. The participants strongly indicated that comprehension or acceptance of any given information is susceptible to them and perhaps further insight may illicit that alternative theories are required regarding pedagogic delivery. Sections 5.4.1 Generational separation and 5.5.2 The 21st century context support discussion of this.

6.6 What I know now that I did not know before...

Cynicism and scepticism are much more widespread and engrained than anticipated along with the role of their peers or significant others, rather than being innovators or early adopters as was initially understood. Clearly within the boundaries of this research these could be indicative, specific attributes to those that volunteered.

As mentioned, the initial indications that social responsibility wasn't as prevalent in their consciousness as academic or industry accounts had portrayed is now confirmed by the research findings. The literature offered awareness to *cash-point conservatism* (Devinney et al., 2010), the concept of the desire to purchase more ethically but negated at the point of purchase yet the data now considers this more of an excuse or justification than any genuine frustration. Suspected awareness of CSR related issues through their various media channels (e.g. Paulin et al, 2014 etc) and in-turn having a variety of opinions on them was not evidenced; what transpired was that many were oblivious or apathetic to the topic. However, there was evidence that they were interested and appeared knowledgeable to information that appealed (fashion, music, celebrity etc.), suggesting and supporting the impact of Millennial affiliated brands and influencers. Similarly, their approach to recycling was surprisingly affected by apathy and inconvenience. The simplistic conclusion drawn from this was that the topic of socially responsible consumption and behaviour was low on their value priority, as discussed in the Analysis (4.2) and Discussion (5.2) chapter sections.

The lack of human empathy was interesting, the distancing from unethical practices in Asia for example unlike the compassion discussed for animal mistreatment. In a society believed to be more globally connected they did not appear to be able to relate to those in faraway conditions, perhaps supporting Twenge et al. (2012) stating the demographics' lack of empathy for out-groups. Whereas some did appear to affiliate to being adamant against animal testing or consumption (i.e. vegetarianism) that perhaps was considered closer to their everyday reality. This was again an insight into their priorities; they were satisfying a moral judgement on the issue with a behavioural choice that suited them i.e. by buying from Lush or Body Shop. What was harder for them to adapt to, was cheap high-street fashion or smart phones, perhaps considered a necessity in adhering to peer social groups. Further investigation and research in

confirming some of these observations is clearly necessary but nevertheless, this new insight has altered my understanding of them.

6.7 Recommendations for further research

As per doctoral research conclusions it is hoped and intended that value is appreciated in the findings. Therein the disclosure offered from this data opens numerous opportunities for future academic or professional research. As a firm believer in the heterogeneity of human attributes it is appreciated that change is inevitable and as stated, the individuals who contributed are only a selection of their generation, and therein the same approach *could* be applied to non-students or students in different locations to look for any correlation of results. Similarly, Millennials at the older age of the acknowledged demographic could be cross referenced to see how those who have experienced more independence, are perceivably more self-reliant and are full-time employees in their twenties may respond.

Moreover, the outputs of this research suggest more could be explored as to how they make sense of these ever-changing and multifaceted information sources, supplied by a range of media streams. In extension of this and the work of (Quinby, 1999) there appears to be a social shift towards trust being an issue for this younger generation with the cultural implications as yet unknown. Furthermore, the role of *influencers* and in-turn social media channels as an omnipresent pastime for the majority of this group would be beneficial to both theory and industry.

From a pro-ethical values perspective, research that investigates how the evolutionary adolescent years affect the individual where they appear susceptible to influence and priority would be insightful. Whilst it is reasonably confident to say that they are aware of such issues from school and home life (predominantly), the role that it plays in their everyday lives *now*, is susceptible to image and peer pressure or social group advocacy. Further research could focus on the topic from any one of these perspectives to explore how these impact on consumption, behaviour change and/or attitude.

Marketing and sustainable business theory could extend this research from both a communications and strategy dimension. The role or purpose of CSR was debated in

the literature review (2.1) and with insight from the participants this could arguably require reconsidering when decisions orientated to this demographic are proposed. As per their responses, there are clearly some who are more CnSR inclined, especially where related to animal empathy, however the majority do not see the appeal at this stage in their life - the debate as to what age it may become more relevant is open for discussion. With targeted marketing available via social media platforms, organisations can tailor communications through targeted segmentation and therefore research into this adult life value formation would be beneficial as to avoid feasible disassociation or wasted resources / expenditure.

6.8 New knowledge this research offers

What this research has found in response to the aims and objectives is that;

- Socially responsible behaviour (CnSR) is understood with significant variance and as a group held low on their value priority at this stage in their life.
- Perceived barriers or excuse making for the lack of CnSR consideration or action is widespread.
- CSR knowledge across this demographic is negligible and any recollection of information is sporadic and uncommitted as fact.
- CSR 'transparent' communications or business strategy does not automatically resonate with these individuals; especially regarding any commitment to purchase.

6.9 Limitations of the study

As previously stated, the literature review (2.0) may have gaps or omissions that readers may consider pertinent. This was not intentional and *to err is human*.

Methodologically, interviews were chosen as described (3.3), as the best solution to gaining the insights required. With no intention of homogenous generalisation, the research aim was to offer exploration that could assist or provoke further investigation (as per Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The limited number of recipients could be considered a limitation, although the diversity of opinion and behaviour was abundant with insight

and deemed suitably sufficient by myself and respective supervisors during the research journey.

With relevance, this research accepts that it is contextualised to *this* cohort of participants, at *this* life-stage; so is only truly pertinent to them. These individuals could be / will expected to be, different personalities a year after graduating, if not before as they depart from student life. It is acknowledged that they were all undergraduate business school students and that their opinions do not automatically represent those of their peers, non-business school students, or others within their demographic, but nonetheless the decision was made that their views were worthy as any other. Interviews lasted no longer than an hour and it could be considered that more could have been gained from longer discussions. This is accepted although I was conscious of not elongating their volunteered time beyond their forthcoming and visually apparent attention parameters.

6.10 Reflections

The DBA journey is a long road and I would be foolhardy to say that I am the same person I was when I began, over 6 years ago. My perspective on the participants representing the demographic has changed and is now more empathetic to their life perceptions against the UK media's portrayal of negative association. For their voluntary participation in this project I shall be forever grateful.

From a research process perspective, my reflection is that of maturation and even though decisions were made 'years ago' as to the approach, I consider that I would do the same again; albeit the content of the interviews may change due to the newly acquired knowledge!

To recap, contributors were recruited via the University internal email system appealing for those wishing to 'talk about global brands' as an effort to obtain non-extreme views on the CSR / CnSR topics. This was never meant to be coercive in any way and the range of conversational topics was disclosed within the body of text from the outset. All participants appeared *happy* to talk and the duration was dictated by their individual body language and enthusiasm to continue.

No payment or incentive was made (other than the option of a beverage during the interview), so as not to support any *working* or *power* relationship. The interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed location and the intention was to make the participant relaxed, a conversation, rather than an academic interview. On reflection I believe this was successful and that the narrative shared appeared genuine as I was conscious not to judge their opinion, behaviour or attitude to the topics.

The discourse analysis, theming that followed the transcription was a long and eventful experience for a novice researcher at this level. With guidance from fellow academic peers and my supervisors I am satisfied with the results being a justified representation of their rhetoric for this research output.

It has been a fascinating and enlightening journey, beneficial not only for academic or industry future consideration but for my future working relationship with this age group.

