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Consumer’s participation in the local organic box schemes in England: Is it about ethics?

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Dedication

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A special feeling of gratitude to my father, Yousri Hashem whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity made the person I am today.

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Table of contents

List of tables

List of Figures

List of Annexes

Chapter One: Introduction

1 Background and research questions

The globalisation of food market responds to a system of economic configuration which has led to a generalised reduction in product prices, tight control over the upstream and downstream supply chain, and considerable improvement in consumer access to food. Such economic configuration, mainly oriented toward mass production and companies profit maximisation, has induced many social, ethical and environmental impacts. The escalating concerns among consumers regarding many of ethical problems might have paved the way for changing consumer choices and practices towards a new mode of consumption, more respectful towards the environment and society as a whole (Cembalo *et al.,* 2013; Lanfranchi and Giannetto, 2015).

The connection between consumption and ethical problems was manifested initially by the increasing concern for environmentalism depicted in green consumer studies (Thogersen, 1999; Holden and Linnerud, 2010; Connolly and Prothero, 2008; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Shaw, 1999). In more recent years, however, the rise and sudden escalation of some other problems associated with the food market, led to the spread of significant concerns and a growing awareness among all those involved with the food market, including researchers, policy makers, producers, and consumers about what has been called the deep-seated issues associated with the global food market such as, labour rights, fair-trade, environmental depletion, soil erosion and cruel working conditions in developing countries (Ford *et al.,* 2005; Tohnstone, 2010).

An alternative to globalised food market may be identified in a set of organisational systems that gave rise to the so-called alternative food networks (AFNs) (Miele 1999; Murdoch and Miele 1999; Morgan *et al.,* 2006). In fact, the spread of AFNs has been directly connected to the spread of new needs on the part of consumers whose demand is increasingly influenced by environmental, ethical, and food safety concerns (Cembalo *et al.,* 2012; Hughner *et al.,* 2007; DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Marsden *et al.,* 2000; Cova, 1999; Elliot 1999; Nygård and Storstad 1998).

What seems to emerge is a new mode of consumption that a stream of the literature on consumer studies calls Ethical consumption (Doane, 2001; Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004; De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005; Shaw *et al.,* 2005; Vermeir and Verbeke 2006; Carrier 2010; Zander and Hamm 2010).

Ethical consumption refers to a particular pattern of consumption, where the consumer fits his/her interests to the ethical, environmental, economic, and social values. The supposedly ethical and the sustainable food systems on their part relies on consumers who have the mind-set to make changes to their consumption pattern toward food that hold environmentally, economic, social, and health favourable makeup.

The cooperative bank which has a long history of reporting on ethical trade and consumption values and development, published newly a report on ethical trade and consumers market documenting a continued growth rate in this sector supported by evidence that ethical values played a major role in consumers decision making. For example, food and drink showed a market share growth of 8.5 percent (£7.9bn to £8.5bn) growth in the value between 2012 and 2013. Particular growth has been experienced in areas including Fair-trade (13%), free range eggs (19%), free food (19%), vegetarianism (9%), and sustainable fish (17%). The rapid growth patterns of this market undoubtedly as claimed by the cooperative bank show a promising potential, however only represent a very small niche compared to the size of the overall food market.(Cooperative Bank, 2014)

Needless to say that, the shift in consumption pattern requires a parallel shift in the supply and retail sides if the benefits of and the trend of ethical consumption to start and to grow. In the food sector, several supply sides could be identified, which has been reported to have a major contribution towards ethical consumption, including Organic, Fairtrade networks , and a smaller but growing sector of small entrepreneurship (Businesses) that adopts completely multiple corporate social responsibility strategies and aiming to reinforcing(emphasizing) ethical consumption. These systems especially organic and fair-trade, have been widely discussed in previous research as an important dimension of ethical consumerism. This study focuses on the small businesses of organic and local production supply side which is believed to have played the major role in the spread of and the rapid growth of ethical consumerism among food consumers.

Different types of AFN's could be identified which might have helped to support and stand behind the current ethical consumption trend. Among the oldest and most consolidated experiences are related to organic and fair trade markets, where consumers recognise food products as being safer, environmentally friendly, and socially just. In particular, organic products have initially been promoted as part of larger ethical and sustainable food systems to replace the ongoing conventional production and industrial systems which have been highly criticised due to the plethora of safety and the ecological issues associated with the heavy reliance on usage of pesticides and chemical fertilisers to increase productivity (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Vermeir and Verbeke 2006; Zander and Hamm 2010). Such food systems were mainly characterised by small and medium organic farms and by, relatively few, sale channels mainly characterised by small independent stores.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the European supply chain of organic products has experienced a significant change, which has seen a market consolidation of large national and multinational retailers becoming more prevalent at the expense of smaller independent stores and sales channels (IFOAM, 2016). This trend is most apparent in the UK, one of the largest organic markets in Europe, where the organic market is by about 70 percent, dominated by the mainstream supermarket chains (Soil Association, 2016). The retail marketplace has become ever more competitive, with the supermarkets discerningly choosing between producers for higher quality specifications and larger quantities, which considerably impact on the environment and local economy, by relying on imported cheap produce, which increases food miles and risks many local producers to lose their small businesses. This prevalent retail strategy has contributed to what has been later referred to by many organic food advocates as the "conventionalization" of organic food and farming. This left the organic food systems to suffer many social, economic, and environmental problems it was genuinely supposed to help overcome (Best, 2008).

The re-organization of organic food supply chain seems to be the starting point for new forms of local and organic alternative food networks in the Great Britain, which emphasise the importance of safeguarding and protecting the environmental, economic, and social elements of food production and consumption (Deland, 2002).

In light of these consequences, as a result of agriculture industrialisation and the globalised structure of organic food markets, it was claimed that alternative food networks have emerged due to the decreasing profitability for farmers and the rising consumer perception of industrial food production as unsafe and unhealthy (Renting *et al.,* 2003; Ploeg, 2008; Treager, 2011). Alternative food networks 'AFN's' is a newly emerging network of producers and consumers' and possibly other actors that embody alternativeness to the more standardised industrial model of food production and supply (Renting *et al.,* 2003). This alternative food networks genuinely aim to move away from the mainstream models of food production and distribution that are exclusively oriented towards an economics of scale and economic performance that is oriented towards production and profit maximisation. On the contrary, the alternative food networks aim at emphasising the importance of safeguarding (conserving) and protecting the ethical, environmental, economic and social elements of food production and consumption (Deland, 2002). These networks of organic and locally based produce are identified as systems that bring consumers and producers together in a close direct contact, trying to establish a food supply chain that bypasses the traditional monoculture of supermarket paradigm with a more transparent and direct based supply model (Van der Ploeg, 2000; Renting *et al.,* 2003; Vidal, 2011).

Interestingly, a newly published report by the Soil Association, on sales and production of organic food in the UK, presents a clear trend in the increase of growth of the different forms of direct sales, specifically the organic food subscription schemes or box schemes (Soil Association, 2016). The steady and increasingly rapid growth of sales of the box schemes in the UK over the last years demonstrates the increasing popularity of these alternative forms of food chains among food consumers and increased consumer interest in purchasing products from local markets directly from local organic growers. Given the high ethical identity that makes up these schemes, this trend could reflect a shift in consumption pattern among particular sort of consumers who sought food that has a local and organic background from these different and unique retail channels for a number of reasons that could be environmental, economic, social, personally relevant.

The astonishing rise of sales of the local and organic box schemes indicates that these alternative channels are being embraced by many consumers, as evidenced by the growth of the networks employing these models. However, it is not clear whether this trend is linked to the rise of ethical consumers who are concerned about environmental and ethical issue associated with the food market, or it is a trend linked to consumers intent to consume domestic fresh and healthy food with a good value for money (Feagan *et al.,* 2004; Zepeda and Li, 2006).

Therefore, the research question underlying this study is: what considerations box scheme consumers have when they decide to purchase and participate in the box schemes?

1.1 Research objectives and limitations

The present PhD thesis seeks to explore whether ethical considerations are important to consumers participating in this networks, or this consumption trend is influenced by other consumers' considerations. To pursue this aim, the present work attempts to explore consumer's decision making to participate in the British organic- local box schemes. The choice to analyse British box schemes is linked to its constant and rapid growth which placed it as one of the most important market niche channels of organic products in the U.K and Europe.

In the context of consumer decision making, this study seeks to explore the specific set of issues that appear to be gaining influence in consumer food purchase decisions. Achieving a greater understanding of how these issues influence the consumer will enable food policy makers, retail environment (strategies) to adopt different measures to promote food that hold multiple values related to the local or regional organic production, and to marketing to their prospective consumers in the UK more efficiently.

As McDonald (2006) emphasised that every time someone makes a decision about whether or not to purchase a product or service there is a potential for that decision to hold more or less an ethical reasoning of consumption (McDonald, 2006). In line with the research stream on ethical consumerism, the hypothesis underline this study is that consumers who make decisions to participate in these local and organic box schemes are mainly driven by ethical considerations. In addition, it is reasonable to believe that such ethical considerations are strictly linked to the consumer's awareness about food market issues.

More in depth, this thesis tries to identify the motivational patterns that derive box scheme consumer's behaviour when participating in local organic box schemes in the UK. The examination of consumers' motivations and ethical decision-making is common in ethical consumerism theories. Such studies tended to assume a linear relationship between motivation and action. However, the relationship between consumer motivation and actual behaviour has been seen in the majority of ethical consumerist behaviour studies as a complex issue. Consumer's decision-making with respect to socially and environmentally responsible behaviour has been identified as a highly complex multidimensional process involving intellect, moral, and pragmatic components, which may further serve to add to the complexity of their decisions (McGregor 2008). Therefore, the concept of a rational and smooth translation between attitudes and behaviour adopted in early consumerism studies has been proven as hard to support (Moisander, 2007). In reality it is likely that ethical consumers find themselves confronted by uncertainties in terms of many other factors that might make the ethical choice more complex, and even it might impact on the ethical action, such as information, product availability, confidence of the impact of behaviour (consequences of their actions), price, quality (Bray *et al.,* 2011). These factors have been undermined by the notion of rational consumption choice assumed in the early consumerist behaviour studies. These factors are generally assumed to have various influences on the translation process of intention into behaviour, which in turn become susceptible to its effect (Mcgregor, 2008). The factors mentioned above have been increasingly referenced as the reason behind the intentions – behavior gap commonly found in the ethical market, which avoids intentions from smoothly translated to behaviour.

In this thesis, a model of moral decision making and behaviour was chosen. This model, proposed by Rest (1986), has been widely described as consistent with the core elements of many subsequent models on decision making (e.g. Ajzen, 1985; Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Hunt and Vitell 1986; Ajzen, 1991), which focus on one or more of the stages outlined (Jones 1991). In addition this model seems less complicated compared to the other models and the most comprehensive to the nature of this research, which doesn't aim at adopting any previous ethical theoretical framework but originally aim at identifying the effects of ethics in consumption in the ongoing actual action of purchase and consumption in a particular context such as that of organic and local box schemes. This is particularly different than most studies conducted in this area, which focus exclusively on the formation of ethical intention, not on the actual behaviour. A consumer who participates in this forms of alternative food chains already consume and actively purchase from these networks; therefore it has required a little modification of some of the phases developed in the Rest's model.

1.2 Methodological overview

To achieve the above aim, this thesis utilises a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, informed by theory, and results in the formation of a methodological approach appropriate for use in this study. The quantitative approach is traditionally associated with logical positivism and is usually deductive (Gill and Johnson, 1991). Quantitative studies, therefore, seek to establish causal relationships among objectively specified variables, testing hypotheses derived from predictive theories (Kerlinger, 1986). Using this approach, variables are precisely measured and data is collected under standardised conditions using an instrument such as a questionnaire. Adopting a different philosophy, qualitative methods are phenomenological in approach and inductive and are concerned with gaining an understanding of the unique experiences of the individual. Importance is, therefore, placed on the subjective account provided by the individual participant. Very different research methods are, therefore, utilised in qualitative research. Data can be collected through observation, in-depth interviews or via participation, for example.

Different purposes are served by the philosophies underlying quantitative and qualitative research methods (the quantitative and qualitative philosophies serve differential purposes). Choice of approach, therefore, depends on the nature of the research question. A quantitative, deductive approach is most appropriate where a substantial body of literature exists, and the problem 'emerges' from the literature. Hypotheses are then used to 'test' theory. A qualitative, inductive approach is more relevant when little information is in existence, or there is an insufficient theory to explain a phenomenon (Thorpe and Lowe, 1991). This is not to suggest that both approaches are mutually exclusive. Rather, a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques is arguably complementary (Robson, 1993; Yin, 1994; Cahill, 1996; Pernice, 1996). Indeed, the use of multiple methods and data sources can overcome the intrinsic bias that can result from single-method studies through applying 'Data triangulation' (Gill and Johnson, 1991).

The programme of research within this thesis, therefore, initially adopts a qualitative approach, in order to explore the principal factors influencing box scheme consumer behaviour. In-depth-interviews, involving 22 consumers, were used to obtain insight into the range of factors influencing box scheme participation. Insights from the in-depth interviews were then used to inform the development and analysis of a survey providing quantitative data. The in-depth interviews based on semi-structured guideline with box scheme consumers served four purposes in the investigation. First, given limited insight in this area of box scheme participation, they were utilised to explore the full range of factors involved in consumer participation. Second, they revealed the specific 'ethical' study focus for utilisation at the quantitative stage. Third, they informed the content, and language used in the questionnaires. Finally, they served to reflect on and help interpret results from the quantitative stage, guiding the development of the subsequent quantitative models of consumer decision-making. The quantitative data obtained by the questionnaire was then used to explore the interaction and impact of important factors influencing ethical consumer decision-making. This was achieved through the integration of qualitative and quantitative data with existing theory (Data triangulation). Overall, such a combination of approaches informed the development of an improved and operationalised model of consumer decision-making to participate and purchase from a local – organic box schemes.

More, in particular, the questionnaire, completed by 416 actual box scheme consumers, was structured in three sections. The first section investigates the consideration underlining consumer participation at box scheme, besides exploring consumers recognition of food market issue, The second section of the questionnaire was used to explore consumers perception about box scheme organisation; while the third section was used to explore consumers socio-demographic characteristics.

At the qualitative phase, data generated from the in-depth face to face interviews were analysed using a content analysis. Because of the sample size and narrowness of the qualitative data, computerised qualitative coding packages have not been employed. The information generated from the data collection have been analysed manually using content analysis, following the guideline from Shye, Ehzur, and Hoffman (1994), to consumption patterns and possible relationships. With reference to quantitative phase, data extracted from the questionnaire were analysed by using SPSS software. Structure of thesis

The thesis is organised into six chapters, the first introductory chapter, **Chapter 1** introduces the research area, and the study's aim and objectives. The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows

The following two chapters of this thesis review the literature on ethical consumerism, consumer behaviour, ethical decision making, organic food and farming, the alternative food sector, with a special focus on the context of local and organic box schemes in the UK as the major focal case in this research.

The literature begins with an overview of the ethical consumerism concept including a comparison of the main differences between consumerism approaches in **Chapter 2**. The chapter goes on to present the ethical consumer's behaviour, with presenting the main critiques found in previous ethical consumer behaviour studies. The chapter ends by presenting the ethical purchase behaviour from the ethical decision-making perspective, moving through the different models used before to examine ethical decision making.

Chapter 3 examines the different ethical supply sides which hold many ethical attributes in food choice and reviewing them more in depth. Then it moves to present the changes in this sector 'Organic' which might have jeopardised the organic ethos embodied in its holistic principals, leading to the development of many alternative food networks. The alternative food networks are then presented with exploring the role of ethics in the makeup of these particular agro-food channels.

Chapter 4, the overall methodological approach adopted is outlined and the specific methods employed for data collection and analysis are discussed.

Chapter 5 present the findings of the research. The chapter begins by presenting the results from the primary research, starting with the initial inductive qualitative phase of the study, and then the findings from the deductive qualitative survey data that has been probed with appropriate inferential statistics to help identify the significant and substantive results will be introduced.

Chapter 6 will integrate the findings from both the primary and secondary research to present the discussion and the research final conclusions, study limitations, and the recommendations for future research

Chapter Two: Ethical consumerism

2 Ethical consumerism

2.1 Introduction

Ethical consumerism and changing consumption pattern among food consumers has become an issue that fast attracted attention in western consumers market economy (Carrier, 2010). Under the ethical consumption umbrella are many different things that encompass the aspects of care and respect toward environment, natural resources, and respect to animal welfare; this is known as “Green consumerism”; while “Ethical consumerism” care and benefit both the environment and other societal and economic factors, such as child labour, fair-trade (De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005). This has also been referred to in wide part of the consumerism literature as ‘political consumerism’ (Stolle and Micheletti 2013).

Ethical consumerism means that consumers when making consumption or a purchase activity they should take into account the moral nature of objects. The moral nature is mainly initiated by either social, economic, environmental, or political background or a mixture of them (Carrier, 2010). Doane (2001) referred to ethical products as carrying several dimensions (human rights, labour conditions, animal well-being, environment, etc.), and to ethical consumption as the free choice by an individual consumer to purchase a product that concerns these ethical dimensions or issues (Doane 2001). This means that the ethical consumer who feels responsible toward environment or society should express these feelings by means of his or her purchasing behaviour.

The increasing trend towards consuming ethical foods spring from a plethora of issues associated with the globalisation of food sourcing and industrial food production which places an emphasis on the responsibility of the individual consumer (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). In particular, the social and environmental consequences of this modern production, trade have resulted in more adventurous consumers and consumers who ask more questions about the production processes and the source of their food due to the loss of confidence in the integrity of the conventional and global food system (Nicholson-Lord, 1999).

A broad range of reports and research over the past decades have documented the emergence and the existence of a group of consumers who are believed to have their consumption decisions affected by a broad set of issues that are questioned ethically; these issues range from the environment to the whole society and local or global economy (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Shaw *et al.,* 2005). Today there is growing evidence that consumers are becoming more discerning in their consumption choices, as a result of changing tastes and expectations and are increasingly making their consumption decisions on the basis of ethical values (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). Consumers can decide to consider one or more ethical attributes when buying products (De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005).

The increasing trend toward ethical consumption has been viewed to be a result of many factors. It has been mainly related to changing consumption values as a result of increasing consumer awareness in response to rising media focus and interest on the increasing scientific evidence of the environmental, social and economic externalities associated with food production and global food trade (Clarke *et al.,* 2007).

Generally, the concept of ethical consumerism is accepted as being born out of the environmental movement and/or seen as an evolution of earlier consumerism movement such as green consumerism (Creyer, 1997; Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Roberts, 1996; Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006).

2.2 Consumerism Evolution

2.2.1 Green consumerism

The concept of green consumption has been the first concept to be established in the field of ethical consumption of consumer behaviour (Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004), where other interrelated concepts of consumerism is accepted as being born out from it (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006).‘Green’ consumerism refer to consumer behavioural and motivational tendency towards a specific environmental conscious. Green consumption was manifested initially by the connection between environmental problems and consumption (Shaw and Clarke, 1999). In the context of food consumption this means that, increasing consumer concern and interest about the environmental issues linked to agriculture and food systems will lead them to demand and purchase more “Green” alternatives to reduce the environmental impact of their own consumption (Shaw and Clarke, 1999; McEachern and Mcclean, 2002; Hughner *et al.,* 2007).

A classic definition of "Green consumerism" reflect on that as it describes green consumers as people who takes the environmental and public consequences into their account when making the purchase, consumption, and use or dispose of a particular product or services and attempts to use their purchasing power to bring about a change (Moisander 2007).

An old, radical view of green consumption behaviour assumes that individual consumers should reduce their consumption to minimum if they truly care about environment. This has been identified to be problematic and not easy to adopt due to due to the current convenience and consumption driven oriented societies (Moisander, 2007). So we rather follow a more liberal view on the phenomenon which view green consumerism as behaviour of choosing product and services that have least impact on environment (Moisander, 2007).

Several general prosperities that describe what a green product might hold were presented by Elkington et al., (1990) who stated that an environmentally sound products and services should not; endanger the health of people or animals, do not use an excessive amount of energy and other resources during production, do not involve unnecessary waste, do not cause cruelty to animals. These criteria were presented to describe green products and further noted that this could be used as a guide to green consumers when making environment-friendly shopping (Elkington et al., 1990).

In more recent years, market research has also identified a significant concerns for other deep-seated problems, such as fair trade, labour rights and armaments. From this, green consumerism has been viewed to represent a rather narrow form of consumerism due to its concentration on environmental values only while omitting other ethical, social and economic issues related to fairness for example that have come to the fore in recent years (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). In this regard, many scholars emphasised on the need to divide between the ethics and environmentalism. For example by Shaw and Shiu (2002) stressed that ethical and green consumerism is not necessarily implying the same thing, emphasising the need to deal or investigate them as two distinct forms of consumerism (Shaw and Shiu, 2002). They explained that this distinction is important due to the major difference in concerns that encompass the two concepts which can add significantly to the complexity of consumer decisions (Shaw and Shiu, 2002).

This increased breadth in consumer concern over the past decade is most commonly referred to as 'ethical consumerism'. The ethical consumption concept then is widely accepted to broaden the concept of green consumerism by including the ethical and moral aspects present in production, delivery of goods and consumption instead of focus solely on aspects of the environment (Shaw and Clarke, 2002). For example, the use of child labour, suppressing or preventing labour unions, and testing on animals (Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004).

2.2.2 Ethical consumerism

The concept of ethical consumerism is assumed to have multiple area concerns including the environment, social, and economic interests (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). By extending the green consumerism ideals, ethical consumerism implies that individual consumers' consider not only individual and environmental goals but they should take social concerns into consideration in their purchase behaviour (Browne *et al.,* 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). The ethical consumption classically was interpreted in relation to the fair-trade concepts; However, it set to encompass wider issues as consumers ethical concerns and awareness increased. These includes issues such as the reduction of gas emissions, protection of rainforest, prevention of child labour, ensuring safe working conditions, and greater interest in local production and consumption (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006; Zander and Hamm, 2010; Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Atif *et al.,* 2013). Ethical consumers would, therefore, seek to purchase or use goods and services that can demonstrate social and environmental responsibility beside their individual or private benefits. This is reflected through Harper and Makatouni (2002) explanation of what ethical consumption entails, being an ethical consumer means ''buying products which are not harmful to the environment and society (Harper and Makatouni 2002). Similarly, Harrison et al., (2005) suggested that ethical consumers ''care whether a corporation promotes employees from minority ethnicities, plan their consumption to avoid harm to others, worry about product transportation distances and probably a plethora of other concerns'' (Freestone and McGoldrick 2008).

2.2.3 Political consumerism

Political consumerism has viewed ethical consumption particularly from the perspective of consumer seeking to resist the market through seeking alternatives to the perceived unethical conduct.

Micheletti (2003) defined political consumerism as " actions by people who make choices among producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices (Micheletti, 2003, P.2)

Political consumption offer consumers the means to challenge and protest what they see unethical or socially and environmentally irresponsible in two distinct ways. First through rewarding and being committed producers and products that carry civic, political, ethical values and preferences such as Fairtrade, organic products. Second, protesting against any unethical or uncivic conduct through boycotts(Stole& Micheletti, 2013). These two forms of political consumerism (boycotts and buycotts) offer consumers opportunities to bring their political and ethical concerns to the marketplace and use their purchasing power among producers and products to attempt to change institutional or market practices found to be ethically, politically and environmentally objectionable.

2.2.4 Sustainable consumerism

A more recent development of ethical consumerism is the concept of "sustainable consumption". Similar to ethical consumption, sustainable consumption is understood to require major alteration in the demand and supply domains.

Similar to ethical consumerism notions, sustainable consumption behaviour requires changes in the personal consumption pattern and lifestyles toward more sustainable economic, social, and environmental systems to step away from the materialism that inherent consumption, and ensure the viability of the sustainable and ethical systems to bring and sustain a better quality of consumption and production (Jackson 2004). This suggests a decision-making process where the purchase of products or services not only to have comparatively less impact on environment and society but also the way the products are consumed is sustainable (Harrison *et al.*, 2005).

To summarise, the consumerism movements encompass different concepts starting from 'Green', 'Ethical', 'political' 'and more recently 'Sustainable'. These concepts already overlap and this could explain why they are often interchangeably used. The integration of these concerns into purchasing decisions seems to be based on a mix of both private and public motivations (Sassatelli 2006; Clarke *et al.,* 2007; Hartlieb and Jones, 2009). Hence, the ethical paradigm of the phenomenon can be distinguished, as reflected in the different uses of the terms green, ethical, political and sustainable consumerism (Hartlieb and Jones, 2009). For clarity and to avoid confusion, this thesis will comprehensively refer to it in the subsequent discussion as ethical consumerism.

2.3 Ethical consumption behaviour: What it is?

As already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the ethical purchase and consumption refers to the consumption and buying behaviour that is aligned with a particular set of ethical issues that could encompass wider environmental, economic, and social goals, rather than the materialistic and economic outlook of consumption which take into account other set of values such as quality (taste, shape, colour) and convenience for instance. Hence, ethical consumers should focus their consumption toward alternatives to the other identified unethical ones. This is largely viewed as a form of symbolic consumption in which consumers pursue an ethical lifestyle by making their consumption decisions on the basis of ethical values (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). The notion of the symbolic consumption is central to (Baudrillard and Levin, 1981) postmodern theory, which suggests that consumers consume the symbolic meaning of products, rather than its depicted images (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). Therefore, this type of consumption moves beyond the primary utilitarian function of serving basic human needs; which contradicts the conventional early modern economic assumptions of a pure utility maximisation of individual economic actors which is based on one assumption that consumers have one, stable utility structure and they express that utility in their purchasing. This means that consumers are not only driven by their mono-utility as presented in the pure economic utility function (Etzioni, 2010). Instead, they have a duality of interests and concerns that are associated with more public goals of the general well-being (Hartlieb and Jones, 2009). Therefore, consumers could bring their ethical concerns into their consumption decisions without compromising their role as consumers (Holzer, 2006; Schoenheit, 2007). The growth of this particular form of consumerism has been embodied by the concept ‘‘caring sharing’’ (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004) and evolving theories of citizenship such as: Ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2006; Dobson, 2007; Jagers 2009), Sustainable citizenship (Micheletti, Stolle *et al.,* 2012), and communal citizenship (Conover *et al.,* 1991; Jones and Gaventa, 2004). These concepts explains the consumption shift in consumer values from the inward materialistic consumption embodied in modern consumption models encouraged by early capitalistic economies that frames consumption as predicted by consumers utility of price, quality and convenience *per se* (Micheletti, 2003; Hemingway and Maclagan 2004; Young, 2006; Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Norris, 2007; Baudrillard, 2016), and associated with what is called the Yuppies of the 1980s ((Micheletti, 2003; Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004), towards a more socially and environmentally proactive mindset (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004). This was interpreted as an opportunity for re-defining consumption to counteract the very damage in the social and/or environmental terms left by the conventional consumption patterns since it allows consumers to be charged with ethical meanings (Kennedy, 2004; Micheletti and Stolle, 2004). This has been described as shift in power from the sphere of producers and production levels to the sphere of consumption (Baudrillard, 2005; Norris, 2007). Beck (2010) for example, argued that this embody the late modernity in which democracy and power are largely oriented to consumers instead of producers as in the early classical concepts of modernity (Beck, 2010).

Accordingly, there is a need to take a multi-perspective approach when investigating about consumer behaviour to start a shift in the way consumption is investigated by considering the identity and cultural systems of meaning and value in examining consumption choice. This is fundamental to give less account to perhaps the traditional conceptualisation of consumption which focus more on the practical aspects of consumption such as price and utility, and pay more attention to the symbolic factor of consumption that are assumed to play major role in consumers consumption decisions (Micheletti, 2003; Schaefer and Crane, 2005; Young, 2006, Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Mostafa, 2007; Norris, 2007; Baudrillard, 2016). This means that the ethical dimension in the consumption activity does not preclude material consumption and people's self-interested desires for ethical consumption. People can, for instance, decide to buy organic food because they think it will benefit their health, but this private goal should not be the only reason to consume ethical products, as it precludes the collectivist or the public dimension that makes up the ethical consumption behaviour (Hartlieb and Jones, 2009; Carrier, 2010). This has been documented in many ethical consumption studies, which explains that the decision to choose and consume an ethical product or service is shaped by consumers personal and public motivations (Shaw and Clark, 1999; Clarke et al., 2007; Sassatelli, 2006; Clarke et al., 2007; Soper, 2007; Freestone, 2008).

While this shift in consumption patterns has been described and explained theoretically in major consumption behaviour literature, there is little substantive empirical research that address how this motivational and consumption process's operates. It is this gap in the existing knowledge that this study seeks to address.

2.3.1 Ethical Consumarism: Forms of action

Consumerism is being used by some scholars (e.g. Micheletti 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005; Micheletti and Stolle 2007; Stolle and Micheletti 2013) as a tool for social and political change based on the assumption that consumers can make companies accountable; wherein corporations make changes to their business strategies on the basis of consumer demand. In this regard, consumerism was argued to take various forms: first consumers can translate their ethical concerns by means of buying products holding ethical qualities from organisations perceived as socially responsible, also known as 'Buycott activity' (Micheletti 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005). It is also known as positive choice behaviours, which implies purchasing those products and practices which are upheld and promoted for its good ethical values such as the purchase of a fair trade and environmentally friendly products (e.g. organic). Second, they may actively boycott (also known as Negative ethical behaviour) those organizations perceived as irresponsible (e.g., not buying products that violates any ethical conduct) and /or products for their negative qualities, reflecting a shift in the balance of power between consumer and producer (Shaw and Clarke, 1999, Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Micheletti 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005; De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005). In this case, consumer power is sought to be used to ensure that companies take into their accounts the social and environmentally respectful aspects in their business conduct. Furthermore, ethical consumption choices and decisions may also include the individual consumers involving in activism other than consumption practice such as anti-corporate, anti-brand and anti-commercialisation (Micheletti 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005; Shaw and Riach, 2011). This may potentially present part of individuals consumption activity and can be viewed within a broad consumption context (Schaefer and Crane, 2001; Holt, 2002; Szmigin *et al.,* 2009).These activities are different from the purchase and consumption of products themselves, either by opening a dialogue with retailers and manufacturers or build lobbying. Figure (1) illustrates these distinctions (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001), which suggests the options people have in following different paths into ethical-consumption behaviours (Starr, 2016).

Before ethics make its way to the market, trade and consumption as widely witnessed nowadays, it played very little role in choice but loomed significantly in the form of negative behavioural activity. The psychological reasons took the credit for that argued several authors, the motivation and the consumer ability to perform a negative ethical purchase behaviour either through boycotting or excluding is considered much easier for them. In the sense that being told to think in terms of excluding led to more ethical decisions (Tallontire *et al.*, 2001). According to Wheale and Hinton (2007), consumers are becoming more and more willing to withhold their patronage if they perceive an unacceptable ethical stance on behalf of the retailer or supplier indicating an increasing shift in power between consumers and corporations (Creyer, 1997; Wheale and Hinton, 2007). However, positive ethical purchase behaviour is increasing which is evidenced by the growing trend in organic, fair-trade, local organic food sales. Although still, small share compared to whole food market sale value, its remarkable growth in recent years shows the increasing opportunity for positive ethical purchase behaviour, i.e. purchase of goods with ethical attributes.

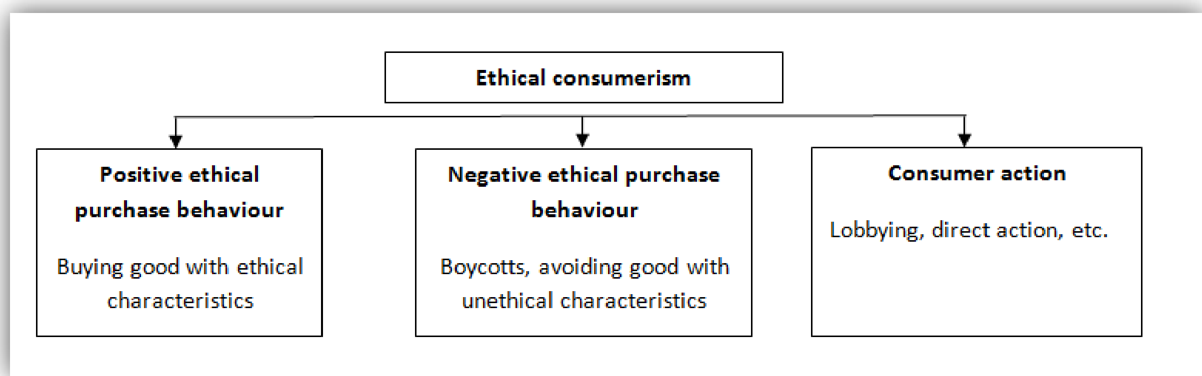


Figure 1:Three types of ethical consumerism, sourceTallontire et al., (2001).

2.4 Ethical Trade:

The phenomenon of ethical consumption is not only about the demand side of product markets, shifts in consumption towards ethically, environmentally and socially preferred products require a parallel shift on the supply side to allow to purchase and use products that demonstrate their ethical responsibility toward the aspect in question (MacGillivray, 2000; Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Clarke, 2008).

Ethical trade refers to any forms of trade that consciously seeks to do business and transactions more ethically, through being responsible towards the diverse social, environmental, economic aspects of production/manufacture and trade. Nowadays, ethics is a fundamental part of companies that have the desire to maintain its success through strengthening its competitiveness capabilities by promoting and embracing ethical production and trade relations (Auger *et al.,* 2003).

The wide-held assumption is that it is no longer enough that corporate shareholders' goals are attained; corporations are also increasingly being evaluated on the basis of how they offer to consumers what they see and care about to be morally/ethically acceptable to their moral and ethical values (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004; Harrison *et al.*, 2005; Migliore *et al.,* 2015). Ethical and sustainable practices imply that no one in the supply chain can ignore the consequences of their actions and how it affects others around. Corporations should act responsibly for how they do business so that consumers can make ethically sustainable decisions (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). As a result, over the past decades social responsibility and ethical trade especially have received increased attention and has become an important corporate goal. As MacGillivray (2000) stressed, it is crucial for companies to better understand what kind of behaviour consumers are now demanding and how they view ethical issues in order to promote the desired concerns and motivations in the minds of the consumer (MacGillivray, 2000).

In the past few years, many large corporations have increasingly taken on goals of operating in more socially and/or environmentally responsible ways, as well as reporting their activities in these respects. For example, in the UK the sales of Cadbury expanded after they decided to make their very popular Dairy Milk chocolate bar with Fairtrade cocoa, which was presumed to increase UK sales of Fairtrade cocoa (Bowers, 2009). Similarly, other large companies in the UK such as the large UK sugar company Tate & Lyle decided to shift all their commercial and industrial sugar to Fairtrade (Wearden, 2008; Carrier, 2010). All these examples could have helped ethics to carve its place in the market, offering many products that carry ethical attributes. These examples also suggest that pro-social shifts in consumer spending can at least at times cause the idea of 'being the change you want to see in the world' to have real effects.

Nevertheless, recent years have seen a substantial amount of research debating on the idea of combining ethics in corporate/trade strategies and what incentives drive businesses to shift what and how they produce in socially-responsible and/or environmentally-sustainable directions, where there is a rising backlash against the idea. Many criticisms have been laid out to argue that corporations does not 'do good' ethically for any reason other than to 'do well' financially to maximize the value of the firm in response to their fiduciary responsibility towards the company (Kitzmueller and Shimshack, 2012). A classical view offered by Milton Friedman (1970) in (starr, 2016) summarises this phenomenon, he argued that "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits."(Starr, 2016). Tregear (1996) followed by suggesting that firms responding to the increasing ethical demands by consumers may be doing so purely for economic reasons including market reasons rather than genuine philanthropy. (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002). While other arguments were laid out to clearly suggest that despite the promising outcome that is associated with adopting ethical or what is famously called socially responsible strategies within the business, most corporations cannot apply it, because in most cases, doing what is best for society means sacrificing profits, and most companies are not ready to do so (Tregear, 1996; McEachern and Mcclean, 2002; Kitzmueller and Shimshack, 2012). These arguments later reflected a pessimism in the capability of corporations and consumers to make a significant change (Kitzmueller and Shimshack, 2012). For example, Star (2016) argued that the voluntary character of corporate social responsibility means that companies can pick and choose which ethical, environmental or social goals to include their CSR strategies, where they presumably pick those goals which they expect to benefit them the most and cost them the least(Star, 2016). She gave an example of the retail giant Wal-Mart that has opted to improve their environmental sustainability and promote healthy and safe food by calling out for sustainable energy use and improving its offerings of organic and healthy foods, while doing little about low wages and lack of benefits for its retail employees, or its shaky commitment to working conditions in the plants of its overseas suppliers (Starr, 2016).

This could well imply that achieving societal goals of shifting economic activities all the way into sustainable trajectories may depend on government policies and regulations if ethical-consumption behaviours alone may have insufficient force. In light of that some studies suggest that setting a regulation for ethical production and trade could lay a better foundation for ethical consumerism to prevail across trade sector and consumption as it will be more immediate and effective solution to unethical practices than hoping for market change as suggested by the National Consumer Council in the UK (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002). But how these regulations will be implemented or enforced is still lacking and it is even believed to have some negative consequences (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002).

While a full review of this research is beyond the scope of this study, many alternative approaches such as fair-trade and organic movements have been at the forefront of understanding this phenomenon of ethical trade and consumption (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). These approaches have been framed as an alternative to the other unjust and unfair globalised and conventional food systems which has been majorly perceived to be behind much of the recent environmental, economic and social deteriorations. Interestingly, organic and Fair-trade have long history of private regulation, of which a certification is available only for products produced and transacted in ways that meet particular standards. Today, fair-trade and organic products are making their presence felt in the commercial mainstream, which allows consumers to have easy access to a wide range of what could be so-called ethically produced products and choose from a wide variety of products and manufacturers in the mainstream food market (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). And many studies recently showed that fair-trade and organic products have become increasingly appealing to consumers for the sustainability attributes and ethical claims it holds (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008; d'Astous and Legendre, 2009, Kotler, 2011; Öberseder *et al.*, 2011).

In the next section three sets of supply-sides that pertain closely to issues of ethical consumption namely organic food and farming and Fairtrade will be briefly presented and discussed. Those supply-sides has been widely identified in the literature as holding many ethical changes in its structural nature and have a major influence in consumers ability to "making a difference" through their consumption choices of this products

2.4.1 The ethical supply sides

2.4.1.1 Fair-trade

"Fair-trade" buying is known as one of the classical trends of ethical consumption activity. It is a specific type of ethical consumption as it holds the main dimension of ethical consumerism regarding the social aspects of consumption. Its emergence was considered as one of the main contributors that opened a room for a change and stimulate a shift or turn in consumption behaviour. Briefly, based on the dimensions highlighted classically, fair-trade consumption means buying items for their positive quality of supporting people in faraway developing countries (De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005). Fair-trade networks are alternative supply chains that connect third-world farmers and first-world consumers via arrangements in which farmers (a) receive guaranteed minimum prices that give them a decent livelihood, (b) organize into cooperatives that serve as efficient vehicles for disseminating information and inputs and for processing and selling output, (c) use sustainable farming methods, and (d) get access to credit. Nowadays Fair-trade arrangements although still represent a small part of the global supply chain, it continues to expand at a good rate, with the number of farmers and workers participating in the fair trade estimated at 1.4 million in 2012 (Fairtrade International, 2013; Starr, 2016).