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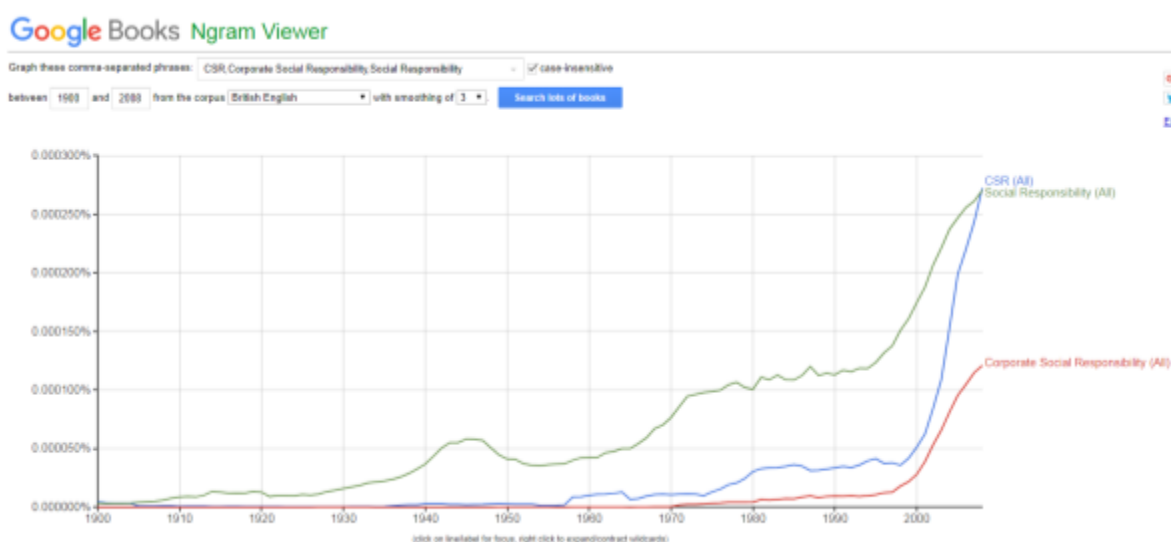
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ngram Viewer, (2018)



Ngram Viewer, (2018) Google Books Ngram Viewer: 'CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Responsibility' Keywords 1900-2008 [online] at: <https://goo.gl/8X7EP8>

Appendix 2 - Extra analysis: Convenience & Indifference

Extra analysis that supports and explains this theme:

Emma's defensiveness regarding Apple;

So yeah, I wouldn't say that I know much about 'em'

Question - About what they do as a company?

'No, I'm sorry I'm rubbish aren't I?'

> She laughs somewhat nervously <

The *convenience* of the smartphone operating system is supported by HanNah;

I just liked the interface of it, the software on it. Don't know, it's just something different and simple; it's easy to use.

HanNah extrapolates on the convenience factor involved with her purchasing; her response to clothing shopping habits also expresses her preference for ease along with access to choice and originality;

I try to stay more online for like ASOS and stuff like that coz they, well they've got a bigger selection and they, well it's just easy isn't it, more convenient...

Furthermore, convenience seeking is supported along with her admittance of laziness, as when it is hypothetically proposed to her that her favoured footwear brand Vans has become 100% ethically sustainable throughout;

Well that would be great, because, I wouldn't have to actively do anything... it's different and I wouldn't really, I would love it if they did a thing like that to be honest, but coz I know for a fact that I actively want to be more like that.

Rosy, placing herself as five 'edging towards a six' on the HRS, she believes her positivity towards an ethical disposition bodes well but in honesty, reflects how regularly she fails to comply with habits or purchasing that she perceives as troublesome to fulfil;

I suppose that's not a very good attitude to have but um, and then I do like walk and take public transport a lot but that's more a convenience thing than doing it on purpose, it's pretty nasty to the planet and stuff

Here she acknowledges that it isn't a consciously ethical decision to walk or use public transport but considers in doing so she is inadvertently being proactive. Perhaps an economic or practicality derived decision, not owning a car or walking rather than paying for a bus, could be deduced here but arguably walking may infer effort opposed to laziness. Accepting the fact that they may or may not appreciate the association, the laziness connotation connected with the demographic reappears in reflective transparency.

The contrast of Kamille's 'chilled out' approach to Mollie's effort to save money (regarding turning off lights) is interesting but requires placing within individual context and personal motivations versus scenario. The excuse or justification to save time is explored further by Mollie when asked how she was back in her 6th form college days prior to University but with no direct correlation this time to the economic implications;

...that's when I started to drive, so I would drive more than I would walk, like I live in a village and I'd drive down to the shop instead of walking, literally I'm that lazy

In addition, Mollie further comments on how she reacts when this is confronted by her peers or social network;

...people say 'oh you could walk' but if like if I'm running out of time, it's quicker for me to drive, coz I think I haven't got time to walk, if that makes sense, so yeah I'm probably not very green at all.

Perceived time restraints were also a factor for Sam's choices;

...sometimes I don't want to err, make coffee at home because sometimes time is quite limited...You don't need to, you don't want to get up so early to get yourself a coffee at home so why not just come across to Starbucks and buy one - It's just quite cheap, it's not so expensive, so why not?

Sam has no reflection as to the subjective interpretation of relative wealth, disposable income or perception of a feasibly unnecessary purchase; this was simply a time efficient justification for him. A factor that was certainly echoed as an implication to Emma's recycling efforts;

As when I was living in a flat on my own I would just like, well I'd try to like separate it but when you're like in a rush and having a quick tidy...so if you're in a rush and just doing a quick tidy up round the house - you just go round 'n' chuck it in the bin...

Alex begins to reflect upon a defensive approach insofar that she acknowledges the stereotypes placed upon them. Whilst simultaneously placing an element of responsibility upon the older generations, it could be considered another attempt at offsetting the obligation and guilt;

I do think there is an air of laziness to this generation but on the other hand, especially with sort of like the education system there's more of a push to get that final degree, to push forward a bit and I can see from actually other... Jeremy Vine [UK daytime talk show] I think a couple of weeks ago, where people were looking at Millennials as a generation and how the older generation were looking at my generation saying 'why do they need these big qualifications with these fancy jobs?' And there was a retort back, very nice, from a 25 year old tailor from London, saying that the current climate that we're in means we need that amount of money to carry on with what we're doing. So it's not 'big dream aspirations' its 'survival aspirations' and I do think that does come back to the attitude of this generation of its, very 'experience based', because we can't own as much - people would rather take a trip to India coz that's more affordable than it is to buy a house

This defensiveness and self-conscious explanation becomes more defined;

...so at the minute there are the ups and downs of this generation and I do think that comes from this situation that the last generation put us in... not the last generation but the generation before that, coz they just got on with it, whereas the generation before me are the ones that are trying to impose the sustainability...

To note, Alex is only one of two of the participants to reflect in such a manner with the rhetoric clarifying how she feels her generation are both portrayed and the victim of previous generations. Along similar lines, Rosy considers how her peers are perceived with a somewhat reserved ambivalence to their efforts, especially when discussing their attitude to making the effort and changing their habits for the better;

...there are the people who won't consider that, and just aren't bothered. And I think generally people perceive my generation as being quite lazy and I think that's something that can be quite true.... not always > I laugh< not always, but can be quite true.

Question - You speak from the inside, you know?

Yeah, I think there are great things about our generation but also they are quite just like, blasé and just leave things as they are and there are only like a small amount of people who will step out and try and change things.

Appendix 3 - Extra analysis: Self-reasoning & justification

Extra analysis that supports and explains this theme:

Laura states, *'it's the price'* when ascertaining product choice. Furthermore, a sense of frustration is evident in the tone of HanNah's discussion when she talks of her predicament in wanting to fulfil a desire to purchase more ethically or sustainability minded. I posited to her the hypothetical concept of a favoured brand of hers going 100% environmentally focussed;

'I would love it if they did a thing like that to be honest, but coz I know for a fact that I actively want to be more like that... But coz I don't have an awful lot of money I can't afford to buy products that are marketed as 100% great for environments, um'

Question - So you make some changes and it comes down to hard economics basically doesn't it?

'Well it's unfortunate but that's just the way it is, it's like I'd love to be able to do it, just completely change my lifestyle and only buy organic and fair trade but, but I can't even afford to buy my lunch sometimes in Uni coz they charge a quid for a small bar of fair trade chocolate... It's like and it's good, and I understand why they would do it but it's, being a student, I don't know I...'

Question - It's frustrating?

'Yeah - I just can't do it'

> She laughs <

HanNah's, almost nervous laughter at the end of her anecdote appears as a conscious reflection to her situation, acknowledging perhaps the priorities she places on consumption with limited finance available. Linking to choice precedence, with Adam's perspective on brands he too evaluates associated price premiums to ethical attributes; although interestingly from what could be perceived as a contrary outlook;

'...before I came to university everything was local, I didn't have a job so I wasn't spending so much money on brands. So I probably went for more cheaper options like Primark, so that I would've been more green anyway because (a greener company) over your bigger brands that outsource from many different locations.'

Adam appears to associate high end brands with disreputable and convoluted supply chains against the perception that low paid Bangladesh factories (Primark) are more ethical for their single point delivery. This individual line of thinking from Adam is extended and justified when discussing transport;

'I think because my generation is sort of a generation that can't really afford to buy cars or anything like that, they are more conscious of how they are travelling; as they do tend to walk everywhere or use public transport more often.'

Furthermore, the self-acknowledgement of their life stage (as young adult, adolescent students) also arises in the narrative as relevant justification. Sam too begins from the financial underpinning but suggests quality is also a key consideration over that of an ethical preference; as he continues he foresees his future, post-student life, where he suspects his attitude will change away from his current, parental accountability;

'...when you see a product or a service, your thought would be very, you can think a lot of things about a service or a product but actually when you want to

buy, when you need to pay for it, you need to pay with money; so sometimes it's not only your thoughts, your ethical or green thoughts, it's all about the price and the quality so sometimes the price might be a problem... Sometimes for me, yeah, coz ah, again it's about the, the finance situation that you're in so, if I get my own job um, I can pay myself.'

Mollie reflects on what she is saying and the cyclical nature of her becoming a parent one day, she continues;

'...but I don't think my generation really, you can get it off a few people but I don't think like the majority of people, don't really think about it that much, the ethical / environment. Which is a bad thing, coz at the end of the day everyone always says like it's like how you treat the environment, it's like how it's going to treat your children and how it's going to treat your children's children - so you should probably think about it a bit more; but I think with busy lifestyles people just don't have the time to think about it.'

Here Mollie infers that her life is perhaps too 'busy' to make a conscious effort to consume or behave with a socially responsible mind-set. When asked directly on her views of her peers and environmental consciousness;

'I don't know if people really think about it that much at my age; I always think like, being like quite ethical is like something older people do more than younger people. Like knowing like, me and the girls and that, like I know people don't, yeah none of us sort of, don't think like 'oh I wouldn't buy that because of like they're not ethical' I think everyone is just 'used to what they're used to' sort of thing - I don't think like our generation really thinks about it very much at all, well I don't personally, and like my friends I know, they don't either.'

The 'safety' of what Ross knows in his confectionary brand choices (Dairy Milk over Fair Trade) is distinct from the excitement and uncertainty of Rosy's shopping preference. Again central to the economic discussion she explains her lifestyle and propensity to 'shop' within the student demographic;

'I'm one of them; we're quite big consumers I think... And like, brands are very, like held in high esteem, but more and more I think people, particularly with clothes, they are buying second hand things quite a lot - Mainly because vintage stuff has come back into fashion... But I think people have started to think that 'maybe I don't need to buy new or the brands all the time' or um but I do think that there are a large amount people that are very stubborn in that they will always buy from high-street brands that they trust, rather than go to a charity shop and sorting through a load of old t-shirts to try and buy something.'

In acceptance that this part of the discussion regards clothes shopping rather than other CnSR activities; in apparent contradiction to the previously discussed indifference or laziness theme I propose to Rosy that some of this preference or choice comes down to effort;

'Yeah... You see I'm quite happy to spend an afternoon going round charity shops and vintage shops and coming away with two t-shirts, than going into Top Shop and knowing that I need jeans and a jumper and coming out having spent like £80... so I think if, I think a lot of people live like, have a lot of jobs on the side of studying or whatever so they're quite happy to go and spend loads of money and not have to spend too long having to think about it.'

Here she appears to be in the realms of a 'cash-rich, time-poor' debate with herself, arguing that perhaps her peers work to enable their high street purchasing. Whereas she prefers the opposite in spending her time finding an exclusive and original at a discounted price. I put this to her;

'Question - But then I suppose you're, without putting words into your mouth I suppose, you're reasons to go to a charity shop would be...?'

It's...

Question - For money or for originality or?

um I think all of them really, it feels good to buy a jumper for £2. When I know that (if I) went into Top Shop it would be thirty, um and also it's a bit of a challenge to try and spend all afternoon sorting through these old clothes. Putting up with the weird smells in the bags um - but then also yeah, it is also originality like, it's nice to have something that no-one else has got.'

This justification or sense-making of clothing originality that Rosy sees as a sustainable venture, the reusing and recycling of clothing supports her reasoning and lifestyle choice. Rosy by no means features significantly higher in being ethical / sustainably minded than the other participants, yet she was upbeat and enthusiastic in sharing this anecdote with me as an example of it.

Davina talks of how she sees her generation being influenced by online social media;

I'd say we're a generation of followers. I feel um, we don't have, we don't necessarily... start the trends? I think you know I don't know the proper terminology for it, but I would definitely say we follow a lot of what people say; celebrities to see what they do. And we follow you know, we'd probably shop where a celebrity shops if it was one of our favourites, you know - bearing on what price wise or definitely have a similar style um - so yeah I yeah I'd definitely say that.

I push her on clarification as to whether she believes these celebrities directly influence purchasing action; she brings it back to ethical consumption;

'Yeah I'd definitely say so, I think if one celebrity endorses it and you know, endorses a message or a brand you know, um ethical issue or something, I think then the fans of that brand being followers would probably do the exact same - and I think yeah, I don't think we're necessarily forefront, in actually send across a message as a generation. I think we're more, follow people that are a little bit older and I think that's probably what happens, you know as you get older anyway.'

This brings the justification back to the life-stage narrative once again. As she is talking, she is connecting her own narrative to clarify her thinking that she now places herself in; what was originally a peer review situation;

'So maybe in a couple of years 10, 20 years' time we'll be the people sending the message but...

Yeah but I'd definitely say we're like followers and just follow what people older than us (say).'

Davina placing such emphasis and influence on the 'following' of celebrities (on social media) proffers a consideration that she is displacing responsibility i.e. 'if they're not talking about it, we're not talking about it'.

The immediacy and disposable nature of a constantly changing social media feed is insinuated in Davina's perspective of a 'living in the now' mentality, albeit with a slightly cynical self-evaluation in its conclusion;

'I think you've probably, parents and older people would probably say the exact same thing; when you're our age you think you've got your life well ahead and it's all gonna stay, everything's gonna stay the same ...and I know it's not improved, I think you've got to be a certain age before you can see the change and the improvement, but right now you can't really see, like the changes in technology, you can't really see that, so you know that for us it's always been there to have like a mobile phone... and that's not necessarily improved drastically from one phone to another, I mean there's better technology coming out but it's not, it's not a new product.'

This externalising and corporate or societal influence (new product or otherwise) has an inference of accountability for Peter; someone who generally respects business success;

'I think people think it's more the responsibility for the company than it is for them... I think that's probably part of it um - yeah I don't think, I don't know, I think my buying behaviour has changed because of what, you know, what I feel about these companies, but I don't think that those restrictions [lack of company knowledge], amongst most of the people I live with...

Question - Do you think you're the minority?

'I feel so yeah., I think so, not as much of a minority as it would have been 3 or 4 years ago, I think it's changing rapidly but I still think it's social responsibility, it's still something that, it happens then it blows over I think a lot of the time, it's all to do with, a lot of it's bad news and then it's up to the brands to recover from that and I think a lot of these big ones do it very successfully.'

Interestingly, Peter, along with Sam, are the only participants to directly empathise with corporate business practice and their admiration of how they deal with what Peter alludes to as being CSR controversy.

Davina brings the media/marketing debate back to the role her parents played in her decision making. She believes that her values were formed by the influence of role models within the home more than those from the wider external environment. She begins by proposing that she has limited awareness from the media in regards to the topic;

'I would say I was less knowledgeable of corporate social responsibility, um. But you always hear on the news you know regarding ethical issue and...'

Question - Yeah, and was that, did it manifest itself in maybe a way that you were concerned about recycling or... using public transport? Or?

'It probably stems from my parents then, than necessarily me, myself and what I hear on the news... My mum's very, my mum and dad are very recyclable, they have the separate bags for when they put the bins out and stuff and so in that way, in the recycling way, and probably walking rather than taking the bus

would probably come from my parents. Not necessarily any messages from the government or press or etc say. That stems more from more my parents than influences elsewhere.'

Interestingly, Davina considers herself to have an above average socially responsible mind-set priority (a higher HRS within the group) that she attributes to being 'aware' of such issues although in practice her efforts are feasibly below average.

The inconvenience of insufficient accommodation recycling availability is recurrent as Rosy's justification concurs;

'Being in student accommodation, recycling is a bit of pain, just because there's only one bin in the flat and there's no recycling in the accommodation so that's something I don't really bother with as it would take me too far out of my way.'

She then appears to quickly reflect on this and attempts to rectify or rebalance her attitude;

'I suppose that's not a very good attitude to have but um, and then I do like walk and take public transport a lot but that's more a convenience thing than doing it on purpose, it's pretty nasty to the planet and stuff.'