The fair trade products so as the organic has a long reputation of holding on a regulatory standard that controls the deals and business transactions to ensure that it is carried out ethically between parties involved. Famously a certification holding the Fairtrade organisation is available on products produced and transacted according to a way that respects its given standards. Coffee, Cocoa, tea, and bananas are the most famous product lines that are sold under the fair trade label. These products can only be sold as Fairtrade if the merchant behaves in particular ways in relation to the producers. At the same time producers themselves are organised and comply on specific sort of ways that is specified in the standards. These standards are broadly enjoined a high degree of social and economic responsibility achieved through cooperation and equality, and other rather loose, general concern to protect the natural environment. As previously noted, most foodstuffs come regulated with fair trade are sourced from developing or underdeveloped countries around the globe, especially the tropical areas where a high level of oppression and unfair trade and business deals prevails. This gives the ethical dimension of fair-trade a sense of 'sensitive morality' to what goes on elsewhere 'not in the backyard' (Carrier, 2010).

The rising demand for these products is present as an evidence of the increasing trend toward ethical consumption. In Britain, for instance, particular growth in fair trade products sales has been experienced in which it reported a 13 percent growth rate in 2014 in the UK (The cooperative bank, 2014). The boom in fair-trade sales was accorded to many companies and trade markets that decided to obtain fair trade label on their popular products. For instance companies like Cadbury made their popular Dairy Milk chocolate with fair-trade cocoa, which is believed to have enhanced the sourcing of fair-trade cocoa as well (Bowers, 2009). As well as other large companies in the UK such as large UK sugar company Tate & Lyle (Wearden, 2008; Carrier, 2010).

However, despite these broader themes toward fair trade and the concept of ethical consumerism, their real and potential impacts on business nature and consumption have tended to be underplayed. From an economic perspective, issues that might have potentially limited the ability of fair-trade networks to come to occupy more substantial role in global supply chains for primary commodities include: (a) shortage of resources for setting up and maintaining alternative supply chains that run on a different logic from standard primary commodity production and exports, and (b) interest in fair-trade products by first-world consumers that is not sufficiently widespread or strong to cause a changeover in the dominant logic. In terms of the heterogeneous-consumer model laid out above, these two issues refers to a possibility that commitment to buying fair-trade products over conventional ones may not spill much beyond the core of consumers who feel strongly about buying fair-trade, with the broad swath of mainstream consumers not perceiving that they too should buy fair trade because so many others are. (Starr, 2016).

2.4.1.2 Organic

Organic production and products are just one of the most famous examples of 'greening of society and increased vocal expressions against the intensive agriculture methods, the speedy environmental and resources degradation and depletion (Climate change, Gas emission from agriculture, decreasing biodiversity), animal cruelty, threats to human health such as many food scares that breakout over the past decade, taking the heightened publicity and concerns over GM produced stuff as the latest example. and the danger of hazardous pesticides and chemical fertilizers on environment, natural resources and human and animal health (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002). All these issues have been used by an extensive body of research to explain the previous and current increasing demand and consumption of organic products. These issues have been also viewed as the reason behind changing consumer perceptions towards many aspects of the environment and society which organic is also believed to serve positively (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002). Organic movement have been accounted as a major contributor for the growth of ‘Green’ and ‘Ethical’ consumerism in recent years.

2.4.1.3 Local food initiatives

Finally, the emergence of an eclectic subsector of local businesses set up is believed to have advanced and reinforced the growth of ethical consumption patterns. Often these businesses are small and driven by the values of their owners and other principals, these types of ethical consumption businesses aim to expand the supply of goods and services needed for lifestyles and consumption patterns to become more sustainable, while providing decent livelihoods for their principals and perhaps enriching community life. Common businesses in this category include sustainable local farms emphasising production based on local, organic, and/or sustainable farmed produce; food box schemes that deliver organic vegetables and cruelty-free animal products (free range meat and eggs)

Casual observation suggests that these businesses having ethical dimensions mixed in with their business goals. They are more likely traditional small businesses where the owners hope their vision for the business will cater to and enrich consumption choices in the community while earning them a good income (Starr, 2016).

Like all new businesses, the potential for growth in this subsector has been open to many questions. This in part is due to the fact that those motivated by environmental, social or ethical concerns face relatively high failure risks, as it is no easy task to build up a good volume of regular customers in good time, while keeping quality of output consistent, operating costs moderate, and prices not too far above mass-produced equivalents. But again, much depends here on the extent to which habits of frequenting such businesses spread beyond the core of people who feel strongly about ethical consumption, and into the pool of people who will adopt ethical consumption practices as they see them becoming a norm within their social networks, as that will determine the extent of demand to which such businesses have access (Starr, 2016).

The whole organic movement in the UK together with the issues that have been associated with it that have led to the emergence of other alternative forms of food provisioning based on organic and locally produced food will be discussed in the next chapter (chapter3).

2.5 Ethical consumer characteristics

Consumers are segmented according to the degree of their ethical concern. As such there are five groups of consumers in their segmentation as presented by Wheale and Hinton (2007) and Cowe and Williams (2000).

The first group is the largest group by constituting half the population and who characterised by not sufficiently ethically concerned to produce any marketplace action. A second group, a fifth of the population who are much more pre-occupied with the value for money element, whose behaviours in the domain of interest are well-described by the classical paradigm of the self-interested consumer, with standard considerations like prices, tastes, income, convenience, etc. explaining what they do. A third group consists of young consumers' who are yet to be set in their purchase behaviour patterns. A fourth group, about a fifth of the population, they are characterised as more active, ready to buy and boycott products on ethical grounds if the issues are obvious and the information readily available. This group has been described by (Forsyth 1980) as 'non-activist' or 'Subjectivist' (Forsyth, 1980), they do seek out information on ethical issues, but they mainly do not feel guilty about purchasing unethically. Such consumers often claim to prefer goods on an ethical basis but when making their purchasing decisions they defer to other factors, such as the relative price of the product (Shaw, 2000). This as we will see later in the following sections highlight the difference between consumers attitude and behaviour; the so-called 'halo effect'. Finally, there is a fifth group consisting of the passionate ethical consumers (described by (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001), as 'activists' and by Forsyth (Forsyth, 1980), as 'absolutists'), they are found to go further to pursue their beliefs; when buying products they are more interested in social and environmental issues than in brand names (Carbonell *et al.,* 2000) They genuinely look for recycled, GM-free and Fairtrade labels. For this group of consumers, information guides their ethical purchasing and companies regularly lead them to buy or avoid certain products (Wheale and Hinton, 2007). This is consistent Brekke *et al.,* (2010) depictions of 'core 'or 'Kantian' people whose rationales for adopting an ethical consumption practice come from its intrinsic value. For example, they may get satisfaction from keeping their behaviour aligned with their own values or they may get disutility from actions that impose harms on nature, wildlife, future generations, or disadvantaged people (Brekke *et al.,* 2010 in Starr, 2016).

2.6 Ethical behaviour

Research in ethic's and consumption behaviour has grown substantially since the 1990s (Vitell, 2003) providing a valuable understanding of the various forms of ethical oriented consumption behaviour. Nonetheless, the concept still lacks a unified understanding of the role of ethics in consumer behaviour (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006). This can be noticed with the lack a unified definition of what ethical consumerist behaviour is and what it entails, where many different conceptions are presented which largely overlaps (Singhapakdi *et al.,* 1999; Howard and Nelson, 2000; Cherrier, 2005).

A commonly referenced definition of ethical behaviour is that offered by (Cooper and Holbrook, 1993), ethical behaviour was defined as "decision making, purchases and other consumption experiences that are affected by the consumer's ethical concerns" (Bray *et al.*, 2011).

Consumer behaviour is mainly known to be purposive; people aim to satisfy needs or to attain some goals (Moisander, 2007). In many consumer behaviour studies, consumer behaviour is assumed to be determined by the consumer motivations and the consumer ability to perform or act on that motivation toward a given behaviour. Thus, analysing consumer's motivation could lay some answers to why a given behaviour occurs. This has been addressed by Solomon and Bamossy (1999) in which they argued that through understanding a person's motivations and values, greater insight can be gained into why individuals behave as they do (Solomon *et al.,* 1999). Consumer motivation addresses questions of how consumption-related behaviour gets started, sustained and directed, and stopped (Solomon, 2006). So, a motive is usually understood as a reason for the behaviour. Furthermore, intensity/strength and the direction are two components motivation may have, which determines which behaviour is chosen from all possibilities and why (Moisander, 2007). It is usually accepted though that the associated motives to a given behaviour can be both overt and hidden, that is, consumers may or may not be aware of why they behave in a certain way (Moisander, 2007).

In addition to motivation, consumers' behaviour is usually assumed to be determined by their ability to perform a behaviour (Pieters, 1991; Thøgersen, 1994), and the degree of behavioural control (Moisander 2007; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013). Ability is assumed to be a function of personal resources (within the consumer) that are needed to perform a designated behaviour, as well as on the opportunity to perform that behaviour, which is determined by aspects of the immediate environment. Ability refers to the various external factors that might impede or facilitate behaviour. Consumers perception of their ability and the degree of behavioural control majorly affects the strength and direction of the motivation they have to engage in a given behaviour. In other words, the lack of necessary resources, opportunities, and a solid degree of behavioural control individuals have in action situation might affect negatively people's motivation to engage in that behaviour. While a strong motivation is presumed to be owed to people's enhanced abilities and the perception of behaviour control, which have a reverse effect on the strength of the motivation as well (Moisander, 2007).

- **Complexity of generating ethically sound behaviour**

In lay discourse, ethical behaviour serves as an outcome in a form of moral action (purchase and consumption) based on moral judgement applied by individual consumers to products and brands regarding production cycle (Brunk, 2010; Carrington et al., 2014). This has been represented in many of consumerist literature that assumes a linear understanding between motivation and action, i.e. awareness leads to a concern which leads to action (Gabriel and Lang, 2015). However, this simplistic association between awareness and action has been argued to be problematic, where it was found not always efficient in predicting or explaining ethical consumers behaviour. This could be owed to the complexity of ethical issues itself, such that, in the process of decision-making, the ethical consumer is faced with a complex, and often irresolvable, set of ethical issues (Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Moisander, 2007). This motivational and practical complexity of ethical responsible consumption could be further owed to the complexity and perplexity of information in the market, in which consumers on one side might have different conceptions of what entails an ethically oriented conduct, and on the other side they can have other political, religious, spiritual, environmental, social or plenty of other motives for choosing one product over another (Harrison *et al.,* 2005), as well as expressing concerns about the impact of their consumption activity which require a lot information to be clearly presented to make the assessment and judgment.

Thus the consumer should be able to identify all the relevant ethical issues and the impact of its effects in their consumption activities, and to understand the complex trade-offs and interrelations of these effects. This is presented in (Moisander, 2007) work in identifying the complexity of environmental consumption motivation, she asserted that this is not as simple as it sounds, the complexity of that lies in the fact that the consumer needs to understand the environmental effects of various consumption activities which often require the individual consumer to have certain practical skills and task knowledge about the causes of problems and the trade-offs associated with the different measures that may be taken for avoiding or solving this issue through consumption choices.

The motivational complexity of ethical consumerism is yet further perplexed by the controversial and dubious nature of ethical information, where basic strategies and areas of ethical concern may involve many issues that are incompatible with means and ends (Moisander, 2007). The divergence of views on the objective and strategies of ethically responsible behaviour make the assessments of these issues by the individual consumer be highly subjective and complexly interlinked (Cherrier, 2005; Dennis *et al.,* 2005); what is ethical then might encapsulate different expressions, concerns, and issues for each individual. This means that even if consumers have the resources and opportunity (e.g. time, money and effort) to engage in an ethical behaviour, the perplexity of information and the low credibility sometimes found with ethical marketing makes it difficult for them to act on their ethical concern. Moisander argues that this obscurity of ethical information offer the ethical agent (consumers) an abundant source of handy excuses for denying their personal responsibility in ethically demanding situations. This element of motivational complexity of ethically oriented consumer behaviour not only de-motivates ethical consumption but also provides consumers with means of justifying their ecologically unsound decisions by referring to complex and contradictory nature of provided information (Moisander, 2007).

These arguments are commonly presented in the area of food production, sourcing, and consumption where issues like global and local come to interplay in decision making. It is hardly surprising then that the ethical consumer frequently has to make complex and incompatible decisions due to the contradictions of ethical considerations one might have (Shaw and Clarke, 1999).

This point can be illustrated in the following example where environmental and fair trade concerns are coupled together. One might choose to use local produce, for example, as they believe it to be more environmentally friendly by reducing food miles– others might choose to buy fair-trade products because of the desire to support developing countries small producers' (Hinrichs, 2003; Winter, 2003; Bray et al., 2011). Also, locally produced goods with low transport impact is compared to other globally sourced products produced organically or according to an ethical code of conduct in a developing country (Tallontire et al., 2001). The cross-over of seemingly unrelated concerns can significantly add to the complexity of the decision-making. These contradictions in ethical concepts were clearly demonstrated in Shaw and Clarke (1999) suggestion that the notion of the 'ideal' ethical choice is inconceivable in a consumer-orientated society; therefore ethical consumers are often forced, through their consumption choices, to pledge their support for one issue merely at the expense of another.

To summarise, we can understand that people's conceptions of ethical responsible consumption may vary for number of reasons: First, because consumers may not know all the ethical relevant behaviours or they may not choose to engage in all of the relevant behaviours'. Second, they may lack the opportunity or ability to do so (Pieters, 1991; Bell 1994; Thøgersen, 1994). Third, the presence of divergence in the weight or magnitude of each behavior involved in their patterns of ethically responsible consumption (Moisander, 2007). In the context of green consumerism, for example, Moisander (2007), argued that few ecologically minded consumers will decide to do everything right, or in an environmentally responsible manner. While the majority will probably only engage in what they perceive as their fair share of practices that they think of as ethical related behaviour that can be implemented.

2.7 Ethical decision-making models

In order to understand the role ethics plays in individual purchasing behaviour, a number of ethical decision-making models have been proposed. However, mostly intended to model general decision-making rather than being concerned to investigate specific consumption decisions (Nicholls and Lee, 2006). The majority of ethical decision-making models developed generally approach the issue from an organisational perspective covering the area of business ethics (Nicholls and Lee 2006; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *,* 2013).

To understand purchase decision making of ethically minded consumers, most studies tend to apply cognitive modelling approaches (Fukukawa, 2003). In this endeavour, the model of general theory of marketing ethics proposed by Hunt and Vitell's (Hunt and Vitell, 1986), and the attitudinal model presented in and based on the theory of planned behaviour presented by Ajzen and Fishbein, and Ajzen’s attitude models (Ajzen 1985; 1991) are considered as the two most prominent theoretical models that have been extensively used in the examination of ethical decision-making (Atif *et al.*, 2013). These models share a common understanding that decisions are made through a process of knowledge formation, the construction of judgements about a particular ethical issue, the formation of purchase intentions and finally purchase(Chatzidakis *et al.*, 2006; Bray *et al.*, 2011; Atif *et al.*, 2013).

First, Hunt and Vitell’s model (1986, 1992) was applied to broad area of business or consumer ethics contexts by (Marks and Mayo, 1991) and (Vitell *et al.,* 2001) to refer to misconduct, mainly in retail settings (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006; Atif *et al.,* 2013). They proposed that ethical decision making starts with an individual perceive a problem as having ethical content. This perception of an ethical problem is the key to the whole process of decision making depicted in the model; meaning that without the perception of the ethical content inherent in the problem situation subsequent elements of the model will not come into play. Given that an individual perceives an ethical problem, the next step is the perception of various possible alternatives or actions that might be followed to resolve this problem. They further highlighted that it is unlikely that the individual will recognise the complete set of ethical alternatives. Once the individual identifies the evoked set of alternatives, subsequently, two kinds of evaluations will take place, namely deontological and teleological evaluations to arrive at a judgment. For example, i.e. attitude about the ethical problem and the possible alternatives to overcome it which, in turn, influences the consumer’s behavioural intentions. Deontology involves the examination of specific actions and holds that some actions are inherently right and others are inherently wrong. Counter to this, teleology examines the perceived consequences of such action and is normally focused on minimising negative consequences (Vitell *et al.,* 2001). The philosophical approaches of deontology and teleology have been used in a variety of studies on ethical consumer behaviour, proving a useful taxonomy of ethical effects (Chan *et al.,* 2008). This phase is considered the heart of the decision making in which an individual's ethical judgments is a function of the individual's deontological evaluation and teleological evaluations. It is suggested that ethical judgements will often differ from intentions because teleological evaluation independently affects the intentions construct. That is, although an individual may perceive a particular alternative as the most ethical alternative, they may intend to choose another alternative because of certain preferred consequences of a less ethical one or due to a situational condition. Nevertheless, hunts and vitell suggest that when this inconsistency in behaviour and intentions with the ethical judgments occurs, the consumer might have a feeling of guilt that will affect future behaviour.

Second, the theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985, 1991) have been frequently employed in the area 'Ethical consumption or ethical consumer contexts' by (Ajzen, 1991; Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Shaw& Shui, 2002; Chatzidakis & Smith, 2007; De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007; Newholm and Shaw, 2007; Shaw, 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Similar to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), the theory of planned behaviour explain the decision-making as the process where the consideration of available information represents the anchor point (Conner and Armitage, 1998). However, the TPB is considered as more comprehensive than the TRA for its ability to predict both the volitional as well as non-volitional behaviours through the 'control parameters' rather than just the limited TRA, that is restricted to the volitional behaviours only (Ajzen, 1991; Conner and Armitage, 1998; Ajzen. 2001). According to the theory, the behaviour is guided by three kinds of considerations; First, beliefs about the likely consequences of the behaviour (behavioural beliefs). Second, beliefs about the normative expectations of others. Third and Finally, beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of the behaviour (control beliefs) (Ajzen, 2001). Control beliefs provide the basis for perception of behavioural control of an individual in a given situation and are suggested to impact both behavioural intentions and behaviour (Atif *et al.,* 2013).

Both of the above models are established on the fundamental premise that both the ethical judgement and intentions are the best predictors of behaviour, in most cases, both intentions and Judgements are consistent (Fukukawa, 2002; Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006). In many studies carried out using TPB, many scholars attempted to integrate factors into the TPB framework that assists in establishing of ethical intentions, such as internal ethics (Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Shaw& Shui, 2002), Self-Identity' and 'Ethical Obligation' (Sparks *et al.*, 1995; Sparks and Guthrie, 1998; Shaw *et al.,* 2000; Shaw and Shiu, 2002;), information quality and quantity (De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007), and personal values (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). These reported factors tend to act upon the attitude formation and purchase intention. However, the problem inherent in these studies lies in its assumption that ethical purchase intentions directly determine actual buying behaviour (Fukukawa, 2003). This disregards the suggestions presented in earlier broader studies on consumer behaviour contexts that warn the free granted assumption that purchase intentions usually translates into actual buying behaviour (Morwitz & Schmittlein, 1993; Young & Morwitz, 1998; Bagozzi, 2000; Ajzen & Carvajal, 2004; Carrington *et al.,* 2014).

In light of aforementioned theoretical approaches, in the following section, and sub-sections the basics of an ethical decision-making model will be presented, followed by analysis of the various elements that make up this model separately, to understand what comprises an ethical decision making under each phase. The underlying framework presented includes those major components of ethical decision making present in earlier models. Amongst the well-known models of ethical decision-making is that of (Rest, 1986). Despite outlined by (Jones, 1991) and more recently (Reynolds, 2006) as parsimonious, it has been widely known as very simple and among the best models as it contains all the key elements of moral decision making. This model has been widely described as consistent with the core elements of many subsequent models on ethical decision making (Ajzen, 1985; Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Ajzen, 1991), which focus on one or more of the stages outlined (Jones, 1991). Thus, we adopt Rests model in this study as a reference model as we find it as less complicated compared to the other models previously presented and the most comprehensive to the nature of this research which does not aim at adopting any previous ethical theoretical framework but originally aim at identifying the effects of ethics in consumption choices in the ongoing actual action of purchase and consumption in a particular context of organic and local alternative food networks (Box schemes) in the UK. This is particularly different than most studies conducted in this area that focus exclusively on the formation of ethical intention, not the actual behaviour. Consumers who participate in this forms of alternative food chains already consumes and actively purchase from these networks which may require us to bypass some phases presented in the majority of the models presented earlier in ethical decision-making context.

This model is graphically depicted in (Figure 2), its component parts are discussed in the following sections.

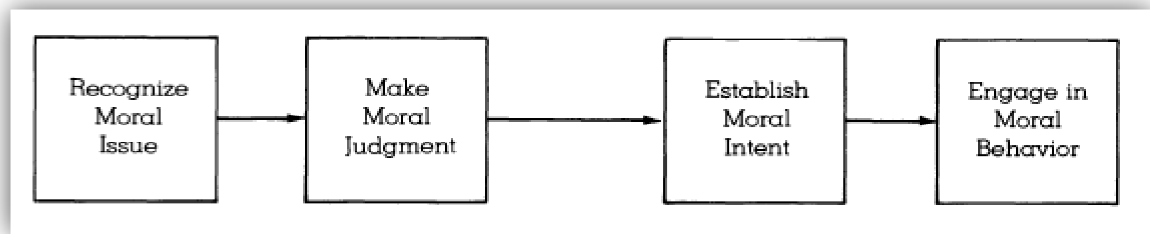


Figure 2: Rest's (Rest 1986) model of ethical decision making

This model proposes a version of the planned behaviour model, in which individuals pass through four consecutive stages towards an ethical decision: a) recognize the moral issue, b) make a moral judgment, c) resolve to place moral concerns (ethical intention), and d) act on the moral concerns by engaging in moral behaviour. Figure 2 depicts the basic four-stage model of ethical decision making advanced by (Rest, 1986).

Johns (1991) argued that each component in the process is conceptually distinct and that success in one stage does not imply success in any other stage (Jones, 1991). However, Reynolds (2006) asserts that the stages of ethical decision-making may not be discrete elements of a formulaic thought process, but may actually be interrelated in a very complex manner.

A new construct namely moral intensity was added by Jones (1991) to Rest’s model. John’s (1991) maintains that the moral intensity of an issue impacts upon all stages of Rest’s model, such that two separate moral issues, simultaneously acknowledged by the consumer, may exert differing levels of influence over the decision process. Jones (1991) described moral intensity as the extent to which an issue, event, or act has characteristics that make it subject to moral consideration, moral judgment, and moral action.

2.7.1 The phases of Rests model of ethical decision making

- **Issue recognition**

Human decision-making processes are often activated by the perception of a problem that requires a solution or response and often some form of action (Bazerman and Moore, 2008).

Moral decision making is no exception; the process begins with a perception of a problem, which carries a moral component.

For the moral decision-making process to begin, a person must be able to recognise the moral issue. However, decision makers do not always recognise the moral element of their decisions. Recall that, according to (Velasquez and Velazquez, 2002), moral issues are present if a person's actions, when freely performed, may harm or help others. Therefore, recognising moral issues involves two elements. A person must recognise that his or her decision or action will affect others (decisions or actions have consequences for human beings) and some choice must be involved (the person has volition). In sum, the person must recognise that he or she is a moral agent. As discussed more fully at the end of this section, a person who fails to recognise a moral issue will fail to employ moral decision-making schemata and will make the decision according to other elements, economic rationality, for example (Jones, 1991).

The initiating point of almost all the ethical decision-making models is the identification of an ethical issue (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Trevino, 1986). Rest (1986) argued that moral awareness is something of an interpretive process wherein the individual recognises that an ethical problem exists in a situation or that a moral standard or principle is relevant to some set of circumstances. Much of this research though has focused on identifying the characteristics of the ethical issue, and, subsequently, very little work has explored how individual differences influence ethical awareness (Reynolds, 2006). Given that ethical awareness is an individual-level phenomenon and the characteristics of an ethical issue vary in salience and vividness, it is possible that one person recognises an issue as an ethical issue, whereas another does not, due to individual differences. Individuals make judgments of the moral intensity of the issue, and these personal judgments are often sufficient for individuals to form critical distinctions (Jones, 1991). Thus, by increasing the likelihood that an individual will pay attention to those characteristics may augment the probabilities of an issue being considered as a moral or ethical issue (Reynolds, 2006).

For example, in the case of environmentally conscious individuals, an ethical consumer is the one who knows that the production, distribution, use and disposal of products lead to external costs, and who evaluates such external costs negatively, trying to minimise them by her/his own behaviour (Grunert and Juhl, 1995). Hence, consumers with a stronger concern for the environment are more likely to purchase products – as a result of their environmental claims and engage in environmentally conscious behaviour like recycling, than those who are less concerned about the environmental issues (Kim and Choi, 2005). Therefore, for the ethical decision-making to begin, first a person must be able to identify the issue. Second, he should feel that he is concerned by that particular issue (Shaw 2000; Reynolds, 2006). Consequently, recognition of a moral issue involves two elements i.e. perceived certainty of occurrence and perceived intensity of concern. Once a person recognises that a moral issue exists and that he is concerned by it, he engages in a process of ethical development whereby he evaluates the issue and makes up his judgments (Jones, 1991).

From the practitioners' point of view, the identification of consumer having a concern for specific ethical issues, and as a result interested in ethical products/solutions is quite appealing. This research considers that it is imperative to link ethical issues with consumers' ethically conscious behaviours. The identification of consumer having specific concern for ethical issues, and thus, interested in ethical solutions or behaviours is quite appealing from a managerial and marketing perspective (Atif *et al.,* 2013)

- **Moral judgments**

Once a person recognises that a moral issue exists, he or she must make a moral judgment. Component 2 of Rest's (1986) model relates to the question, "How do people make moral judgments?" At this point, Kohlberg's (1976) model of moral development becomes relevant. Kohlberg postulated that human beings make moral judgments in some combination of six analytically distinct ways. Children and morally immature adults have predominantly pre-conventional orientations. In Stage 1, Obedience and Punishment, the individual obeys rules to avoid punishment; in Stage 2, Instrumental Purpose and Exchange, the individual obeys rules only to further his or her own interests. Most adults operate at conventional levels of moral development. In Stage 3, Interpersonal Accord, Conformity, and Mutual Expectations, the individual adapts to the moral standards of his or her peers; in Stage 4, Social Accord and System Maintenance, the individual adopts the moral standards of society, particularly its laws. Some adults reach a post-conventional level of moral development. In Stage 5, Social Contract and Individual Rights, the individual is aware of the relativity of values and upholds rules because they conform to the social contract; in Stage 6, Universal Ethical Principles, the individual chooses his or her own ethical principles and follows them, even if they run counter to laws. Rest (1979) subdivided the basic categories somewhat, but mainly followed Kohlberg's model. Kohlberg's (1976) and Rest (1979) agreed that individuals may vary considerably in terms of their approaches to moral issues and that some form of cognitive development perspective is appropriate.

John (1991) from his side argued that moral reasoning is issue dependent. The argument is intuitive, theoretical, and empirical. From an intuitive perspective, moral reasoning takes time and energy (e.g., gathering facts, applying moral principles, and making moral judgments (Velasquez and Velazquez, 2002). It is likely that moral agents will economise on efforts devoted to moral reasoning when moral stakes are low (Jones 1991). Fiske and Taylor (1984) captured this view well in terms of social cognition in general: "People dedicate more effort to social understanding when the stakes are higher. They think more, if not more accurately."

- **Moral intention**

Once a person has made an ethical predisposition, a development that is dependent on his or her ethical identity process (Rest, 1986), he or she must decide what to do. A decision about what is ethically correct, an ethical judgment, is not the same as a decision to act on that judgment, that is to establish ethical intent (Jones, 1991). At this stage, individuals balance moral factors against other factors, notably the self-interest. Hunt & Vitell (1986), as well as Rest (1986), explicitly included this step in their models whereas Trevino (1986) and Ferrell & Gresham (1985) assume a direct transition from the ethical predisposition phase to ethical behaviour (Jones, 1991).

The establishment of moral intent is important in moral decision-making and behaviour presented here because intentions are important determinants of behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen argued that "the best predictor of a person's behaviour is his intention to perform the behaviour" (1975: 381), especially when the intention and behaviour are measured at the same level of specificity. Theoretically speaking, moral intent and moral behaviour should be similarly related, however, we will see later in the next section (attitude-behaviour gap) that this does not often happen for many reasons. Indeed, Dubinsky and Loken (1989) and Hunt and Vitell (1986) explicitly included a link between moral intent and moral behaviour in their models. With Conner and Armitage (1998) outlining that, the stronger the intentions to carry out a behaviour, the more it is the likelihood of occurrence of that particular behaviour and vice versa (Conner and Armitage, 1998).

John (1991) argued that moral intensity may also play a role in establishing moral intent. Attributions of responsibility are related to perceived control over an event; the greater the perceived control, the greater the attributed responsibility (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Proximity, an element of moral intensity, is likely to affect perceived control and, in turn, attributions of responsibility. For example, a person usually cannot be held responsible for events that are physically distant. Because people seek to avoid negative attributions of responsibility, they will establish positive moral intent more frequently when the moral issue is proximate.

- **Moral behaviour**

The fourth component of Rest's model involves acting on a person's moral intentions, that is, engaging in the moral behaviour. In Rest's (Rest, 1986). words, "Executing and implementing a plan of action involves working around impediments and unexpected difficulties, overcoming fatigue and frustration, resisting distractions and allurements, and keeping sight of the original goal" (Jones 1991).

2.8 The complexity of ethical decision making (attitude-behaviour gap)

Many studies on ethical consumption behaviour indicate that consumers' attitudes towards ethical consumption are increasingly becoming more positive as they become more concerned about the ethical issues that surround the agriculture and food sector recently (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). Trends over time suggest an increased awareness on the part of consumers to ethical issues such as environmental, social, and more recently issues in trade and consumption (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001). This could be observed in the steady growth of alternative product categories in the market that carries ethical value such as fair-trade, and the organic produce.

Nevertheless, there are some problems of most studies researching consumer's intention or attitude to ethical consumption and behavior, argues (Szmigin *et al.,* 2009). First, the for granted assumption that consumers have a rational choice in which awareness is smoothly translated to ethical intentions to behavior/ action (Szmigin *et al.,* 2009). Second, the artificially induced awareness about ethical issues, in which consumers in these studies are assumed to be more aware of what is required of producers as well as their responsibilities as consumers (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). This have been seen as a rather simplistic view which overlooks several internal and external factors that happened to influence behaviour (Carrigan *et al.,* 2009), besides, it leave some questions unanswered about how consumers perceive these ethical or sustainable issues with regard to their specific product offerings and whether or not they integrate these aspects into their decision-making (Shaw and Clarke, 1999).

Therefore, consumers decision to consume ethically are rather complex involving a multidimensional process of intellectual, moral and pragmatic decisions. Thus, the translations process from intentions/attitudes to actual behaviour are not connected in a simplistic way, instead, the translation process is susceptible to various influences (McGregor, 2008).

This phenomenon is known as the 'Halo effect' which reflect what has been reportedly called a 'words/deeds inconsistency' or attitude and behaviour gap (Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Elliott *et al.,* 2003). It has been reported in terms of a negative or weak relationship between what consumers say, and what they do (Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004; Carrington *et al.,* 2014), and it is becoming more and more evident in many ethical consumption contexts where consumers' ethical concerns are not always manifested in actual behaviour through consumption as claimed (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; d'Astous and Legendre 2009; van Huylenbroek *et al.,* 2009; Eckhardt *et al.,* 2010).

It is hardly surprising therefore, that a weak relationship between what consumer say, and what they do has been increasingly reported in this particular consumption domain. This is commonly reported in many studies investigating about the attitude/behavior gap; in which a common ground agreeing that if people genuinely care about social and environmental aspects, as widely reported within survey's research, these aspects should have been reflected in the market share of the ethical products as it should have been a lot higher than its current level (Cone and Myhre, 2000). Most of these studies used market size data demonstrated in the volume of sales figures for fair-trade, organic and other ethical goods as evidence to show the divergence between what consumers say about ethical and sustainable consumption and the actual behaviour in the market in which market size compared to the consumer claims suggests that the attitude shift toward ethical products has not been reflected in actual behaviour which consequently indicates a discrepancy in what the consumer say and their actual behaviour. This can be easily noticed by taking a look at the market data of ethical products, market shares of ethical and sustainable products do not exceed 1% of the total market share of food products (Soil Association 2016; Cooperative Bank, 2014). This suggests a massive disparity between consumer awareness and their actual behaviour in the market in which awareness and concern are not directly translated into ethical purchase behaviour and that ethical consumption is more celebrated than practiced (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Atif *et al.,* 2013).

An ample amount of research attempted to understand this phenomenon by analysing the purchase decision making to identify the complexities inherited in the ethical decisions and the contexts in which these decisions are made e.g. Shaw and Clarke, 1999; De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005; Harrison *et al.,* 2005, Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008). However, these studies focus only on the formation of purchase interntions, how intentions are translated to actual behaviour were poorly gauged until studies started to focus on the factors that may affect consumers decisions and how it influence behaviour (Atif *et al.,* 2013). Several studies attempted to explain the phenomenon of purchase intention-behaviour gap by proposing new constructs(Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006). For example, Fukukawa (2002) in the context of consumer ethics proposed an additional construct namely “perceived unfairness”. While in the context of ethical consumption, Shaw and her colleagues (Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Shaw *et al.,* 2000; Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, 2002b, 2003) have proposed additional two constructs namely “ethical obligation” and “self-identity”. These additional constructs reflect the influences that are apparent in the context of ethical consumer behaviour which points towards the internal tensions that consumers may have when balancing their own desires with moral behaviour. However, it was claimed by (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006) that both constructs inevitably fail to account for the psychological realities of consumers who consistently behave in ways that are in apparent contradiction to their expressed ethical concerns (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2006).

Other studies further present various situational factors such as price, quality, convenience, and brand familiarity to still play a significant role in purchase decision making by impeding or inhibit ethical behaviours (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Hughner *et al.,* 2007; van Huylenbroek *et al.,* 2009; Bray *et al.,* 2011), whereby the majority of people are found to jointly evaluate them with products ethical attributes when making purchase decisions. For example, (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan and

Attalla, 2001) explained that the discrepancy between what the consumer says and their actual behaviour could be owing to variety seeking or economic and social factors that intervene in the choice situation (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). This means that despite consumer increasing awareness with the surrounding society and the increasing desire to act in an ethically responsible way toward the perceived environmental, economic, and societal issues, when it comes to actual decision, factors such as price, value, quality, and brand are often more important choice criteria than ethics (Uusitalo and Oksanen, 2004). In support to that, these factors have been reported to play a major role in facilitating or impeding the ethical behaviour (Bray *et al.,* 2011). McEachern *et al.,* (2005) refer to that as a trade-off between values and needs when making decisions. For example, consumers may trade off the cost of a potentially higher priced ethical product (organic –fairtrade) against the various environmental, economic, social benefit that characterises these products (McEachern *et al.,* 2005). Thistradeoffs could be also related to low levels of consumer education and awareness of scientific issues (McEachern and Mcclean, 2002).

Other elements accounted for the attitudes- behaviour gap is the lack of availability of ethical products, disbelief of ethical claims, and lack of information (Roberts, 1996; Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Mielants *et al.,* 2003; De Pelsmacker *et al.,* 2005). Limited availability of 'ethical' alternatives, where issues are already often in conflict and subject to change, highlight again the untenable nature of ethical consumption. Therefore, although consumers may voice concern for a varying number of issues at different times, their attention is often confined to a limited number of products when making consumption choices (Newholm, 1999; Shaw and Clarke, 1999). This suggestion appears reasonable given the complexity of concerns, where attempts to adequately consider all issues by the consumer are likely to prove unmanageable (Shaw and Clarke, 1999).

Moreover consumers ability to neutralise or rationalise their behaviour was found to partially explain the absence of cognitive dissonance. Some studies (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2007; Szmigin *et al.,* 2009) draw upon neutralisation theory to propose that the consumer ability to justify their unethical purchase as being acceptable, though not ethical, facilitates the perceived ethical intention and behaviour gap.

Last but not least in a different attempt to explain the attitude–behaviour gap, a few researchers moved beyond cognitive intention formation to gain better insight on the phenomenon. For example, Ulrich and Sarasin (1995) cynically suggested not to do any research and not to ask the public any question on the subject of ethics, because responses may not be reliable and often misleading, reflecting a dissonance in what they say and what they do, that attitudes measured tend to be more positive than actual behaviour . This situation claimed King and Bruner (2000) is commonly found due to the consumer's desire to leave a good impression on the researcher or want to conform to social norms (King and Bruner, 2000). This situation known as social desirability bias has been also identified by Carrigan and Attala (2001) to have a significant role in the respondent's intentions and behaviour gap (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001).

Moreover, attitudes are traditionally measured by means of explicit attitude measures, mostly self-reported paper-and-pencil tasks favoured by researchers in the ethical consumerism field inflates espoused ethical purchase intentions (Auger *et al.,* 2003). Respondents are not always able or willing to report their attitudes and convictions accurately, especially in the case of socially sensitive issues such as ethical consumption behaviour (Greenwald and Banaji, 1995) in (Maison, 2002).

Chapter Three: Organic & Local AFN's

3 The organic food and farming

3.1 The organic food and sustainability

The concerns and motivation toward organic farming by the early exponents (pioneers) lies in the crux of the current debate regarding the negative impact of modern agriculture systems in relation to the increasing concerns towards the sustainability of the agriculture and food systems, including issues of soil health and structure, the long-term economic viability of food and farming, the exhaustible nature of artificial fertilizers and human health (Rigby and Cáceres, 2001).

Sustainable agriculture and production systems have been long defined by Ikerd (1993) as "capable of main- training its productivity and usefulness to society over the long run, it must be environmentally-sound, resource-conserving, economically viable and socially supportive, commercially competitive, and environmentally sound" (Ikerd, 1993: p. 30). According to Lampkin and Measures (1995), this definition reflects the concept of agricultural and food sustainability in its broadest sense by encompassing many issues ranging from the conservation of non-renewable resources (soil, water) to issues of environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Lampkin and Measure, 1995).

There have been few attempts ``to characterise the sustainability of specific agricultural systems'' (Hansen and Jones, 1996). The problems associated with the current modern production systems have been at the heart of debates of sustainability of production systems wherein it led to doubts regarding its long-term viability. Some of these developments that characterize and prevail in conventional agriculture systems were summed up by (Hodge 1993, p. 3): who states that: food production and agriculture, in general, has come to draw the inputs which it uses from more distant sources, both spatially and sectorally, to derive an increasing proportion of its energy supplies from non-renewable sources, to increase its impact on environment and to depend on upon a narrow genetic base. This is practically reflected in its heavy reliance on chemical fertilisers and pesticides, its dependence upon subsidies and price support strategies and several other external costs such as threats to other species, environmental pollution, habitat destruction and risks to human health and welfare (Hodge, 1993). There is a broad consensus among the advocates of sustainable agriculture that these problems mentioned above by Hodge (1993) are inappropriate, and require immediate strategies in order to develop better production systems to approach sustainability. However, despite the far great agreement on the problems of the current farming and food systems, there is a significant difference regarding the strategies and the proper type of farming practices that should be developed to cope with these issues in order to approach sustainability (Rigby and Cáceres, 2001).

In this regard, organic farming was among the many "alternative" approaches that have been developed with respect to issues of sustainability (Scofield, 1986), which received significant attention by many agriculture and food and farming advocates in the recent years. What makes organic agriculture unique and different from all other developed approaches to sustainability is the long history of regulation that defines what organic farming is and how it works (Rigby and Cáceres, 2001).