A statement which quickly turns albeit with some honesty in justification, yet perhaps doesn't equate to her moral conscience. Conversely, Emma explains that she *does* make the effort when faced with accommodation challenges as she has the option, accepting that it may take her out of her way;

'...I think that's just because we've got like separate things and only like 3 different places to put things in my flat, so if you're in a rush and just doing a quick tidy up round the house and you just go round a chuck it in the bin. But I would, I would be conscious of splitting things - but I would, probably would be more now, coz I can just go out to the bins and I've got a blue one and

Question - It's easy?

Yeah.'

Annie too, states how convenience and circumstance plays a pivotal role to her self-reasoning;

'um, I suppose like where I work we recycle so that keeps me in the mind-set to do it so having certain jobs might but I don't think I've changed much from moving home.'

The unpredictable influence of the customer experience and the impact it has, also plays pertinent to Emma's consumption habits, self-reasoning and ultimately, brand choice;

Yeah, Starbucks. Never, well, with that it's more, it's not because of the marketing or anything like that it's just that, it's because, like I said before it's close to everything - it used to be Cafe Nero and I'd never go near a Starbucks or a Costa and then they changed all the staff in the Cafe Nero and it all went a bit > she pulls a disgruntled face < so now we've been Starbucks' people for the last year and a half... so - but that's, we'd never go near a Starbucks before, like no, it all seemed a bit too corporate, but now we just 'love it' so we never go anywhere else apart from Starbucks.'

Question - Interesting, so customer service has been obviously the positive there?

'Yeah yeah yeah definitely.'

The role of brand association and corporate awareness occasionally raised contradictions among the participants. As Maisie spoke earlier about financial restrictions then admitting to maintaining her up to date iPhone, her overall rhetoric was generally business positive. When Maisie was asked about what she knew of the Coca-Cola organisation she was animated in recounting her knowledge of their CSR misdemeanours;

'Um Coca-Cola, biggest iconic brand in the world, everyone knows Coca-Cola, I think that something crazy like 60% in remote towns and villages in Mexico drink 2 litres of Coca-Cola a day!'

Question - I saw something about (it) on telly, it was documentary?

'It was awful, yeah, children'

Question - And that's proper 'red Coke' as well?

'Yeah, children literally as young as 4 months old were being substituted with Coca-Cola for milk, awful absolutely disgusting um - but yeah an amazing company and you've got to respect them for how amazing, like how big they are.'

Unprompted, she concluded the narrative by commending their global corporate status in what appeared incongruent to the point she was initially making. Indeed, Coke's prominence in global marketing and company success was echoed by others. Rosy was asked how she would react to them (hypothetically) changing their business practice to become holistically environmentally conscious, sustainable and ethically responsible;

'Um I think it would make me think of them as less of a big scary corporation... um but it wouldn't change whether I bought their products or not, the only thing that would change that is whether it tasted as good, coz if it didn't I, I'd just not buy it, um - but I, I think it would change my perception of them in it would make me think that they really care about something, rather than just care about making money which is how they come across now... Coz they're a company and that's what they do, um but I think it would have quite a big impact if they did something like that coz they are such a big company'

Laura positions herself in a 'real-world' context having been exposed to CSR marketing;

'When I go to MacDonald's I'm not gonna think back to that advert, I don't care... I don't know, it's hard - maybe, maybe I would, but I don't think with KFC there and MacDonald's (there), 'oh you know what? MacDonald's have changed their supply chain, I want to go to MacDonald's'...I don't think anyone does that - It's the taste and price I think - Yes'

Laura almost transcends into mockery of MacDonald's efforts in her association of its impact on her consumption choices. When the hypothetical inflated green agenda question was offered to Lottie but this time using Apple (a brand she affiliated to), similarly to Rosy and Laura's priority of taste, Lottie's primacy is the product quality;

'I don't think it would make a mass difference but I don't think it would do them any harm so it's sort (of) by association, you'd feel good using it but it wouldn't make me think 'I'm definitely gonna stay with them because of that... So if they upped the green and the product started getting worse, I'd still move - even if they were greener, so..'

Question - So if the product stayed the same?

'Then I think it would help... Especially with there not being any other companies within their competitive industry that would do something like that then it would benefit them.'

So Lottie along with others explain that they see the positive to CSR initiatives but it by no means infers any significant customer purchasing influence for those interviewed - the product attributes outweigh that. Daisy has her own perspective after previously sharing an anecdote linking Nestle to a baby milk scandal that she was aware of, she considers her self-reasoning;

'Yeah, and Nestle, I do buy some Nestle stuff I think probably - um, yeah I do really, like, I don't like try and avoid either of the brands because of their reputation or anything its more because of their nutritional value of their products, you try and avoid them, because you know, just to be healthy, not because it's Nestle or anything.'

On this occasion, Daisy clearly has a health priority when deciding.

And then there is Maisie's individual self-reasoning justification recalling her family's circumstances during the UK's recession years and the impact that had upon her and her financial perspective;

'I remember it being particularly hard and um coz my dad got made redundant when the recession hit so that for us we didn't have the luxury of ethically sourced or green things so yeah I don't... that, that was obviously just like my personal thing. I don't know um - yeah I think perhaps that is a bit left over you know like yeah, a theme through this lot, I feel like I've kind a said it a lot is 'money' it's that choice over what costs sort of thing.'

Maisie's uncertainty in her narrative appears as a justification in her self-reflection that perhaps it isn't a priority in her current consumption choices; irrespective of the years that have passed and self-development.

Appendix 4 - Extra analysis: Distrust

Extra analysis that supports and explains this theme:

Authors have looked at various industries and situations including the fizzy beverage and tobacco industries' CSR campaigns (Dorfman et al. 2012), millennial attitude to political cynicism (Sandfort & Haworth, 2002) and employee perspectives regarding cynicism toward organizational motives (Donia et al. 2017).

Indeed, motives, transparency, and business or product associations arise as common discourse in this research. This, along with a salience in the participants rhetoric in-line with the work of Kuokkanen and Sun (2016) who discuss social desirability and

cynicism's contribution to the incongruity between attitudes and purchase behaviour (or actions/inaction). Chylinski and Chu (2010, p796) had also looked at intrinsic antecedents, considering an individual's goals or values and firm actions; they found *'value incongruence has a greater effect on the severity of cynical behaviours'*. A scenario debatably made more negative with this generational cohort by Pînzaru et al. (2016) stating millennial employees are more likely to 'tune-out' of CSR or environmental related topics. With characteristics akin to *'exhibiting a higher propensity to egocentrism and self-promotion... dominating those around them according to their own values, to risk and challenges, being often more cynical'* (Pînzaru et al 2016, p187). Consonant with Pînzaru et al., a selection of participants were almost lyrical with their displeasure of pro-environmental narratives, a topic clearly connected to the research topic but not always approached directly in conversation.

Emma considers motive, driven by repetition;

... By putting all this in our face - Why do you keep telling us this? What else is? What's underneath there? Why are you trying to look all goody goody all the time?

I don't know, I think sometime it's when it's just like thrust in your face all the time it's...

Question - It raises other questions?

Yeah'

Kamile's tone throughout our conversation was regularly cynical or perceivably negative to the topic. She contributes to the business motivation dialogue whilst discussing Coca-Cola products;

'Yeah, so I think they just, hmmm - maybe they were pressured to like minimise sugar, that's like maybe in the UK, companies will be taxed on the sugar level they have - So maybe similar in America coz maybe like the obesity levels and so maybe like the social responsibility, so yeah, they just want to bring in a product that is healthy, maybe only sugar, I don't know... maybe everything adds up and they want to be ahead of the game as well, coz if it's like a new product then why not yeah, why not sell it, coz like no one has it, must (be) the first ones.'

She concludes on this occasion to almost perceive it as a positive business USP decision, albeit with cynical or alternative motive undertones, nevertheless she deduces a purpose behind her explanation. Her reflection whilst discussing, alludes to contradiction which is recurrent amongst a selection of participants, many are unsure or uncertain of their personal commitment to being environmentally conscious or caring as a value priority. There could be conflict in the participants being Business School students who have a degree of corporate success taught throughout their courses. The few acknowledged pro-business participants were vocal although partially reserved in enthusiasm within the discussion; arguably understandable if the topics of global corporate companies and environmental responsibility are placed together. To note, the term 'pro-business' is used where individuals overall narrative depicted a priority to business success or performance above other attributes. Representing these participants, Peter states his cynicism from the alternate perspective;

'I think every big company these days, you always hear, there's always a story that, you know, will drag their name through the mud.'