There are a plethora of definitions of organic farming. Lampkin (1995) points out that these accounts to the different approaches to organic farming that were blended over time resulting in the current school of thought. He further stressed that seeking to provide the definition of any of these approaches is always difficult (Lampkin, 1995). For example, he refers to it as the relationships between farm, food, consumer, and the surrounding environment, as follows "a holistic view of agriculture that aims to reflect the profound interrelationship that exists between farm biota, its production, and the overall environment". Earlier, however, Scofield (1986) stressed on the concept of' wholeness' suggesting that organic farming is not simply about living materials only, implying the ``systematic connection or coordination of all parts in one whole" Scofield (198, p. 5). While more recently, Northbourne (2003) implied that the person credited with trust using the term organic farming, shall advocate a society made up of small, self-contained units, a view that has a strong position against the modern environmental movements, where the reliance on large impersonal units of production is largely rejected, where both people and nature are being subordinated or replaced by machine or corporate identity. This rejection of larger units with the concentrated and specialised production was most famously articulated many years ago by Schumacher (2013) in his book `Small is Beautiful' (Schumacher 1973 in Scofield, 1986).

One of the most significant expositions of the aims and principles of organic farming is that presented in IFOAM basic standards for production and processing (IFOAM, 2006) (Table 1). As presented in (Table 1); the provided scope of the principles obviously extend beyond simple biophysical aspects to matters of justice and responsibility. Clearly, based on these general principles; more focused standard exists, which lay an outline of the specific practices and inputs, whether recommended or prohibited. The IFOAM aims in Table 1 refer to the need ``to interact in a constructive and life-enhancing way with the natural systems and cycles, to consider the wider social and ecological impact of the organic production and processing system, to encourage and enhance biological cycles within the farming system, involving micro-organisms, soi1 ora and fauna, plants and animals, to progress toward an entire production, processing and distribution chain which is both socially just and ecologically responsible" (IFOAM, 2006).

Table 1. The principle aims of organic production and processing. IFOAM, 2006

The principle aims of organic production and processing
To produce foo of high quality in sufficient quantity
To interact in a constructive way and life-enhancing way with natural systems and cycles.
To consider the wider social and ecological impact of the organic production and processing system
To encourage and enhance the biological cycles with the farming system, involving microorganisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals.
To develop valuable and sustainable aquatic ecosystem
To maintain and increase long term fertility soils.
To maintain the genetic diversity of the production system and its surroundings, including the protection of plant and wildlife habitats.
To promote the healthy use and proper carwe of water, water resources and all life therein.
To use, as far as possible, renewable resources in locally organis3ed production systems.

To create a harmonious balance between crop production and animal husbandry.
To give all livestock conditions of life with due consideration for the basic aspects of their innate behaviour.
To minimise all form of pollution.
To process organic products using renewable resources
To produce fully biodegradable organic products.
To produce textiles which are long lasting and of good quality.
To allow everyone involved in organic production and processing a quality life which meets their basic needs and allows an adequate return and satisfaction from their work, including a safe working environment
To progress toward an entire production, processing and distribution chain which both socially just and ecologically responsible.

Lampkin (1994) modern definition of organic farming seems to be very consistent with the general aims and principals provided by IFOAM, in which he states that the aim is: ``to create integrated, humane, environmentally and economically sustainable production systems, which maximize reliance on farm-derived renewable resources and the management of ecological and biological processes and interactions, so as to provide acceptable levels of crop, livestock and human nutrition, protection from pests and disease, and an appropriate return to the human and other resources" (Lampkin, 1994: p. 5.).

The sustainable production and consumption rational of organic food and farming are the reliance on production methods that are more harmonious with the environment and local ecosystems. By working with nature rather than against it, and replenishing the soil with organic material, rather than denuding it and relying upon artificial fertilisers. The organic food and farming advocates claim that organic farming improves soil quality and hence food quality, biodiversity will be improved and enhanced as well. Another debate around organic food is the need to protect people's health by avoiding the usage of the harmful chemicals and pesticides in production, so avoiding consumers ingestion of unnecessary toxic chemicals and pesticides that may put their health in danger (Reed, 2001). Additionally, there are several economic and social benefits (such as employment benefits and premium prices) from organic farms compared to conventional farms (Maynard and Green, 2006). Nevertheless, the fact that the core principle of the current organic systems is to ensure the non-use of artificial chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and animals reared in more natural conditions, without the routine use of drugs, antibiotics and wormers common in intensive livestock farming; organic production systems has been viewed as merely a production technique, as it presents only one part of the picture of sustainability by going beyond the narrow production issues that characterize modern conventional systems, but it does not necessarily reflect any change in the rules, ways, and structures of provision (Seyfang, 2006; Milestad *et al.,* 2010).

3.2 Organic regulations

As previously presented in the introduction of this chapter, the main aspect that determines the uniqueness of the organic systems and separates it from any other alternative agricultural movements identified above is the long history of regulation it holds on. A complete set of certification procedures governs organic farming, from the soil to the dining table" (MacCormack, 1995). This history of regulation makes any discussion of what organic agriculture is considerably easier given the existence of a published standards that are compulsory to any farmer and/or manufacturer wishes to adopt it. Although there are differences in these standards between various organic bodies and across national boundaries, the defined standards set by IFOAM remain the foundation in which more meaningful debate of ethical purchasing of organic food production and consumption can be based.

In the UK, there are different policies regulated and governed on the part of different parties. The United Kingdom Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS) part of the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) carry out the direct registration. In Scotland the Scottish Organic Producers Association (SOPA) dominates certification, whilst in Wales, the locus of activity is Quality Welsh Food Certification, which often means that (Defra) policy can be in effect English policy, which takes place in England.

3.2.1 The Soil Association

The soil association principle concerns were, the loss of soil through erosion and depletion, decreased nutritional quality of intensively produced food, exploitation of animals in intensive units, and the Impact of the large intensive farming system on the countryside and wildlife. The association only owns a limited company SA Certification, which is dedicated to the certification of organic producers and processors (Soil Association, 2016).

3.2.1.1 The Soil Association certification system

The Soil Association has set up a certification system in 1973 which is used to provide an independent audit and tracking system from the individual field through to the final packing. The Soil Association serves as an independent certification body which offers a number of advantages. Firstly it guarantees that whoever is involved in the organic business is compliant with its set of defined standards. This allows customers to have more trust in such particularly well-known institution like the soil association. Second, soil association provides a wide range of services, including standard setting, inspection, certification, and the enforcement of labelling, which is crucial to ensure the exclusion of any free-riders. Thirdly, contracting an independent certification body. (Soil Association, 2016).Nowadays, about 70% of organic food and drink sold in the UK are certified by the Soil Association.

3.2.1.2 The Soil association role in the UK organic movement

In the past and still today, the Soil Association has played a central role in promoting the organic farming and food movement (Reed, 2001). The "Soil Association" is a predominant organisation in the UK; uniquely the only nongovernmental organisation concerned with promoting and campaigning solely for the organic farming system (Tomlinson, 2008). The Soil Association functions in a number of different ways; as a pressure group, for example altering the public to the perils of pesticides, preventing BSE ,opposing antibiotics, campaign against genetically modified organisms (GMOs), campaign against government during 2001 Foot and mouth, and expose the truth about agribusiness; as a broad social movement, for example in its pioneering for local food, and as a certification body in creating consumer power through initiating and organic logo (Table 2). In these varying capacities, the Soil Association has played an important role in shaping the organic movement in Britain. (Soil Association, 2016).

Table 2. Soil association role in the British agriculture

Pressure group	Alerting the public to the perils of pesticides	Through being the first who questions the use of DDT (an insecticide) in agriculture
	Preventing BSE	In 1983 by banning animal protein from organic livestock feed for ruminants (cattle and sheep) as an unnatural feeding cycle, rightly predicting serious consequences.
	Opposing antibiotics	The Soil Association's first organic standards, published in 1967, prohibit the routine use of drugs and antibiotics in livestock, and the use of antibiotic animal feed. A Soil Association long-running campaign leads to EU ban on six antibiotic feed additives in 1999
	GM-free zone	By launching campaign to keep the UK GM-free which attracted widespread public support and leads to a supermarket ban on GM ingredients from own-brand products. In 1998, the Soil Association challenges the government and GM seed companies in the high court to halt a GM trial threatening an organic grower, Guy Watson. Judges rule that the government has acted illegally.
	Exposing the truth about agribusiness	By conducting and publishing research about the environmental ,economic costs of pesticide use, factory farming's appalling animal welfare which generated and surged in environmental and animal welfare concerns
	Foot and mouth	The Soil Association challenges the government policy of mass slaughter, recommending voluntary and selective vaccination instead.
Environmental group	Working for wildlife	By conducting joint research's to show that organic farms support more wildlife than non-organic farms. It led the government awards organic farmers £30 more per hectare than

		non-organic farmers in recognition of these wildlife benefits.
Socio-economic group	Pioneering local food	The Soil Association's was the first to promote the concept more widely. Today over 500 organic veg box schemes are operating in the UK. There are 550 farmers' markets with an annual turnover of £220 million. 15% of produce sold at these is organic.
	Provide technical assistance to organic farmers	The Soil Association provide constant information and support for organic farmers
	Creating consumer power	Soil Association now certifies over 70% of organic food and drink sold in the UK

3.3 The Drawback of the organic movement in the UK: Conventionalization Issue

The organic farming has profound itself within a critique of industrial farming systems and with the recognition of the negative externalities associated with its productivism model of agriculture. Initially, the central ideology of organic farming stood in direct opposition to the agricultural paradigm known as conventional farming methods, embodied in the 1947 Agriculture Act, that has been dominant in Britain agriculture since World War II, with its central concern to increase productivity by applying new technologies, including the use of chemical fertilisers and synthetic pesticides, the selective breeding of plants and animals and increased mechanisation (Buller, 1992). More recently the UK organic movement has criticised the UK government's policy on a number of particular rural and agricultural issues, including GMOs (Soil Association, 2006), foot and mouth disease (Soil Association, 2001) and avian influenza (Soil Association, 2005). Over and above a concern with specific farming practices, such as prohibiting artificial fertilisers and pesticides, organic farming advocates a new system of farming where the health of the soil is connected to the health of plants, animals and humans (IFOAM 2006) (Tomlinson, 2008). Proponents of the organic movement contend that under the organic farming systems, production and conservation are achieved together in a holistic system based on the health of the soil and the quality of food produced. The holistic discourse of organic farming was seen as a potential to create an alternative everyday life and to construct new values and interests in agriculture (Pederson and Kjaergard, 2004), in the sense that the notion of 'Organic' encompasses much more than a set of farming practices or production technique, and it is also rooted in a social movement (Tovey, 1997; Moore, 2006; Tomlinson, 2008).

Nevertheless, the growth of both organic agriculture as a policy discourse, and organic produce as a market good, organic farming and food have taken on a multitude of new representations and forms, many of which challenge this more holistic approach (Tomlinson, 2008).

In this context, it has led many substantive concerns to arise as to what organic food and farming are becoming. Even in the context of the rapid growth of the organic market, recent changes in the organic sector have not just been a matter of scale but it recorded highly significant changes to the qualitative nature and characteristics of 'organics'.

The phenomenon of changes that has occurred in the organic sector were famously highlighted in many of the international academic scholarship as 'conventionalisation thesis' (Buck *et al.*, 1997; Tovey, 1997; Campbell and Liepins, 2001; Hall and Mogyorody, 2001; Michelsen, 2001; Michelsen, 2001; Guthman, 2004; Lockie and Halpin, 2005; Seyfang, 2006; Tomlinson, 2008). This thesis describes a process whereby the structure and ideology of the organic sector are increasingly resembling that of the mainstream or conventional food and farming sector that it has traditionally opposed (Lockie and Halpin, 2005).

The many academic literature on the organic movement has tended to view what is happening within the organic movement as complex and subtle. They view it in terms of binarism and mainly compromised the system, in which it has been argued to be particularly evident in areas where the free market is undercutting and compromising the movement (Buck *et al.,* 1997; Guthman, 2004; Lockie and Halpin, 2005).

Major contributions to this debate conclude that organic agriculture is facing 'co-option' and 'corruption'. Organic movement, which grew up in opposition to the methods and philosophies of conventional agriculture, has been incorporated into a system for state management of rural spaces that are designed to allow the continuation of conventional methods of production

(Tomlinson 2008). This phenomenon has been widely known among the proponents of organic as the 'conventionalisation' of the organic.

Most work on the conventionalisation thesis has focused on the role of economic actors with the consideration of the role of supermarket food chains (Tomlinson, 2008, Seyfang, 2006; Seyfang, 2008). Yet, in the UK when the supermarkets embraced organic food, the movement was mobilised and vigorously campaigning against another element of the food system. However, the progressive shift in attitude that has taken place towards organic food and farming from complete support that started in early 1981 to help promote organic food and farming in the UK and increase the consumers awareness, to a serious change which is believed to have changed the discourse of organic food and farming from representing a form of green resistance and a social critique of the hegemony of the agro-industrial paradigm (Vos, 2000), to adopting more or less the same productivist model of conventional farming and industrial food chains that organic systems were centrally developed to oppose (Morgan and Murdoch, 2000).

3.3.1 The British major retailers (Supermarkets) role in corrupting the organic ideologies in the UK

Since 1981, the major retail chains in the UK like Sainsbury's, Waitrose, and Tesco have been involved in encouraging the development of the organic food sector, as a direct response to the growing demand for organic foods. They designed many corporate strategies through encouraging UK producers to convert to organic farming, and support research with the aim to increase the number of organic foods on its shelves; extend the range of organic products available; increase sourcing of organic food (Fruits and vegetables) from British suppliers, and develop new technologies and production methods to promote a smooth transition to organic by farmers (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2007).

Despite their bright prospect to broaden the national market for organics in the UK and its effort to deepen food consumer's knowledge about organic food, which resulted in increasing the retail market share of organic products. The increasing availability of organic food in the mainstream market and the heightened consumer awareness has resulted in a rise of intense competition between the different mainstream retail chains. However, instead of competing on the availability of organic products to assure greater supply and better quality of a wide range of organic produce, the competition has long taken a different level by evolving towards a price value strategy (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2007). The fierce competition that took place among the major British retailers for a larger share of lucrative organic food in their shelves has led to increasing attempts by the different retail chain to forge its own supply chains; as they aim to assure sufficient access to best organic suppliers and supplies. This resulted in placing new challenges on organic farmers by demanding increasing volumes, unique quality specifications and wider varieties of items. This competitive transformation has been widely argued to have given organic a conventional characteristic by turning organic into just another commodity range (Chatzidakis *et al.,* 2007).

Many organic farming and food advocates have criticised this phenomenon at the time. Generally, they were reluctant about the market condition that the initiative of high mainstream chain competitiveness may create. Among those, the Soil Association as one of the pioneers of the British organic movement were among those who were not enthusiastic about the increasing competition in the market. The Soil Association was particularly concerned that the combination of supermarkets severe competition over price and the failure to be loyal to UK producers may eventually lead the producers to receive income below the cost of production due to farm gate price squeeze (Soil Association, 2001). These concerns were similarly expressed by Levins (2001); who asserted that the economic power the supermarkets hold on can be used to manipulate prices, to influence contracts, and to affect the rule of the game by relying on a combination of cheap imports and low UK farm gate prices. He continues, this will place supermarkets or whoever holds these powers in a very strong and potentially very profitable position within the organic food supply chains. This means that eventually those who have access to the economic power will have access to more profits that are not available to those who don't have it. In the current food systems, farmers' might be the ones without economic power (Bell, 1994; Burt and Sparks, 1997; Jones, 2001; Levins, 2001).

Despite their stated concerns back in time, these issues have taken place in the competitive organic marketplace, and the dominance of the supermarket sector of the organic market led the retail sector to act in a manner which has been considered in contrast to the holistic notions that are largely associated with the organic principles as dealing in "socially just" or "ecologically responsible" (hatzidakis *et al.*, 2007).

The dominance of the large supermarkets in the organic food retailing chains have been associated with number of issues that has long been a characteristic of conventional food supply chains, such as: encouraging farmers to produce more which forced organic into progressively more intensive production strategies, strategies that have often been associated with the conventional agriculture that has been condemned with the gradual erosion of high quality food production across the UK over the last decades.

Furthermore, the supermarket chains demands of a sustained over-supply of organic food has led to a significant decline in farm-gate prices due to supermarket price wars which have threatened the integrity of the market by exerting a price-squeeze on indigenous organic producers by demanding organic produce at farm gate prices to make organic produce affordable to the majority of households in the UK (Van der Ploeg, 2000). The Supermarkets were unwilling to sacrifice its own profit margins in the quest to convert 'price-sensitive families' into organic food shoppers. The preferred option was to combine between cheap imports and squeeze the British farmers economically by applying low farm gate prices which reflected on an over-abundance of indigenous organic produce. The negative impact on farm-gate prices of burgeoning supplies of indigenous organic produce, such as organic milk, lamb and vegetables, are already evident in the UK marketplace. The supermarket dominance in result to its increasing power has led to the absence of any currency of obligation or covenants between retailers and their organic suppliers which have culminated in retailers being able to 'pick and choose' between suppliers, produce and quality. The supermarket domination of the organic market has also led to the decline in the market share represented by direct sales and sales through independent and health food shops due to the tremendous power of the mainstream chains hold compared to the independent sector (Tomlinson, 2008).

As suggested the conventional characteristic of the competitive marketplace of organic food system in the UK has resulted in tremendous growth in indigenous organic production, as well as growth in levels and value of the broad organic retail market in the UK by dominating the sector, making the UK organic market the fastest growing in Europe (fed by cheap organic imports and larger indigenous volumes), however, it reflected the retail chain failure to recognise the necessity to provide and maintain fair engagement between organic farmers and organic retailers by failing to articulate how the retail sector should engage with organic farmers.

This has been seen by many organic farming advocates as a threat to what has been seen as a very bright future for organic farming in the UK (Burt and Sparks, 1997; Bell, 1999; Jones *et al.,* 2001; Levins, 2001).

This was reflected by Hamm *et al.* (2002), who suggested that the highest rate of organic market growth is experienced largely by those countries in which the mainstream retailers have moved seriously into the promotion and sale of organic products (Hamm *et al.,* 2002). This is attributed to the increased availability and visibility of organic products in the mainstream shelves suggested (Richter *et al.,* 2001), and to increase economies of scale by those retailers through price premiums reductions for farmers and reduction of distribution costs (Hamm *et al.,* 2002; Lockie, 2009).

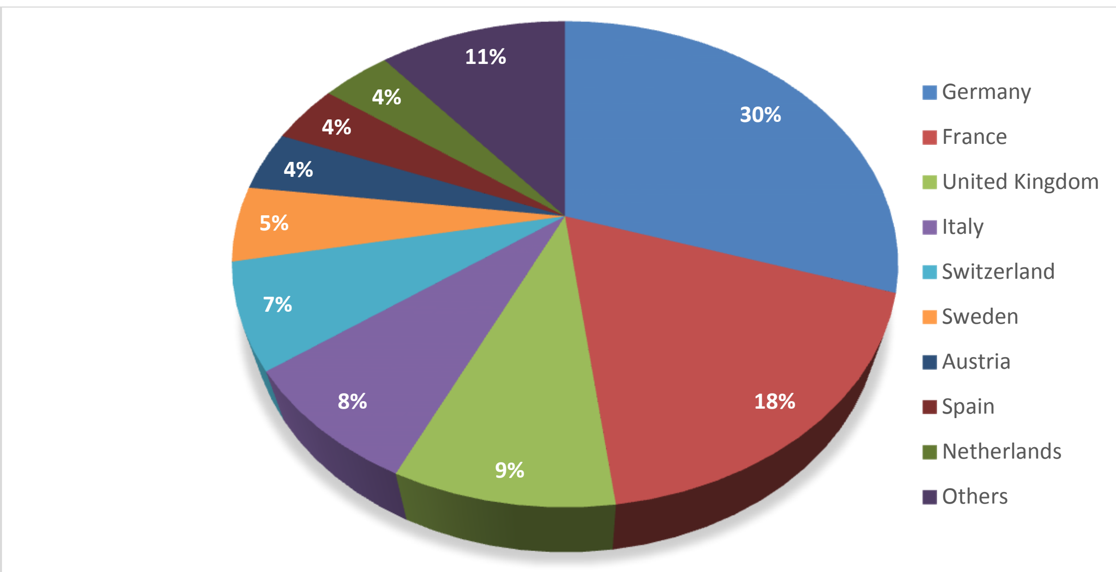
Further, this market situation of the massive expansion of organic in the mainstream with all the consequences of moving organic beyond the niche sparked the problem that the organic regulation and standards might not be sufficient , due to the fact that standards are far more able to refer to prohibited inputs than to deal with the structure of provision which takes along a precise criteria for the assessment of whether producers, processors, and retailers' are acting in a manner which is "socially just" or "ecologically responsible " or not (Lampkin 1995). This urged many organic advocates to make a case for the development of private standards to cover the pitfalls left out by the organic regulation to effectively regulate the private interests (between organic suppliers and retailers), if the deep-seated benefits of organic system as an engine of long-term economic and rural development are to be sustained and embrace further expansion (Smith and Marsden, 2004).

3.4 Organic market value

All countries in Europe reported growing retail sales, with the most spectacular growth occurring in Sweden at 40 percent. Retail sales of organic products in Europe totalled approximately 26.2 billion euros in 2014, an increase of 7.6 percent over 2013. The largest market for organic products in 2014 was Germany, with retail sales of 7.9 billion euros, followed by France (4.8 billion euros), and the UK (2.3 billion euros), and followed by Italy (2.1 billion euros).

Germany the largest market in Europe, had a growth rate of 4.8 percent; in France, the second largest market in Europe, growth was by 10 percent. Exceptional growth was noted for Sweden, where the market grew by more than 40 percent, representing an extraordinary growth rate for a mature market. In the United Kingdom, where retail sales had decreased for a number of years, a growth of 3.8 percent was noted. In 2015, in many European countries, the market experienced further significant growth, and growth rates were similar to those in 2014.

With the retail sales in 2014 valued at 23.9 billion euros, the European Union is the second largest single market for organic products in the world after the United States. The market showed a growth rate of almost eight percent. The European market for organic products was valued at approximately 26.2 billion euros, while North America was almost 29.8 billion euros. Comparing the value of the organic market worldwide by a single market, the United States has the lead by 43 percent of global retail are in the United States in which the market is valued at 27.1 billion euros. (The world of organic agriculture, emerging statistics and trends, 2016).



Source, the world of organic agriculture 2016

Figure 3: Distribution of retail sales in Europe 2014

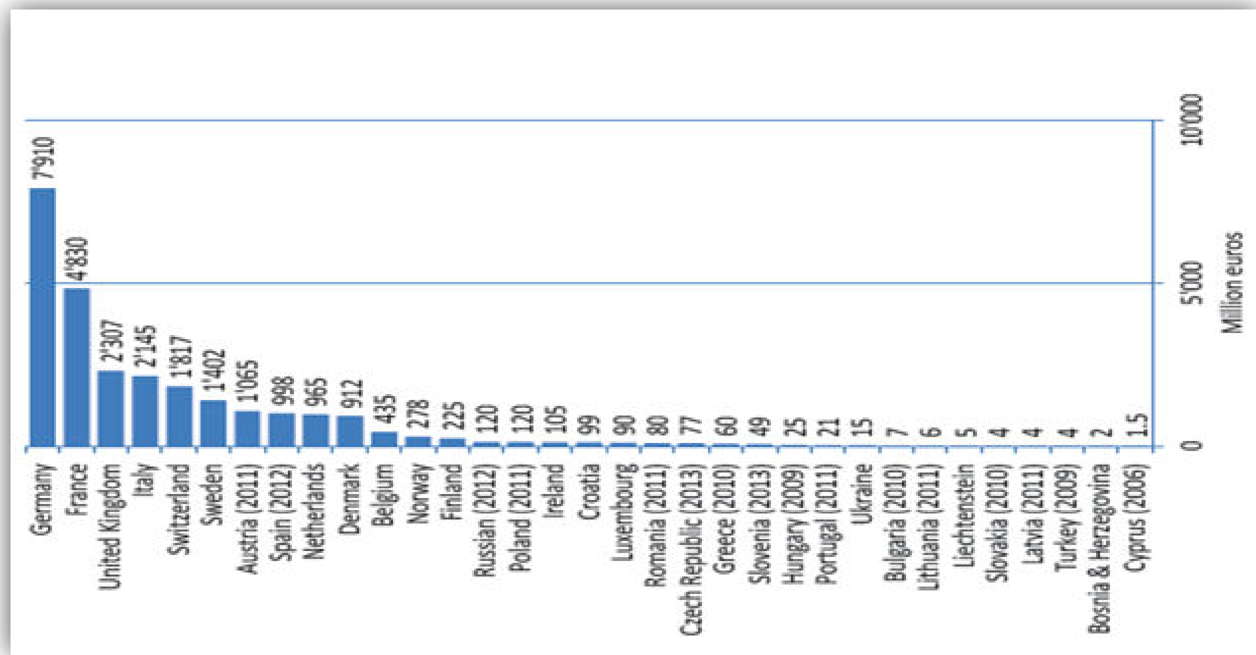


Figure 4: retail sales by country 2014.Source the world of organic agriculture, 2016

3.5 Market channels

Figure (5) on market channels shows that the importance of the various market channels may differ from country to country. In the past, countries with a strong involvement by mainstream retailers showed a strong growth of their organic markets (United Kingdom, Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland. However, the financial crisis exposed the risk of the strong dependence on supermarkets. In those years, in the UK, the market decreased, and in Germany, stagnation was noted for general retail sales, whereas it continued to grow in specialised channels. France, Italy, and Germany are good examples of countries with strong market growth, while, at the same time, specialised retailers play a very important role (Figure 5). (The world of organic agriculture, emerging statistics and trends 2016).

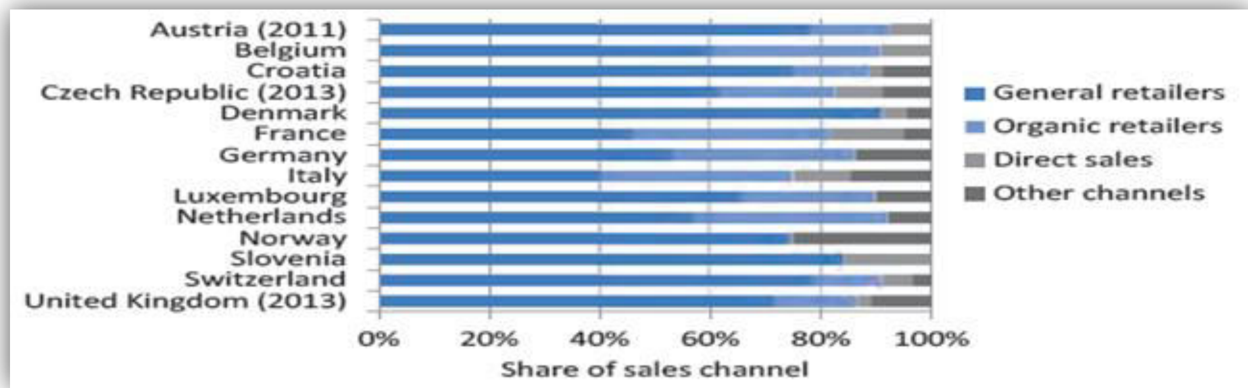


Figure 5: Retail sales by channel in selected European countries 2014, based on retail sales value in million euros)--Source: the world of organic agriculture, 2016

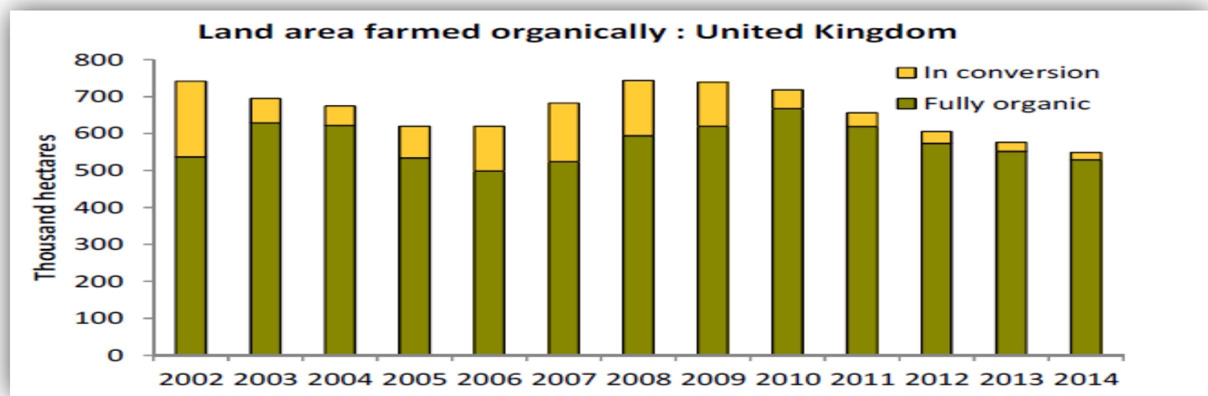
3.6 Organic farming in the UK

3.6.1 Organic land in the UK

Despite the steady growth in the area of organically managed land around the world thanks to the increased number of organic livestock which caused an increasing demand for organic raw materials.

Recent data from the Soil Association (2016) based on DEFRA data figures to the end of 2014 shows that, in the UK, certified organic farmland and land in-conversion continued to decrease at a very rapid pace. In June 2015 the UK's organic land area was reported to be 548.7 thousand ha down from 575,349 thousand hectares in 2013. This amounts to 3.3% of the agricultural land area being managed organically, with 4% of this in-conversion and the rest fully organic. (Soil Association, 2016). These data show the steep decline of the organically farmed area, in which the total organic and in-conversion farmland has declined by 26 percent since 2008 when the area of the farmed organically peaked reporting over 700 thousand ha (See Table 3-Figure 6). The current organically farmed area constitutes 3.2% per cent of the total utilised agricultural land area in the United Kingdom., with 4% of this in conversion and the rest fully organic (based on Defra data to the end of 2015) (figures quoted in DEFRA, 2016). The soil association related this fall in the total organically farmed land in the UK to the increasing farmer's retirement and farmers, especially livestock, are leaving the sector because of the decline in sales of red meat.

Figure 6 gives a clearer picture of how the decreases in total organic farmland, between 2002 till 2014, in the UK. The picture that emerges from Histogram (Figure 6) is a negative one reflecting a sharp fall of UK total organic land.



Source organic market report 2016

Figure 6: Land area farmed organically in the United Kingdom

Table 3: land area farmed organically

Thousand hectares

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
United Kingdom							
In conversion	149.1	119.4	50.8	36.9	32.2	24.4	19.7
Fully organic	594.4	619.3	667.6	619.1	573.4	551.7	529.0
England							
In conversion	91.1	67.6	29.8	25.4	19.2	14.0	12.5
Fully organic	284.0	311.2	362.0	325.6	304.8	302.4	295.7

3.6.2 Land in conversion

Organic production comes from fully converted land. Before an area can be considered as fully organic, it must undergo a conversion process. The area in conversion expressed as a percentage of the total organic area can give an indication of the potential growth in the organic sector. The proportion of the area of farmland being converted to organic is also in decline in 2014 though the decline has slowed in the last four years compared to the period between 2007 and 2010 (see figure 7).

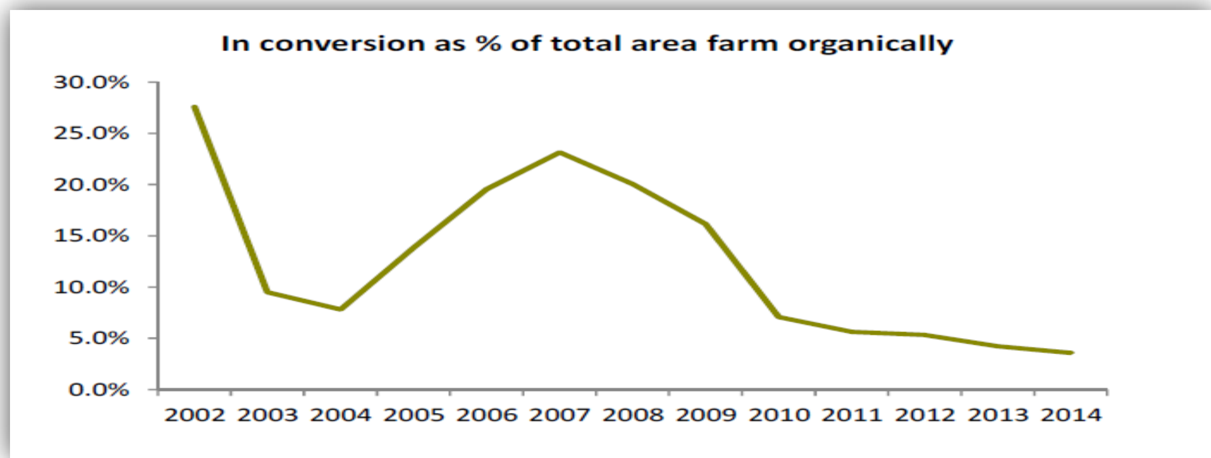


Figure 7: In conversion as % of total area farmed organically

3.6.3 Number of agricultural producers

In 2014, there were 3,695 agricultural producers registered with the organic certification bodies in the United Kingdom, down from 3,918 in 2013. The number of producers has declined by 33 per cent since 2007, mirroring the decline in the land area farmed organically.

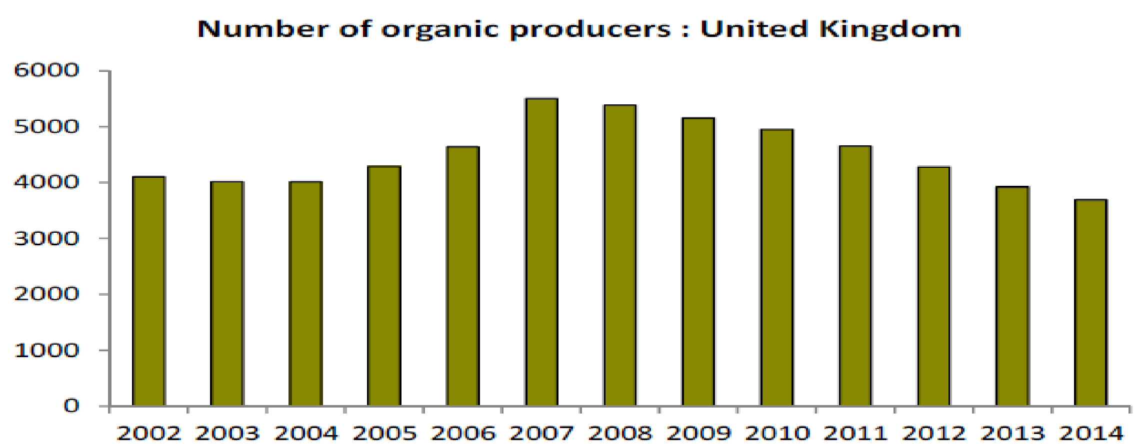


Figure 8: Number of organic producers in the United Kingdom

The continuous reduction of the total agricultural land undergone organically and the reduction of number of organic producers could be related to the changing producers' motivation to convert and adopt organic methods which has been proven by Lampkin and measures (1995) to differ from the motivation of those he named as traditional' organic producer who associated closely with these broader principles. There have been a number of different studies attempting to explain the motivations of producers in establishing organic production systems.

In his study on the behaviour of producers Lampkin (1995) highlighted that it is highly probable that the undergoing conversion decisions by many producers are driven by some economic factors (e.g. the higher market prices for organic food in the market) in contrast to the past where the organic producers motivation toward organic were associated closely with the broader organic holistic principles. Thus, by taking into account the implications of the current environment of the organic marketplace in the UK which is characterized by the major supermarket dominance of the sector with more or less 70% and the power supermarket chains hold ; in imposing a farm gate price squeeze and the consequences of that on organic farmers receiving less income; this could be the reason behind the increasing organic producers decision to quit organic farming as reflected in the current number of organic producers and processors and the total area of land grown organically and under conversion.

In the UK, the changing farmers motivation (being associated with the economic factor, pursue premiums)to join organic might be the reason for the continuous reduction of organic producers, the area of the organic land, and land under conversion as a result of the current market situation and the lack of adequate policy measures to provide subsidies. The supermarket chains dominance of the UK organic market and the consequences of that on organic farmers not to have access to an adequate income or premium for their efforts due to the price reductions strategies; might have discouraged them to stay in organic or to motivate new farmers to convert to organic farming as they might have felt it is unworthy their efforts .The significance of this theory is apparent especially when considering the current organic systems underway in many countries, where the motivations of newly converting organic producers might be different from the `traditional' organic producer who associated closely with these broader principles.

In the UK, this might be the reason for the changing profile of the new organic products as a result of the number of established conventional producers who are nowadays prompted to establish organic holding through converting to organic production to pursue these premiums;

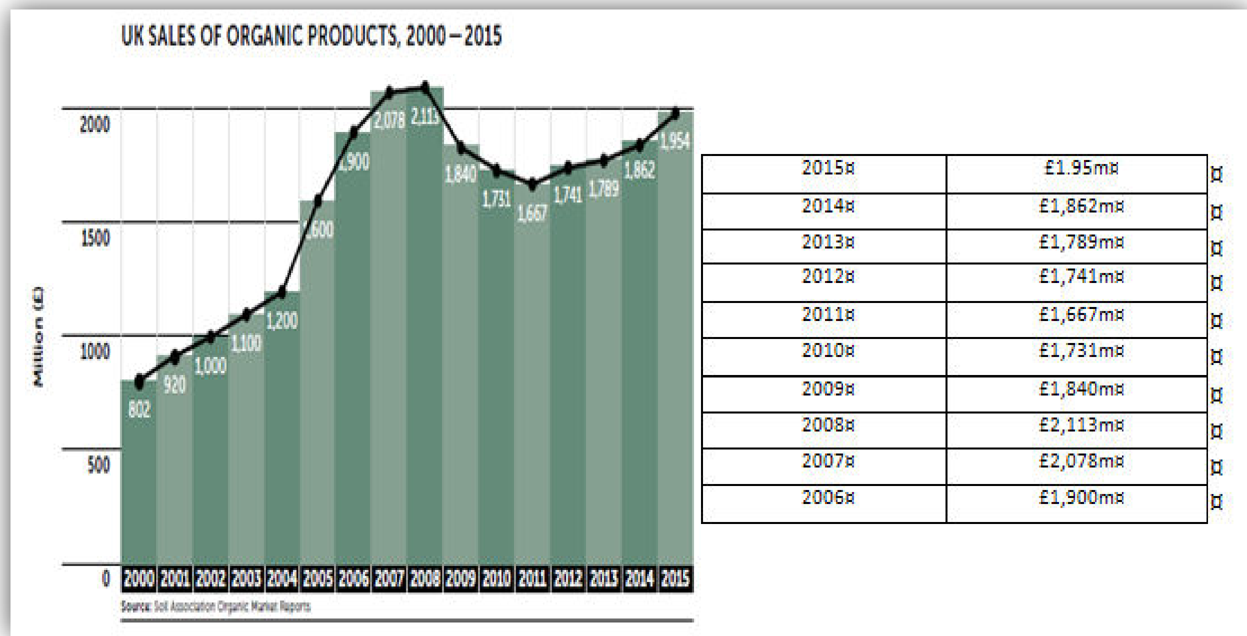
their motives may not be related sustainability in its broadest sense, but merely a market economic logic at its most strategic approach.