He continues and his pro-business stance is self-dissected where he alludes to scepticism of global corporate dominance in reference to Apple, a brand he advocates for;

'...they own quite a monopoly at the moment and I think - for me it's a bit err - I won't say worrying but I think the competition for Apple is not nearly as strong as, at the market so I feel that they - as long as they don't develop a complacency or 'take the mick' with their customers'

He's clear as to not say 'worrying', but evidently conscious of; his *distrust* is manifested with his use of the word 'trust', perhaps a value he holds high;

'I think it's a trust thing yeah, it's because these products we buy from Apple, the technology is so advanced, it's probably one of the most advanced bit of technology that most people own and we just don't know what we're actually, what information we're giving these phones, we don't know what Apple are keeping and what they're using and you kinda assume, 'all of it really' - yeah for me it's kinda the data and privacy and I think that's definitely being picked up recently in the media... Yeah so I think that's gonna be a big thing for them in the future um - yeah it's privacy really isn't it, but then again, it's not stopped me from entering my details into it'

> We both laugh<

Our joint laughter acknowledging the inconsistency of *our* actions upon vocalising the concern regarding a value we apparently hold strongly. Adam is another pro-business advocate, he talks of Coca-Cola;

'...so you've got a very wide variety of choice that they own so, in terms of their marketing and brands they have available they are a good company - I wouldn't necessarily say they could be a green company, I've only just started to look at things like that...'

Adam is conscious of his lack of insight into such matters, recurrent in other participants but his hesitation and moral compass was evidently disassociating corporate *success* with corporate *responsibility*. Maisie's pro-business stance is more complicated. Her reaction to Coca-Cola and Nestle was *'um there just very, very corporate in my opinion they're too big'* which is straight forward enough. In addition, when asked about Apple and eBay she clarified;

'er far too big, far too prominent

Question - Apple too big?

In the market, actually just having a conversation with a friend yesterday and we were saying how, coz I've just got the iPhone 6s and I used to have a Samsung for the last 2 years and it's literally too hard not have an iPhone um, you know I had to get an iPhone this time coz everyone's got an iPhone in my friend group - You need iMessage coz it's useful, they are good phones but they're not that good. Not £400 more good, if you know what I mean'

But then as she continued into discussing eBay and Airbnb she picks up an alternate perspective;

'um and eBay, eBay is just a massive resource it's just so good um - I've just been doing a project on Airbnb... Um and it was just showing the comparison

between the strategy um in eBay and in Airbnb coz obviously because the e-commerce side of it... Um yeah massive, massive company - yeah totally respect both those companies a lot actually

Question - Ok, so you, so they're positive?

Definitely, definitely positive towards those 2.'

Whether Maisie's negativity and scepticism relating to the size and dominance of Coke, Nestle and Apple is connected to her association of them as 'old' in contrast to the positivity she has for eBay and Airbnb in being e-commerce and 'new' is unexplored. Or perhaps the service domain of online providers over FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) or computer hardware suppliers has environmental connotations for her and her ethical conclusions.

Kamille has concerns and doubt over Coke's purpose;

I'm just thinking if they want everyone to be more healthy you wouldn't do Coke with like loads of sugar, even when it's sugar-free is it really healthy? How can it get that sweet? I nah, I'm just confused about Coke - I'm not fond of it, I would not wear a t-shirt with Coca-Cola on the front of it...

I'm not fond of it for some reason, which because it's just too big for me? It's like everywhere.

Furthermore, the lack of committal to statements suggests insecurity in their personal knowledge in being unable to succinctly recollect information or attributing it to being something they perceive as 'fact'. Insofar it's information that primarily appears to resonate from the media or their social media rather than direct from the organisation in question, as Peter proclaimed earlier, '*...being picked up recently in the media...*' and Kamille confirmed;

I think like the social media, you know, it can affect everyone, like everyone can see the news really quickly... For example like Nestle, like coz, I have like a some message umm on social media that they didn't treat their workers nicely'

The 'affect' media appears to have on some participants infers a certain level of comprehension and cognition.

HanNah's reminiscing was also apparent with Rosy when she recalled the impact her mother's comments had on her in relation to marketing, speaking in relation to the Coke Life product;

I know that even though it's 'all natural' and stuff, that's kind of (what) my mum's got into me like 'don't believe that' > she laughs < 'coz they're probably lying'. She used to tell me not to have cheese strings because > we both laugh < they'd never seen a real cow and like things like that. So my mum's kind of put (that) in my head as a child, not to believe things that companies tell you like that and 'oh, it's good for you' > spoken in a sarcastic voice <'

Rosy found significant humour in sharing this anecdote, her animation and laughter depicted fond memories but also an acknowledgement of how her mother's scepticism still resonates with her. Similarly a general distrust in marketing and its role with Peter;

I get sceptical with it just being for the purposes for a marketing campaign'

Daisie too, considers the role marketing plays yet looks further in to the broader

environmental impacts;

'Um, Coca-Cola I feel like their emissions would be really high too, they like sponsor loads of stuff like, I don't know, I feel like they do lots of extra things which are kind of unnecessary just to promote their brand... like the Santa Christmas truck'

Her internal conflict swiftly arises though as she ruminates the significance of what she's saying;

'...although like, yeah that is - I mean it's good coz it's kind of like a tradition and festive and stuff but it's not really got anything to do with Coke.'

Peter's attitude and pro-business perspective is, as noted, critical to marketing; suggesting either distrust, cynicism or that he posits environmentally conscious product offerings low on his agenda. In reference to Toyota as an organisation he states;

'Yeah the thing that they're kind of shifting towards is the hybrid cars, um but again I don't think, I don't feel, I feel that's more of a marketing ploy than it is of a corporate responsibility shift.'

His consideration regarding the core product attributes is a topic of discussion for a range of participants and their seemingly cynical or sceptical viewpoints. Regarding the topic of the Coke Life product, Ross elaborates on his preconceptions before actually consuming the product;

'I just get the impression of it like, flat, it's probably not! > he laughs < so I, I'm fussy with all foods but like it takes something to get me try something it would be a bit, like unless they had sold out of normal Coke or like it was a hot day and they only had that left in the fridge - I just think maybe like, I don't know, it might make me feel a bit groggy afterwards.'

His steadfast approach to trying new food or drink products is evident, yet his verbal manifestation elicits negativity and scepticism perhaps reflecting on how environmentally conscious affiliated products are held in low reverence for him. His laughter depicts an acknowledgment that he is reflecting upon what he has said; perhaps in acceptance that the statement or presumption is not based on any evidence and therefore considers as humorous. Moreover, Coke's distinct flavour is also cognisant for Rosy.

Peter's narrative around the various Coca-Cola product range attributes is interesting and intermittently sceptical, acknowledging that he's not actually a Coke drinker. I begin with his familiarity to Coke Life;

'Err I've heard of the term but I don't know much about it, no

Comment - It's a green can.

Ok, is it the, they use a kind of alternative to sugar in it?

Comment - Yeah

Yeah I am familiar with that um - I've never tried it, um - yeah I

Question - Have you seen anyone drink it or seen it on the shelves?

Less so now, when it first came out I saw it everywhere, I haven't seen it much since, I don't know - but again yeah I'm still - The thing with Coca-Cola Life is, it

gets bundled in with Diet Coke and Coke Zero and kind of like the rest of the range, and I know it's trying to differentiate itself but I get the feeling that Diet Coke is no good for a diet, there's nothing really diet about it, it just doesn't have sugar in. The sugar's only replaced with other chemicals anyway, so that's why I, I don't trust that it's a 'diet' Coke in terms of that word 'diet' err and then you know Coke Zero's not supposed to have any caffeine in or any sugar, I don't know what it's supposed to have in it!

> I laugh <

To me, that makes me even more sceptical - I'd rather it did have sugar and it did have caffeine then I'd know but um

Question - Then you've got this one, you've got the Coke Life?

Yeah um

Question - Who do you think it's marketed at? Who do you think it's pitched at?

Um I think maybe it might be pitched at people like me, who a, feel, like the current iterations of Coca-Cola just aren't - people just don't know enough about them, they're too sceptical about them, the fact that there's lots of chemicals in them and things like that.'

Unprompted, Peter uses the word sceptical twice in this excerpt which happens to coincide with his self-admittance to a lack of product knowledge. Appreciating he doesn't drink Coke it's still interesting that rather than researching the product differences he chooses to be suspicious and draw upon his own beliefs suggesting cynical attributes himself.

The Coca-Cola, 100% environmental hypothetical suggestion from earlier was put to David, but this time in relation to a brand he affiliates to, Apple;

'My perception would probably be that they were trying to be more sustainable and more environmentally friendly, um (but) is it gonna affect the product? Is the product gonna be not so, not as good...

Question - Would be detrimental to the quality of the...?

Yeah sort of thing, um but in terms of, in terms of the actual company I would just guess that maybe their store would maybe not be as big, yeah.'

David, Ross and Rosy's scepticism could be a consequence of how environmentally purposeful products have been historically received and the connotation that they are inferior to prior or alternate iterations. Returning to Rosy and her account regarding the Coke Life product; she explains her thought process beginning with the flavour attributes and then her preference into a cynical view on Coke's approach to new product development;

'I tried it, I didn't think it was bad but also I didn't think it improved the flavour at all. It's kind of like, if you're gonna drink Coke, just drink one that isn't very good for you, as even though I drink the Diet one, I know it's not good for me um so yeah I kinda like, saw it, tried it and then was like 'it's a bit of a gimmick'

Question - Why did you try it?

Um, coz it was new.'

Similarly, Alex's cynicism is along a similar line;

'...which is why I think they're trying to make it more of a fashionable or marketing thing rather than a conscious effort...'

Hannah too picks up on her perception of the branding and what she perceives as the impact this has on potential purchasers;

'I think people will associate it with like, well the whole name is like, 'Life' is insinuating that it's better, it's healthier - so yeah, it's all about image.'

Echoed by Kamile who highlights the colour connotations?

'I think maybe Life Coke is to create an image of being healthy, I think, not just like maybe sugar but just maybe healthy coz it's green'

Kamile is open and self-reflective in her conversation and early into our talk she explains her attitude to environmentally conscious consumption by stating *matter-of-fact*, 'sometimes you like just buy upon impulse'. She expands whilst recollecting how she had read about Nestlé's negative reports on child labour;

'...that were working on err cocoa beans, so like they were carrying heavy bags. So like I'm ok, I do not want to buy chocolates off Nestle, but I was really hungry

> We laugh <

So I just took it and when I ate it, I was like oh wait, 'it smells like chocolate', hmmm, so yeah it happens to me.'

The laughter we shared after her disclosure (and honesty) was, on my part, to set her at ease with what could be posited as insincerity or lack of empathy. In comparison to the other participants, Kamile sits mid-range as to how they self-judge themselves (HRS) in how pro-ethically minded they are. During each conversation I asked them for their perspective of their peers' attitude which was intended to illicit both a literal response and hopefully a catalyst to their self-reflection as an individual of the Millennial generation. Kamile begins, as she ponders with a sceptical consideration;

'Um so yeah, I think it's getting better. People, but then again I'm not sure, I would say that people of my generation are becoming a bit more eco-friendly; so they would like to say 'I am a responsible person' so if you like ask a student like any like 'do you think you're responsible, like for the environment?' they would say 'yeah yeah I'm trying, I recycle, I do that ' but then again there's that passion thing that, that adverts influence us to have unnecessary things and I think people will buy clothes that no matter what, I think people buy clothes based like maybe on the price, the quality and the looks, and they really care how it looks and they want to be stylish.

...But I don't think they would be interested in what happen with the suppliers and etc'

She is quick to include the external influences and alternate drivers of personal choice and infers that there are feasibly more important factors in her or their purchasing decisions. She also refers to the influence of marketing on her peers and the power that it appears to have in acquiring what she refers to as 'unnecessary things'. When asked about her own attitude to the efforts of organisations in being more responsible;

'I wouldn't really care, like you know coz like, I would say 'well done' ... if they went really green it's like 'well done' but I just would look away, I would not dig deep or not like analyse it.'

Clearly this could be akin to the apathy previously discussed but could also suppose a self-reflective cynicism to her personal attitude regarding the actions of others.

Where Kamile discusses the alternate influences in product choice, Alex uses terminology that reflects cynicism in her discussion when asked who she thought consumed Coke Life;

'Probably people about my age that think they're conscious - I think it's a little bit of a fashionable thing at the minute.'

Alex is self-confessed non-fashion conscious and more aligned to what could be considered an alternative sub-culture so the use of 'fashionable', that was delivered in a non-positive tone asserts disparagement. Daisy too considers how Coke Life drinkers may be perceived;

'I don't know, maybe, maybe they might feel like people would judge that as they're changing, they are trying to be healthy.'

Admittedly, her delivery was less definitive regarding this being a sympathetic view or cynical with its demonstration of uncertainty ('trying to be healthy'). Mollie's perspective alludes to lack of knowledge, arguably demonstrating insufficient marketing efficacy on Coke's part. This topic seemed to sit quite uncomfortable with her, which feasibly could relate to her unfamiliarity across the Coke-Cola range;

'I don't really know - I just think like, is it necessary to bring out another version of the same drink sort of thing? Coz I think Coke Zero and Diet Coke, in my eyes they're basically the same sort of thing, they both sort of mention sort of health, like lower fat, lower calories option; I don't know Coke Life. Was it aimed at people who try to be more sustainable and stuff like that? I don't really know, I just think it's another name to add to the brand sort of thing.'

Question - Part of their product range / portfolio whatever?

'Yeah but I don't really understand like what the difference is, so.'

Admittedly, she doesn't know and states this repeatedly; her tone infers somewhat cynically *'I just think it's another name to add to the brand'*. So acknowledging that the conversation is centrally around CSR and environmentally responsible products/consumption/habits her deduction is that, in this case, it is about more market share or profit.

Rosy's response is similarly sceptical to the external attributes of the Coke Life packaging where she infers her own hypothetical purchase, albeit distancing herself;

'It just makes you think, oh this is good, it's ok to buy it, it's not bad for me, it's not bad for the environment, because that's just like, people like that are 'pro' to it being green - So by having a green can or a green label on it, it just automatically makes people think about it and makes them think 'oh, that's good for the environment, that's good for me' whichever.'

Her tone reflects an almost disparaging association to the colour green and how she sees the societal connotations, her cynical overtones appear to relate to the marketers choice along with those who buy into it. In contrast and an alternate perspective, she

clarifies the personal significance of more inherent organisational efforts succinctly;

'So I think it would impress me but it wouldn't change whether I bought their products or not.'

Emma's narrative continues in expanding on how she sees the potential consumer impact being minimal (after Nike sweatshop rumours);

'It's only gonna be like a fraction of the market, that's gonna go 'I'm not...until you sort it out!' but what's that? That's what, maybe 20,000 trainers when they're selling millions and millions, you know?'

Emma doesn't, and I don't push her on whether she believes or knows if Adidas or Nike made changes to their supply chain after the scandal but what's clear is that she believes the consequence is insignificant in the bigger picture.

With Laura, she again could feature in the apathy section; however in reflecting upon her perception to the UK's introduction of charging for carrier bags in shops she swaps from her personal attitude and offsetting to others;

'Oh yeah, yeah recycling bags, big carry bags for 10p yeah that looks good, I do that as well - You know because it's there, when you are getting your shopping it's there with a big notice and you think, you look at it and you consciously go yeah, I need one of those, it's good, it's recycling, other than that you wouldn't, I don't.'

'I don't think people otherwise would unless it's there to remind you.'

For Mollie, she can't be clear enough as she explains how she sees her peer's current cynical, perhaps more than indifferent attitude;

'I don't know if people really think about it that much at my age; I always think like, being like quite ethical is like something older people do more than younger people. Like knowing like, me and the girls and that, like I know people don't, yeah none of us sort of, don't think like 'oh I wouldn't buy that because of like they're not ethical' I think everyone is just 'used to what they're used to' sort of thing - I don't think like our generation really thinks about it very much at all, well I don't personally, and like my friends I know, they don't either.'

The final perspective is Sam's pro-business attitude that demonstrates his allegiance to corporate success over the benefit to the environment. I ask what he thinks of organisational pro-environmental efforts;

'Well if they were to do that I would say um 'that's really good' and that is helpful for the reputation and their brand image but I'd say it's a little bit weird coz, coz I think that if you take something that is really green it might be a good benefit for a business in a long term but in a short term you feel something that is quite weird, strange and very hard.'

'Because it rises the cost of your products, yeah it's good for long term, but in the short term I would really worry about it, worry about the company, will they really afford the cost of green? Yeah green's nice but it's costly.'