3.6.4 Organic market in the UK

Organic marketing has been increasingly promoted on the basis of multiple forms of a new food provisioning schemes, such as Farmers' Markets, Farm Shops, Internet-based retailing, and box schemes. Its benefits are argued to be related to a plethora of areas ; provide healthier food, improved farmed environment, and a contribution to the enhancement of the rural economy through fostering the locality of food selling and consumption (Pretty, 2002; Renting *et al.,* 2003; Smith and Marsden, 2004; Soil Association, 2006).

An influential annual market report published by one of the strong advocates of organic production in the UK, such as the Soil Association reported sharp and continuous increases in the retail value of organic foods across the UK in 2015 (Soil Association, 2016). Although the total organic land area and the number of registered organic producers continued to show a staggering decrease, the retail sales of organic products in 2015 increased by 4.9% showing a year on year increase making this the third year of consecutive growth after achieving a growth of more than 30% in 2014 (Soil Association, 2016). The UK, however, still lags behind the two largest European markets for organic food - Germany and France – that saw a total market value increase by almost 5% and 10% respectively (Source: FIBL The World of Organic Agriculture).

Organic sales are reported to outperform the non-organic grocery market as a whole. Food retailers experienced crippling deflation and deep promotional price cuts to retain market share in 2015, making it a challenging year with the retail sale of food and drink fell at almost -1% value. But, in this market, organic food and drink stabilised its position as a key part of consumer choice. However, the trend of growing consumer demand for organic foods in the UK remained very much intact. Shoppers spent an extra £1.4 million a week on organic products and the organic market is expected to be worth £2 billion in next year (Soil Association, 2016). The organic food and drink market in the UK is now worth a staggering £1.95 billion and growing steadily (See Figure 9).



2015	£1.95m
2014	£1,862m
2013	£1,789m
2012	£1,741m
2011	£1,667m
2010	£1,731m
2009	£1,840m
2008	£2,113m
2007	£2,078m
2006	£1,900m

Source: Soil Association 2016

Figure 9: UK sales of organic products 2006-2015

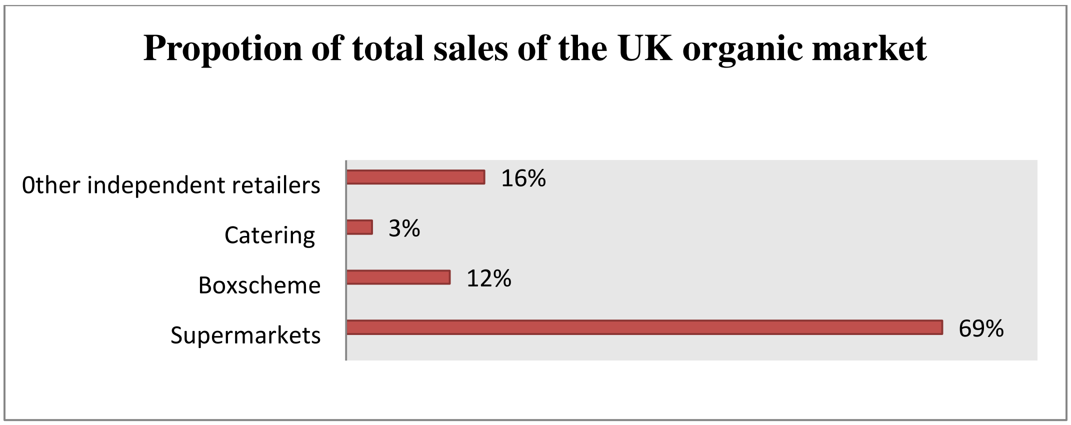
The increasing demand for organic food could indicate the growth of demand for environmentally friendly ``green" or chemical-free food products. This market volume and the continuity of demand has been in the heart of the ethical consumerism debates in which consumer interest in products that have been produced based on ethical measures such as environmentally friendly, chemical free, and even safety and personal health reflects how ethics of food shopping and consumption can play a major role in consumer food basket in their shopping.

3.6.5 Market channels for organic food

Yet, despite the fact that supermarkets are still dominating the UK organic market, they witnessed an overall continuous breakdown. A decade ago, supermarkets had around 80% of organic sales, now they have less than 70%. The decline in supermarket share of organic sales has been attributed to the changing face of food shopping where people are increasingly altering where they buy organic from. UK customers now shop in large out of town stores less and doing more at smaller shops in local stores. This works well for organic offered by online retailers (e.g.

Ocado, Amazon), other independent and catering sector on the high street, where smaller stores can have a specialist range, and finally local food initiatives, box schemes in particular. These channels are continuing to carve out a niche for the overall organic sales volume.

In the UK, the market structure is gradually changing, with more business coming through independent stores and online sales. the percentage of non-supermarket business is 31% and this channel is worth a significant £650m (Soil association, 2016).

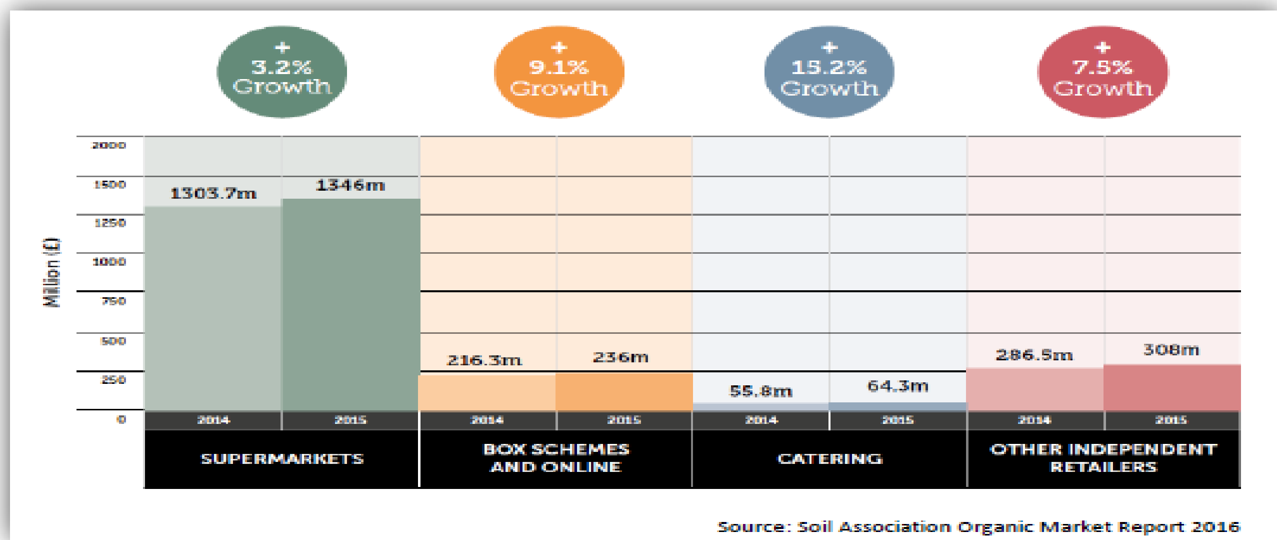


Source : Organic market report 2016

Figure 10: Total sales of he UK organic market in 2015

Figure 10 illustrates that the strongest growth was through online shopping, box schemes and large independent retailers. These outlets often offer the choice and convenience of extensive organic ranges under one roof or on a single website. Sales through box schemes and online independent retail increased by 9.1% and topped £4 million a week for the first time at £236 million (Table 4) (Figure 11-12). Online retailer Ocado increased its organic sales by 14%. Combined sales through the three largest high-street chains specialising in organic products – Whole Foods Market, Planet Organic and As Nature Intended also increased by more than 10%. Over time, it is forecast that the share of sales through supermarkets will decline further, as the organic ranges are condensed and offer inadequate choice. This has already been witnessed in the value of organic sale at Asda supermarket chain. Analysts attribute this to a number of things, the desire to 'scratch cook' when fresh ingredients are needed for the same day, the nascent rise in popularity of specialised food often seen as 'artisan-produced foods' and the ongoing trend for convenience and saving time.

Further, the evidence of the growth of direct to consumer sales of Farmers' Markets, Farm Shops, and box-schemes indicates a group of consumers who are prepared to enter into innovative relationships with producers. This could be related to what (Padel and Foster, 2005, pp. 622) suggested that supermarkets, as a point of sale, serve a purely functional purpose and unlike local, specialist shops, do not tap into or fulfil any deep desires or aspirations).



Source: Organic market Report 2016

Figure 11: Total sales of organic in different market channels

Table 4. Shares of UK organic market 2015. Source: Soil Association, 2016

Channel	Year 2014	Year 2015	Total increase
Supermarkets	£1,303.7m	£1,346m	+3.2%
Other Independent retail	£286.5m	£308m	+5.7%
Box schemes	£216.3m	£236m	+9.1%
Catering and restaurants	£55.8m	£64.3m*	+13.6%
Total organic sale increase			+4% (£1.86 Billion)

Table 5. Organic food sale channels in UK (in Milion £)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Supermarkets	1,189.9	1,260.5	1,275.6	1,303.7	1,346.0	1,428.1
Box Schemes	167.0	174.3	193.6	216.3	236.0	260.8
Other indipendent retailers	246.6	249.1	259.9	286.5	308.0	327.4
Total	1,667.0	1,741.0	1,789.3	1,862.0	1,954.0	2,092.7

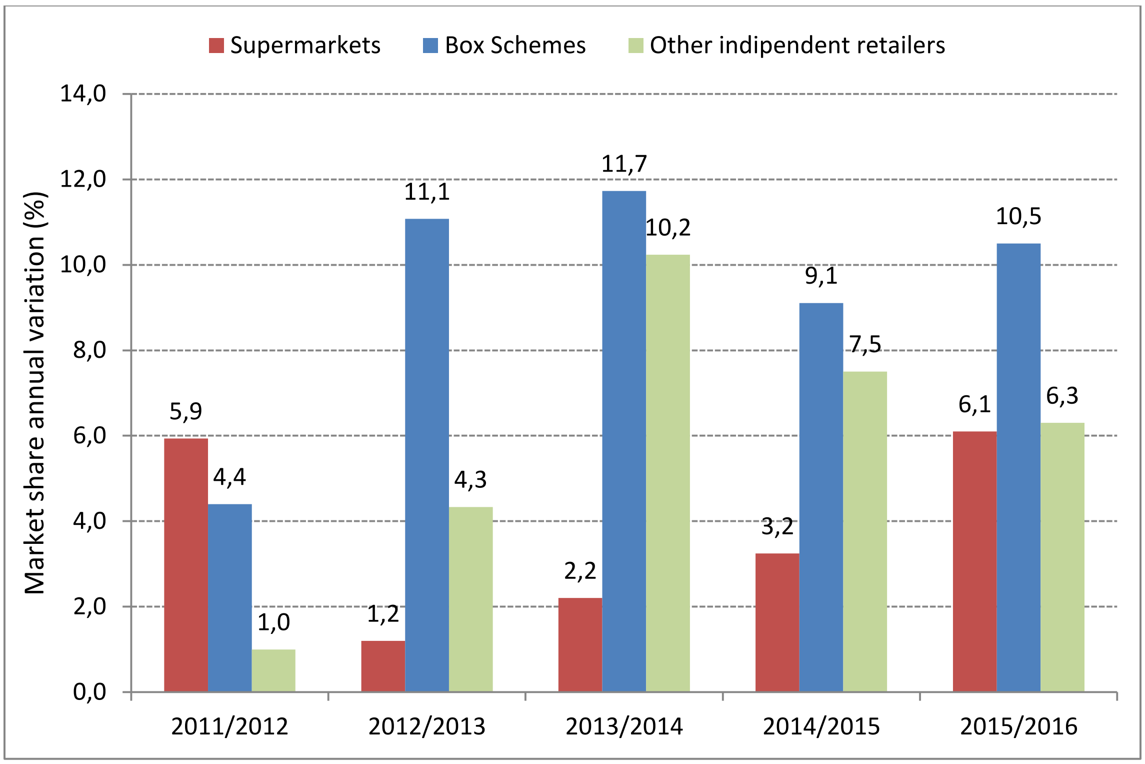


Figure 12. Different sale channels organic market shares progress

3.6.5.1 Supermarkets

Over the last two decades, there has been an increased interest in organic markets by mainstream retailers. For example, Supermarkets in the UK, are currently boosting the number of organic lines in their stores and investing heavily in advertising organic food. Based on sales data supermarkets now hold about 70% of all organic fruit and vegetables (Soil Association, 2016). There is thus a great opportunity for producers in developing countries and the UK to benefit from the expansion of the organic market in the UK.

In the UK organic retail environment, 69% of sales of total organic are sold through the major supermarkets. Based on the soil association and supermarket data, the organic sales in supermarkets have grown by 3.2%. Organic food and drink sales represent approximately 1.4% of overall sales within the main supermarket groups in the UK, accounting for approximately £1. 346 million sales.

This is quite a contrast to other European countries where the structure of the market is more evenly balanced between the large supermarket chains and the independent specialist stores. In France, for example, approximately 50% of organic food is sold through the large retailers, whereas smaller chains such as Bio-coop, an exclusive organic chain with over 300 stores, offer an alternative to customers. The UK does not have any independent chains of this size, however, there is a growing number of high street stores selling a percentage of organic food and drink.

Thus, while the mainstream supermarket share of organic sales has grown, this has come about more through total market growth. As supermarkets have such a large share, the trend in organic sales is controlled and determined by their approach to marketing and selling the products in the store. The four biggest retailers of organic are to be Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco, and Waitrose. The four multiples in organics together account for around 80% of the total multiple retail sales of organic between them. Of the leading supermarkets, Sainsbury's is the UK's largest retailer of organic products with the largest share of the organic market, with 29%, and have been most committed to organic over the longest period of time with a loyal customer base , while the online retailer "Ocado overtrades", with a 9% share, has seen a 19% increase in organic sales. Waitrose also had positive growth during 2015 with a share of 23%, which is almost 5 times the size of their current grocery share. Spending on organic products represents 4.5% of purchases at Waitrose – the highest proportion among the leading supermarkets. A key factor in the company's success has been the investment in its popular own-label organic ranges, with own-label products currently accounting for 60% of its organic sales. Tesco's organic turnover continued to record a fall in 2015 for the second successive year. Despite their fall in organic sales, Tesco still accounts for more than a quarter of the market.

The discount food retail such as "Lidl" and "Aldi" move has the potential to make organic produce more affordable for some of those on low incomes. They increased their combined sales by around 20% in 2014, and gradually extra organic lines are being introduced to the choice in both stores (Soil Association, 2016).

3.6.5.2 Independent retailers

In the UK, the percentage of non-supermarket business is 31% and this channel is worth a significant £650m. The market structure is gradually changing, with more business coming through independent stores, online sales and box schemes. This steady and increasing trend toward shopping from an independent retailer and specialist shops are believed to be giving organic brands better growth potential over the coming years.

a. Online retail

The rise of the online retailing has been regarded as the main reason behind the recent increase in organic sales, for the role it plays in boosting the organic market with increasing sales. For the organic consumer, online shopping provides an alternative to a wide variation in the range, quality and availability of organic food in supermarkets, with the benefit of searching a database of all available organic products together, as opposed to finding them throughout a store. so they are shopping online, or using a box scheme or buying from an independent operator to guarantee availability and a good comprehensive choice of organic at supermarkets. Online retail is getting stronger and stronger and the consumer knows where to get extensive ranges. According to the organic market data report, 43% of shoppers are now shopping online regularly.

Ocado is a leading organic online market, it has been voted as Soil Association Retailer of the Year 2014 by consumers, increased its organic sales by 14% to £80 million, a success story deemed to be powered by choice and convenience. Ocado customers can choose from an unparalleled 3,344 organic lines (up 9% since 2013) and 315 organic brands (up 11%). Organic products account for 8.5% of Ocado online sales. Nowadays it is becoming known as the 'destination shop' for organic. It trades 10 times higher on organic than their actual share of the market (Soil Association, 2016).

More recent entrants to organic in the UK, such as Amazon and Costco, are also creating interesting opportunities for lesser well-known brands to win space of about 17% of internet shoppers have actively used Amazon for a grocery.

b. Box schemes

Direct farm-to-consumer sale channel such as farmers' markets, box schemes, and community supported agriculture programs have also experienced strong absolute growth. In recent years, particularly in the organic sector, box schemes have become increasingly popular. Based on the sales figures presented by the Soil Association's organic market report, there was an increase in sales for box schemes by 9.1% to £236 million in 2015 compared to 4.4% to £216 million in 2014 (Soil Association 2016). The two biggest box schemes, Abel & Cole and Riverford, saw their sales increase by 16% and 7% respectively. Their success was attributed to increased marketing and new product development as the main factors in their growth and in securing new customers. Both have successfully introduced recipe box ranges, which make cooking from scratch more straightforward for busy people and appeal to the growing appetite for 'occasion shopping' -buying food with a particular meal or special occasion in mind (Soil Association, 2016).

Even among box schemes with a turnover below £100,000, an average growth rate growth rate of 5% was achieved in 2014, though being isolated from the urban hotspots of organic shopping and lack both the range of products offered by their larger rivals and the marketing resources needed to attract new customers (soil association, 2016).

c. Independent stores

The independent sector is the most exciting and buoyant segment of the organic market. Independent retailers account for approximately 15% of UK sales totalling almost £300 million.

The independent sector is considered as the best starting point for many organic brands, establishing the product among the customers who are less price-sensitive and using this success as a springboard for further growth through mainstream supermarkets. Many organic brands in the UK choose to be available through independents and have built up significant sales in this way, particularly specialist products such as superfoods and supplements. The top-selling organic brand nowadays, according to the main retailers, is Yeo Valley. Other key supermarket brands according to their survey returns are Waitrose Duchy, Sainsbury's So Organic, Rachel's, Green & Blacks, Organix, Pukka, Biona, Ella's Kitchen, Clipper, Seeds of Change, and Ocado's Wholegood.

These retailers are adding many organic options in their ranges in which they are enjoying the sales increase. The general wholesalers who focus on organic are benefiting from this trend and adding more options to their catalogues, often at customers' request. Based on recent data available, wholesalers of organic increased their sales by slightly more than 10% during 2015 (Soil Association, 2016).

The transformation in the competitive context of UK organics augured for the necessity to develop different strategies to effectively overcome the environmental, economic, and social externalities implicated from the transformation of organic world from the niche to the mainstream sector. The increasing market competitiveness which affect farmers income negatively due to the price wars which forced implementing price value strategies; environmental externalities associated with the agribusiness's aim at maximizing organic production to provide massive volumes of production to achieve the highest possible profitability which is against the organic holistic approach itself; retail chains reliance on cheap imports which carry a lot of environmental externalities due to the increase the food miles which contribute to the unnecessary increase in CO_2 emissions, and finally the social externalities by isolating food consumers away from where their food has been produced and who produced it, all these issues made a case for a change in the way organic are being dealt with at all the supply chain levels to effectively overcome and avoid these issues and provide products that is respectful at all levels of production till it arrives in consumers.

A different school of thought, many ethical consumerisms and organic food advocates viewed short food supply chains "SFSC's" and direct sale channels movements to operate in adjacent and adjunct to ethics and sustainability aspects genuinely embodied in the organic movement, offering a social, environmental, economic ethical space. Local food initiatives have taken on increased economic, environmental and symbolic importance in recent years. There is often a close alliance in perception between local food and organic food movements. Localness of production is believed to bring organic farming and organic food back to its holistic and sustainable approach as an engine for a long-term economic, environmental, and social features linked to food and farming to expand and sustained.