His distrust of benefits manifests in that he 'worries' about the implications of the changes involved, whereas his rhetoric doesn't 'worry' about the implications if they don't make the changes; his value priorities are seemingly evident.

Appendix 5 - Participant approach email

Email title:

Nike, Coke, Starbucks, Toyota, eBay; Would you be up for chatting about your thoughts on brands?

Email content:

Hello

I'm not looking to test anyone! But I am doing research on consumers (like you) and how you personally consider large brands and your affinity (if any) to them.

My name is Dan from SBS in the Events Mgmt department and currently studying for my Doctorate at Hallam and I need your help.

It should take no longer than 45 minutes and I am happy to meet up in Uni or a local café to chat to you about your own thoughts as a regular consumer regarding a selection of brands; their image, reputation and marketing. I'll also be asking you about green issues to see how you feel about the topic.

I'd really like to chat sometime in April, May or June this year so if you would be happy to do so please have a read through the attached participant information sheet and if ok, please email me on d.woodason@shu.ac.uk that would be great and really appreciated. The research title is currently 'An exploration of consumer values; affinity and dissonance to CSR communications' please don't let this put you off! Such is academia at level 7...

So no pressure, not a test or a quiz, just a chat over a coffee (other drinks available).

Thank you for considering this

All the best

Dan

Appendix 6 - Participant response, follow-up email

Email attachment:

DBA Primary research - Dan Woodason - d.woodason@shu.ac.uk - Spring 2016

Title: **An exploration of consumer values; affinity and dissonance to CSR communications**

Thank you for considering assisting me in my doctorate research regarding consumer knowledge of 'everyday' brands (i.e. Coca-Cola, eBay, Nike, Ford) and their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reputation. My research is an exploration of consumers without bias towards age, gender, culture etc to gain insight into what if any messages are absorbed by people such as you.

I would like to interview you to talk about what you (do or do not) know / feel about a selection of brands, whether you have any connections to them and if you know of their CSR reputation. If ok, I would like to audio record the discussion for later analysis, meaning no further participation will be expected.

Venue: The aim is to make the interview as comfortable for you as possible, we can talk at a café or within the university, whichever suits you. I am more than happy to discuss my findings and analysis if required further down the line.

Confidentiality & security of information: Your anonymity is assured throughout; recordings and transcripts will be stored on a portable drive and safely away from any others. I, along with the University will hold copyright of my work and your identification will not be feasible from the finished document.

Participation is entirely voluntary and participants will be free to withdraw at any point. Participants will be emailed a copy of the resulting doctoral thesis should they wish to see one.

nb. A list of FAQs relating to confidentiality was also included.

Appendix 7 - Participant consent form

Doctoral Research Project Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY: Millennial perceptions and their value priority of CSR and CnSR

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you understood the background information provided on this study? YES / NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES / NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES / NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a reason for your withdrawal, and any responses that you have given will not be used? YES / NO

Are you aware that your data will be anonymised before being presented? YES / NO

Do you give permission for your anonymised responses to be used for this doctoral research study? YES / NO

Do you agree to take part in this study? YES / NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information provided for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with the student researcher and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:.....Date:.....

Name (block letters):.....

Signature of student researcher:..... Date:.....

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the background information about the study together.

Name, address, contact number of student researcher:

Daniel Woodason
Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, S1 1WB
0114 255 3215

Appendix 8 - Brand logos used in the interviews

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Page Three



Appendix 9 – SHU Ethics approval



RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST (SHUREC1)

This form is designed to help staff and postgraduate research students to complete an ethical scrutiny of proposed research. The SHU [Research Ethics Policy](#) should be consulted before completing the form.

Answering the questions below will help you decide whether your proposed research requires ethical review by a Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). In cases of uncertainty, members of the FREC can be approached for advice.

Please note: staff based in University central departments should submit to the University Ethics Committee (SHUREC) for review and advice.

The final responsibility for ensuring that ethical research practices are followed rests with the supervisor for student research and with the principal investigator for staff research projects.

Note that students and staff are responsible for making suitable arrangements for keeping data secure and, if relevant, for keeping the identity of participants anonymous. They are also responsible for following SHU guidelines about data encryption and research data management.

The form also enables the University and Faculty to keep a record confirming that research conducted has been subjected to ethical scrutiny.

- For postgraduate research student projects, the form should be completed by the student and counter-signed by the supervisor, and kept as a record showing that ethical scrutiny has occurred. Students should retain a copy for inclusion in their thesis, and staff should keep a copy in the student file.
- For staff research, the form should be completed and kept by the principal investigator.

Please note if it may be necessary to conduct a health and safety risk assessment for the proposed research. Further information can be obtained from the Faculty Safety Co-ordinator.

General Details

Name of principal investigator or postgraduate research student	Dan Woodason
SHU email address	d.woodason@shu.ac.uk
Name of supervisor (if applicable)	Christine Gilligan (D.O.S)
email address	C.K.Gilligan@shu.ac.uk
Title of proposed research	An exploration of consumer values; affinity and dissonance to CSR communications
Proposed start date	2012
Proposed end date	2018
Brief outline of research to include, rationale & aims (500 - 750 words).	The rationale of this research derives from an interest in CSR, marketing communications and consumers. Acknowledging the abundance of academia and professional narrative that praises and

	<p>encourages the consumer-corporate communication of CSR practice, my attention began to piece together discussion where this wasn't always the case. From initial studies of secondary data I have observed commentary relating to some disengagement from CSR narrative. There is also evidence for positive consumer engagement with CSR programmes and CSR's impact on wealth creation (in terms of company valuation). Some of these CSR programmes have a significant legacy of public reporting (for example, Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan). The current literature and previous studies have yet to explore potential consumer dissonance as a theme. Furthermore, personalised communications via social media are bespoke and a future where tailor-made messages become the mainstream may result in this research providing new insights into how consumers interact with CSR communications across businesses that provide products and services.</p> <p>The aim of the research is to explore the use of consumer focused CSR communications from recognisable 'everyday' brands i.e. Coca-Cola, Toyota, eBay, Starbucks and how corporate values are / are-not mirrored with those of the consumer. The intention is to explore affinity and/or the feasibility of any potential disengagement from organisations in relation to their CSR communications. The notion of identity will be explored; the participant, the organisation and how the individual may consider any affiliation to the company (or not) and how.</p> <p>This research will be undertaken from an observational perspective collecting information using semi-structured interviews and through the development of my methodology aim, guided using a benchmark of external sources of information. These external sources will include a meta-analysis of the literature and market analysis in the public domain and open access arena that may also utilise social media search tools / SEO analysis and Google analytic style software. To clarify, the external sources will not look into the individual participants personally. The participant will be asked after the interview to complete an online Likert style questionnaire derived from Schwartz portrait value questionnaire (PVQ). This is a survey that has been used extensively and across many territories. The combination of the survey findings and narrative analysis will be the primary data on which my research will be based.</p> <p>The intention is that there will be approx. 25-30 one-to-one interviews with non-specific adult consumers (aged 18 and over) selected from SHU's student and professional community. Participants will only be chosen who have no connection to me to avoid any power-relation issues. Therefore, none of the participants will be students enrolled on any modules I teach or am involved with. I'm focusing on students as my sample as an insight into millennials as consumers and acknowledging them as future consumers and</p>
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	<p>regular social media users. My career and previous research has focused on this demographic and their value in informing future consumption habits. The sample's response will therefore hopefully offer opportunity for analysis and connections relevant for corporate-consumer personalised CSR narrative (feasibly through social media) from this study.</p> <p>The interviews will take place at a mutually agreed time and place i.e. local café or SHU classroom and are expected to last 30-60 minutes (a pilot interview has already been completed to gauge this). In relation to time, it is therefore a necessity that this can happen before the students disappear at the end of semester 2 and summer 2016. Participants will have the opportunity to withdraw at any time, before, during or after their initial commitment. There will be no financial enticement or reward and participants will be asked on a purely voluntary basis to participate in research relating to the outlined topics of which they may find interesting.</p>
<p>Where data is collected from human participants, outline the nature of the data, details of anonymisation, storage and disposal procedures if these are required (300 -750 words).</p>	<p>All the participants will be consenting adults (over 18 years of age) with anonymity assured and they will have access to the research findings and conclusion. The interviews will be recorded using a portable electronic Dictaphone and transcribed afterwards for analysis purposes. Discourse analysis will be completed using the NVivo software programme for coding and theming purposes alongside the other participants data.</p> <p>The topic of the conversation within the interview will approach 2 key areas; 1) the individual's opinions regarding their own 'green' or ethical lifestyle and consumption habits and 2) the individual's affiliation and knowledge of recognisable brands and the CSR efforts of said organisations.</p> <p>The online Schwartz PVQ survey that the participant will be asked to complete after the interview is a series of 40 Likert response questions. These questions will start with a few in relation to confirming their age, gender, role at SHU and interview participation onto asking the participant to consider their opinion of hypothetical guests that they could meet at a hypothetical occasion. The survey is designed to gain a response relating to how similar the participant affiliates with the guest on a 6 point scale from 'Very much like me' to 'Not like me at all'. The survey is hosted on a secure Google document and then downloaded into Excel where they are then converted into a 'wind rose' style diagram to show the individual's values; determined from the Schwartz methodology. To note, this information will not be used for specific measurement purposes but to highlight preference or predisposed value priority of the individual.</p>

nb. The Schwartz PVQ survey was not used in this research.

	<p>Storage of the PVQ information, audio files and transcripts will be on a personal portable hard drive (i.e. not online) and file names will not allow the identification of the individual to any 3rd party. The files will be deleted after the completion of the research if required, after the period of storage in line with SHU guidelines after completion of the DBA.</p> <p>The PVQ survey can be accessed here:</p> <p>Male - http://goo.gl/forms/6iAgTlS9aB</p> <p>Female - http://goo.gl/forms/UKPZ0EwpRS</p>
Will the research be conducted with partners & subcontractors?	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>(If YES, outline how you will ensure that their ethical policies are consistent with university policy.)</p>

1. Health Related Research involving the NHS or Social Care / Community Care or the Criminal Justice System or with research participants unable to provide informed consent

Question	Yes/No
<p>1. Does the research involve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or Social Care • Relatives/carers of patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or Social Care • Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past or present NHS patients • Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients • The recently dead in NHS premises • Prisoners or others within the criminal justice system recruited for health-related research* • Police, court officials, prisoners or others within the criminal justice system* • Participants who are unable to provide informed consent due to their incapacity even if the project is not health related 	No
<p>2. Is this a research project as opposed to service evaluation or audit? For NHS definitions please see the following website http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/is-your-project-research/</p>	No

If you have answered YES to questions 1 & 2 then you must seek the appropriate external approvals from the NHS, Social Care or the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) under their independent Research Governance schemes. Further information is provided below.

NHS <https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/SignIn.aspx>

* Prison projects may also need National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Approval and Governor's Approval and may need Ministry of Justice approval. Further guidance at: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/research-community/applying-for-approvals/national-offender-management-service-noms/>

NB FRECs provide Independent Scientific Review for NHS or SC research and initial scrutiny for ethics applications as required for university sponsorship of the research. Applicants can use the NHS proforma and submit this initially to their FREC.

2. Research with Human Participants

Question	Yes/No
1. Does the research involve human participants? This includes surveys, questionnaires, observing behaviour etc. <i>Note If YES, then please answer questions 2 to 10 If NO, please go to Section 3</i>	Yes
2. Will any of the participants be vulnerable? <i>Note 'Vulnerable' people include children and young people, people with learning disabilities, people who may be limited by age or sickness or disability, etc. See definition</i>	No
3. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?	No
4. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?	No
5. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	No
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?	No
7. Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants? <i>Note Harm may be caused by distressing or intrusive interview questions, uncomfortable procedures involving the participant, invasion of privacy, topics relating to highly personal information, topics relating to illegal activity, etc.</i>	No
8. Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?	No
9. Is it covert research? <i>Note 'Covert research' refers to research that is conducted without the knowledge of participants.</i>	No
10. Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?	No

If you answered **YES** only to question 1, you must complete the box below and submit the signed form to the FREC for registration and scrutiny.

<p>Data Handling Where data is collected from participants, outline the nature of the data, details of anonymisation, storage and disposal procedures if these are required (300 -750 words).</p> <p><i>As outlined before:</i> All the participants will be consenting adults (over 18 years of age) with anonymity assured and they will have access to the research findings and conclusion. The interviews will be recorded using a portable electronic Dictaphone and transcribed afterwards for analysis purposes. Discourse analysis will be completed using the NVivo software programme for coding and theming purposes alongside the other participants data. The topic of the conversation within the interview will approach 2 key areas; 1) the individual's opinions regarding their own 'green' or ethical lifestyle and consumption habits and 2) the individual's affiliation and knowledge of recognisable brands and the CSR efforts of said organisations. The online Schwartz PVQ survey that the participant will be asked to complete after the interview is a series of 40 Likert response questions. These questions will start with a few in relation to confirming their age, gender, role at SHU and interview participation onto asking the participant to consider their opinion of hypothetical guests that they could meet at a hypothetical occasion. The survey is designed to gain a response relating to how similar the participant affiliates with the guest on a 6 point scale from 'Very much like me' to 'Not like me at all'. The survey is hosted on a secure Google document and then downloaded into</p>
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Excel where they are then converted into a 'wind rose' style diagram to show the individual's values; determined from the Schwartz methodology. To note, this information will not be used for specific measurement purposes but to highlight preference or predisposed value priority of the individual. Storage of the PVQ information, audio files and transcripts will be on a personal portable hard drive (i.e. not online) and file names will not allow the identification of the individual to any 3rd party. The files will be deleted after the completion of the research if required, after the period of storage in line with SHU guidelines after completion of the DBA.

If you have answered YES to any of the other questions you are required to submit a SHUREC2A (or 2B) to the FREC. If you answered YES to question 8 and participants cannot provide informed consent due to their incapacity you must obtain the appropriate approvals from the NHS research governance system.

3. Research in Organisations

Question	Yes/No
1 Will the research involve working with/within an organisation (e.g. school, business, charity, museum, government department, international agency, etc.)?	Yes
2 If you answered YES to question 1, do you have granted access to conduct the research? <i>If YES, students please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain safely.</i>	No
3 If you answered NO to question 2, is it because: A. you have not yet asked B. you have asked and not yet received an answer C. you have asked and been refused access. <i>Note You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted access.</i>	A

4. Research with Products and Artefacts

Question	Yes/No
1. Will the research involve working with copyrighted documents, films, broadcasts, photographs, artworks, designs, products, programmes, databases, networks, processes, existing datasets or secure data?	No

2.	<p>If you answered YES to question 1, are the materials you intend to use in the public domain?</p> <p><i>Notes</i> <i>'In the public domain' does not mean the same thing as 'publicly accessible'.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Information which is 'in the public domain' is no longer protected by copyright (i.e. copyright has either expired or been waived) and can be used without permission.</i> - <i>Information which is 'publicly accessible' (e.g. TV broadcasts, websites, artworks, newspapers) is available for anyone to consult/view. It is still protected by copyright even if there is no copyright notice. In UK law, copyright protection is automatic and does not require a copyright statement, although it is always good practice to provide one. It is necessary to check the terms and conditions of use to find out exactly how the material may be reused etc.</i> <p><i>If you answered YES to question 1, be aware that you may need to consider other ethics codes. For example, when conducting Internet research, consult the code of the Association of Internet Researchers; for educational research, consult the Code of Ethics of the British Educational Research Association.</i></p>	n/a
3.	<p>If you answered NO to question 2, do you have explicit permission to use these materials as data?</p> <p><i>If YES, please show evidence to your supervisor. PI should retain permission.</i></p>	n/a
4.	<p>If you answered NO to question 3, is it because:</p> <p>A. you have not yet asked permission B. you have asked and not yet received an answer C. you have asked and been refused access.</p> <p><i>Note</i> <i>You will only be able to start the research when you have been granted permission to use the specified material.</i></p>	n/a

Adherence to SHU policy and procedures

Personal statement	
<p>I can confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have read the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Policy and Procedures - I agree to abide by its principles. 	
Student / Researcher/ Principal Investigator (as applicable)	
Name: Dan Woodason	Date: 04/03/2016
<p>Signature: <i>DWoodason</i> - Via Email -</p>	
Supervisor or other person giving ethical sign-off	
<p>I can confirm that completion of this form has not identified the need for ethical approval by the FREC or an NHS, Social Care or other external REC. The research will not commence until any approvals required under Sections 3 & 4 have been received.</p>	
Name: Christine Gilligan	Date: 07/03/2016
<p>Signature: -Via Email -</p>	