This different school of thought was propounded by the fact that these initiatives are concerned with reducing environmental costs, particularly food miles, also a desire to increase local economic multipliers and contribute to the reconnection of farmers and consumers (Pretty *et al.,* 2005). Arguing that combining a greater degree of localness in food sourcing with organic production would lead to considerable savings associated with the reduction of environmental externalities (Pretty *et al.*, 2005). Whereas the economic and social benefits of reducing negative externalities and increasing positive externalities have long been recognised (Winter, 2003). Other writers such as van der Ploeg (2000) have suggested that the operators of farm businesses have particular advantages to bring to the process of rural development, while Renting *et al.* (2003) have demonstrated further aggregate benefits in terms of additional net value added stemming from "short food supply chains" (including organics and direct sales) and Smithers *et al.* (2008) point to the benefits of retaining a greater proportion of farming and food expenditure within the local economy. Similarly, in discussing the multiple rationales associated with the promotion of "locally sourced organically produced food", Seyfang (2006) argues that such food supply chains can, amongst other things, favour new "socially embedded economies of place" and "make a significant contribution to rural development" (p. 386) by giving farmers greater control of their market and retaining a greater proportion of food spend in the local economy. Nevertheless, the assumed localised nature of organic food and associated social and economic benefits are not uncontested. For instance, Clarke *et al.,* (2008 p. 220) have recently commented on the "supposedly localised nature of organic food" and called for more critical and reflexive accounts of what it is organic food networks can do.

In a project held by the ESRC for the promotion of organic food suggested that there is an increasing convergence between the organic movement and the multiple retailers in marketing organic goods (Cook *et al.,* 2007). They found that organic movement originally could be divided into four main themes: eating pleasure, health, environment, socio-political structures. the ordering of these arguments across the organic markets were found to differ a lot, with the sharp divergence seen between the local food initiatives and supermarkets, where eating pleasure and particular tastiness is the main argument for organic food in the Organic promoted in the supermarket, followed by cautious presentation of health benefits and environmental benefits. While arguments of possible social and political benefits of small scale production and localised retail are rare from the supermarkets, though found noticeably in more local and organic initiatives such as box schemes. Another great divergence could be found in the promotion and the language used between major box schemes operators and supermarket, box schemes for instance largely view their role as educating their subscribers, in contrast, supermarkets view organic as just one brand among many competing brands to attract the attention of the fickle consumer. The project concluded that the organic movement has largely adopted conventional marketing strategies and a language and that the most successful organic retailers appear to be those who, whilst using marketing language they also maintain and refer to organic principles (Cook *et al.,* 2009).

Direct farm-to-consumer sale channels such as farmers' markets, box schemes, and community supported agriculture programs have experienced strong absolute growth in the recent years. Although the majority of organic sales are via supermarkets, sales through direct routes, such as local box schemes, rose by almost 200% between 2005 and 2017. The ambivalence of these systems with regard to supermarkets and the desire for a broader 'ethical' component to organic food; with the increased growth of these initiatives suggests that a considerable body of people prepared to play role in food even more ambitious than organic as presented in the supermarkets. Which could be argued to find a wider role in creating new organic food futures?

3.7 Alternative food networks

Alternative food networks are positioned as forms of food provisioning that are counteractive to mainstream (or conventional) food systems (Sage, 2003; Milestad *et al.,* 2010; Maye, 2013). This is a common feature that characterizes most studies on the development of alternative food networks, in which AFN's are based on the alternative positioning and alternativeness that challenge the larger and more conventional ' industrial and/or the globalised large scale production and retail systems' (Goodman, 2004; Whatmore *et al.,* 2004; Watts *et al.*, 2005; Tregear, 2011; Maye, 2013). Others attempted to differentiate between both systems in terms of 'Binarism' to show the difference in the economic, environmental, sociological and geographical structures between both systems(e.g. Morgan and Murdoch, 2000; Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Ilbery *et al.,* 2005; Sonnino and Marsden, 2006)..

AFN's are presented as adopting the logic of quality different to the logic of efficiency that define the conventional structures of food production and retail in western modern economies. The central idea behind AFN's is more realistic, it attempts to reclaim some power and legitimacy in food production and consumption by offering different food qualities which centre around the ethical, environmental, social, and economic conditions of production (Morgan and Murdoch, 2000; Miele, 2001; Parker, 2005).

The global and large scale industrial food production and retail systems on the other side, regardless the significant role it played in promoting the organic and fair-trade in the mainstream by increasing product range and availability, it was criticised for doing more harm than good for its lack of sustainability due to the negative economic, social, and environmental externalities largely associated with it. Examples of this externalities include: expanding the environmental degradation from global food trade and the excessive use of fossil fuel and oil in transportation, its contributions to the erosion of small-scale family farms, due to its strategies of squeezing local producers financially, its reliance on heavy chemical and pesticides usage to increase production which put consumers and farmers health at risk, besides several environmental and ecological disasters (water and soil contamination), its contribution in widening the distance between food producers and consumers which led to high obscurity among people in regard to the credibility of those who grow their food and the authenticity of the claims associated with the provided food due to the spatiality and the complexity of the production chains (Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Eden *et al.,* 2008; Jarosz, 2008; Milestad *et al.,* 2010). These issues according to Feagan (2007) largely resulted in the loss of agricultural resilience and diversity, degradation of the environment, dislocation of community and loss of identity and place (Feagan, 2007).

Although still weak, the UK government has responded by placing many policy initiatives which emphasis on principles of sustainable food and farming system. It called out to encourage closer collaboration and orientation between farmers and the upstream operators and end consumers. For example, those of the Policies of Commission on the Future of Food and Farming (2002). These policies although not enough in achieving real change in the main retail chains strategies, it encourage farmers and upstream operators to engage in more direct relationships with end consumers: to produce, process and market products on a localised basis, in what have been described as alternative food chains, 'systems', 'networks (DEFRA, 2002; Seyfang, 2006). The AFN's has been put forward as a strategy for sustainable consumption for its claimed benefits to local economies, communities, and environment (Jones 2001; Taylor et al., 2005). The major food retailers (supermarkets) from its side, responded by stocking more local organic produce

(Padbury, 2006; Seyfang, 2006). The rising trend in demand of products that carries these characteristics (specifically local organic produce) resulted in the rapid growth and success of these alternative food supply chains such as farmers markets, farm shops, and a diverse range of box schemes delivering meat, vegetables, and fruits. This has been described by many ethical and sustainable food advocates as a move towards a more sustainable food choices in the UK (NORBERG, 2000; La Trobe, 2002; Saltmarsh, 2004; Pretty *et al.,* 2005; Seyfang, 2006).

3.7.1 The shift in demand (Turning point)

Consumer and producers shift in demand are accounted to their concern of the vulnerabilities associated with the modernised food systems.

In the UK there have been significant shifts in demand allied with a series of food and other crises that have shed the light on the structural problems with the way agriculture is governed and land, crops and livestock are managed. Many producers and consumers view local initiatives as a more ethical alternative to the unsustainable globalised production and retail mainstream counterparts (Parker, 2005). The producer and consumers shift to alternative food systems has been described as a direct desire to bypass the conventional production and distribution systems and return to small-scale production and consumption with more direct selling to re-grow a sense of connection with the land and, through search for authenticity and provenance of the food they eat (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Parker, 2005; Ilbery *et al.*, 2006). In the nest section, both the consuers and producers rational stance in participating in AFN's will be presented.

3.7.1.1 Consumers side

On the consumption side, there is an increased awareness among certain groups of consumers of the ethical and political dimensions of food purchase and consumption (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000), which has led to the occurrence of an important transitions in consumer perceptions of food and farming (Ilbery and Maye, 2006). The search for alternatives owes to the increased public concern over issues like ecology, health, and animal welfare. Several AFN's research discussed the trend in consumer increasing interests to purchase from AFN's, suggesting that consumer mistrust in standardised food production systems cast their doubt about the ethical and environmental conditions and increasingly made them ask questions about the modes of farming, environmental damage and animal husbandry practices which is often perceived negatively by food consumers (McMichael, 2000; Sassatelli and Scott, 2001; Weatherell *et al.,* 2003; Murdoch and Miele, 2004; Ilbery and Maye, 2006). For example, in the UK, a legacy of the unnerving frequency of 'food scares' outbreaks such as the BSE pandemic and Foot and Mouth disease that took place few years ago are argued to have provoked a 'crisis of trust' amongst consumers, reinforced by a general disconnection of consumers from modern food production. (Renting *et al.,* 2003; Murdoch and Miele, 2004). Further recent events such as the introduction of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) could have confirmed many of the consumers pre-established, negative image of modern food production (Renting *et al.,* 2003).

All this in turn, could have led their interest on food perceived to be safe, traceable and associated with ideas of sustainability and ecological- friendliness (Ilbery and Maye, 2005). Increasing interest in, for example, organic farming (Clunies-Ross *et al.,* 1994; Michelsen, 2001) and local foods (Hinrichs, 2000; Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000), could help illustrate how such concerns are played out in contemporary food supply networks.

In response to these issues, the large scale production and mainstream retail have prompted a closer interrogation of the practices of large-scale corporate agriculture. Providing information about production and regulations was also seen as a good strategy to present a solution to address this supposed distrust by providing more and better information about food production and regulation through the proliferation of retailer initiated Quality Assurance Schemes (Morris and Young, 1997; Morris and Young, 2000), and several other institutional-based efforts that differentiate products according to standards of safety, hygiene and traceability (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000). The food assurance schemes have been originally developed with the aim to reconnect consumers with production cycles, it tends to do so by raising consumer awareness and educating them about the production methods of the products they buy and its consequences, in order to regenerate consumers trust on the production systems authenticity. Examples include organic production assurance scheme, animal welfare standards and fair-trade schemes (Renting *et al.,* 2003). For several decades according to Renting *et al.,* (2003) this arrangement met a broad social support and induced consumer confidence in brands, but the industrialised food production systems hardly had a chance to relax, the conventional institutional regime with the objectified standards that govern it was again increasingly challenged. Large consumers groups no longer tend to believe or trust unconditionally in the institutional standards set to protect the safety of what they eat and drink (Renting *et al.,* 2003). In support to that several studies into food scares and food assurance schemes criticised the food assurance regulatory systems suggesting that provision of information does not necessarily or easily generate trust. Some studies showed that presenting even a positive information about food origins and processing can increase distrust amongst consumers (.Poortinga and Pidgeon, 2004; Scholderer and Frewer, 2003). This have encouraged the emergence and growth of many alternatives channels to supermarkets and the large scale production units to face what is so called the 'placeless and faceless' food.

3.7.1.2 Producer side

From the producer's side, the shifts in trade into more global oriented systems have implicated heavily on the small agriculture domains and small farmers. One of the drivers toward various AFNs is that producers are diversifying their production methods and crops as a response to an economic squeeze, as well as responding to the lack of prestige and self-worth in producing food that is perceived as low-quality and/or 'risky food' (Parker, 2005).

Developments in global and mass food markets have adopted alternative strategies in sourcing food, in which the economic returns to farmers decreased. For example, reliance on cheap imports, increased possibilities for sourcing food industries with non-agricultural primary materials (Van der Ploeg, 2000). At the same time, the dramatic increase in production costs due to the technological and regulatory treadmills put farmers in further financial risk as they became more obligated to inject more money to comply with the production regulations. In addition, product requirements from food industries and retailers add on further costs; Farmers access to markets is conditioned by their capacity to comply with specific quality and production volumes specification, membership of good- practice labels, and the capacity for flexible delivery. All these issues in the market resulted in decreasing the income earned by farmers (van der Ploeg, 2000; Renting *et al.,* 2003).

The conventional solution to overcome these production issues were no longer possible and farmers and farms diversification into new activities was believed to boost the farm's financial revenues such as (Agro-tourism, nature and landscape management, etc..), and by increasing value added on farm products (Quality production, on-farm processing, direct selling, etc..).

Another innovative way involves new forms of cost reduction is by cutting down costs related to 'technological' and `regulatory treadmills', through going back to more natural and traditional farming and trade systems. Many farmers are prepared to try their luck with alternative forms of production with all the new ways of marketing it entails, in the conviction that mass food production for their farm no longer provides continuity and sufficient income. These practices are an active response of farmers to the changing economic and political context of their enterprise. AFNs in this context represent active attempts by producers to recapture value in the supply chain in ways which are assumed to help overcome the problems of the economic or price squeeze associated with conventional systems. These processes of building alternatives and short-circuiting the conventional chains took a diversity of forms of time and space (Renting *et al.,* 2003). Farmers engagement in these initiatives, brought several other benefits on board, as it served as a knowledge and skills fix which helped to enrich farmers with greater knowledge and information regarding production and marketing as well.

To summarise, AFN's are couched in opposition to globalised food systems embodied in conventional food consumption channelled through supermarkets. This binary notion is mostly present in almost all the literature about the AFN's or SFSC's (Lezberg and Kloppenburg, 1996; Clancy and Lockeretz, 1997; Feenstra, 1997; Reed, 2001; Jarosz, 2008; Smith, 2008). It has been commonly viewed as a solution to reverse the vulnerabilities associated with the current prevailed conventional system through embracing discourses of the local, environmental and social awareness, through establishing direct contact between producer and consumer which foster education and information provision about systems of production, so that consumers would avoid food coming from the corrupted systems and instead favour food from more beneficial ones (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Sage, 2003; Jackson, 2004; Tregear, 2011).

In the UK the case of AFN's emergence is not different, AFN's represent modes of food provisioning which are in various ways different from, or alternatives to, the prevalent, supermarket model of food provisioning (Parker, 2005). Examples of conventionalization issues which hijacked the organic food and farming movement in the UK as described in the previous section suggests that the boundaries between organic and conventional and industrial agriculture have grown increasingly porous as agribusiness moves to increase its market share in organics in response to growing consumer demand, while overlooking the consequences of their strategies that classify organic as merely another commodity range bound by the conventional market rules, which jeopardise the organic movement original message and approaches toward achieving sustainability.

These alternative chains instead comprise production, marketing, distribution, retail and consumption activities in various ethical contexts. Local food networks are claiming its alternativeness by their attempts to establish 'closer' or more 'connected' relationships between food producers through production with consumers through their consumption. This was argued by several authors (Lyson and Green, 1999; O'Hara and Stagl 2001; Smithers *et al.,* 2008) as representing and proposing a new vision of authentic trade relationships through its capacity to re-establish positive relationships between producers and consumers and ability to generate social, economic and environmental benefits. Similarly , in that regard, Seyfang (2008) described AFN's as relying on what he called 'socially embedded' economies of place as means developing connections between consumers and producers, boosting ethical and social capital around food chains, educating consumers about the origins of their food and the impacts of different production methods, and strengthening local economies and markets against external forces of globalisation (Seyfang, 2008 ; Milestad *et al.,* 2010).

Despite the oppositional status and the socio-political transformative potential which gave alternative agro-food networks its impetus in most studies and literature developed around these networks" (Abrahams, 2006). The notion of AFN's has yet grabbed its critics, many counterarguments were also made against this common held binary opposition between local/alternative and global/conventional. The critiques of AFNs noted above apply especially to local foods and organic foods – i.e. niche-orientated retail markets (Maye *et al.,* 2010; Maye, 2013). Many recent studies on AFN's tend to provide a great critique of AFNs, for example, research by Tregear (2011) suggests that the various economic, social, and environmental benefits of local food to farmers, micro-businesses and community, 'food miles reduction' were not proven. Goodman (2004) questions the viability and efficiency of many of these networks and its real rural development impact, suggesting that such a characterization is overly estimated and premature. Also (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005) criticise the over-reliance on romanticised notions of the countryside and nature, as well as unpacking the privileges assigned to terms like 'alternative' and 'local' (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). They argued that the local can be a site of inequality and exclusion that obscures the local politics of race, class, and gender; ''unreflexive localism can lead to a potentially undemocratic, unrepresentative, and defensive militant particularism'' (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). They continued by suggesting that these romanticised notions tend to neglect the possible unjust politics of the local food systems, by focusing only on the alternative strategies that define these networks. A normative, ''unreflexive'' localism, grounded on a fixed set of norms or imaginaries, tends to neglect the potentially unjust politics of the local and to propose solutions, based ''on alternative standards of purity and perfection'', which are ''vulnerable to corporate cooptation'' (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Abrahams, 2006). Locke (2009) similarly argued that despite the unfriendliness of the global capitalism, the increasingly claimed connection between local production and consumption, resistance to capitalistic relations, and the community building, quality, sustainability and healthfulness linked AFN's are not inevitable (Lockie, 2009).

Furthermore, many other academic echoed the necessity to delimit the space of what is variously labelled local, place or community. Feagan (2007) for instance stressed the importance to remember that the playground of AFN's are interdependent and dynamic not islands (Feagan, 2007). Globalisation of food plays a part of the development of these systems, by contributing to the restructuring, which in turn may have contributed to the spread and the development of these systems in the urban centres specialising in local markets (Jarosz, 2008). The linkages of urban markets to the local produce may be found critical to the sustainability of this small and locally oriented producer in rural agro-industrial regions due to the weak demand for such products in rural areas (Selfa and Qazi, 2005). Hence, even this alternative approaches/systems may need to broaden their strategies by stretching their selling and target consumers to include high-end consumers in urban areas, especially in areas where well-educated and high-income citizens are located (Jarosz, 2008). In this sense, the local-level social interaction does not occur in a ''vacuum- untouched by the larger workings of the world'' (Hinrichs, 2000). The same argument was made by (Sonnino and Marsden, 2006), who stressed on the danger of the often untheorized notions of re-localization, by claiming that its misinterpretation might marginalise the real effects of alternative food networks almost by definition (Abrahams, 2006).

Other authors talked about the organisational structure of these systems arguing that the vertical integration and crop diversity or mono-cropping are not scaled dependent as suggested in most

AFN's literature. In contrast, small-scale farms may also exhibit the same structures and cropping practices. For example, DuPuis and Goodman (2005), argued that trust and cooperation can also be politicised. While DeLind (1999) argued that the social and environmental commitments defining AFNs may not be shared equally between farmers and their customers (DeLind, 1999), and these motivations may not be the major driver behind either the producer and consumers engagement in the participation and consumption decisions. These were also suggested in a study conducted by Holloway and Kneafsey (2000) on Farmers Markets, they stated that products sold at "Farmers markets" as a type of alternative food networks, is still relatively expensive and hold a luxury'nature, thus may exclude the participation of some social groups (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000) and this could be deemed as unfair or unethical due to the exclusiveness of this networks for a specific social groups and the exclusion of others. Finally, other studies that focused on the consumer in their search suggested that the various political, ethical, and environmental reasoning may not be necessarily dominating consumer decision making about food choices, wherein other issues may be concerning the consumer activities such as a diversity of desires, beliefs, and preferences as well as issues concerning availability, cost and convenience (Robinson *et al.,* 2002; Lockie *et al.,* 2004; Jarosz, 2008).

3.7.2 Alternative food networks "definition"

There is a diversity of descriptions of the characteristics of local (organic) food networks. In conceptualising and defining AFNs, researchers combine a diversity of processes and locations that produce and sustain AFNs in particular places and times (Morris and Buller, 2003; Sage, 2003; Maxey, 2006). AFN's are conceptualized in relation to various to rural and regional development, different forms of capitalist restructuring, and as a vision and discourse that embrace environmental awareness and progressive social goals (Feenstra, 1997; Hendrickson and Heffernan, 2002; Allen *et al.,* 2003; Hassanein, 2003; Renting *et al.,* 2003; Watts *et al.,* 2005). A commonly referenced definition of AFNs is that offered by Jarosz (2008) who defined it in four major ways: (1) by shorter distances between producers and consumers (Renting *et al.,* 2003); (2) where enterprises are small-scale and/or use holistic production methods (Kloppenburg *et al.* 2000); (3) where alternative food purchasing venues exist such as food cooperatives, farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and box schemes (Trobe, 2001); and (4) by a commitment to various ethical dimensions of food production, distribution and consumption (Kloppenburg *et al.,* 2000). The components of this definition will be taken separately to identify more closely the AFN's characteristics.

The first attribute defines AFNs in terms of shorter distances between where food is being produced and where it is consumed. Farmers in AFNs grow food in relatively close local proximity to people buying and eating the food they grow (La Trobe and Acott, 2000; O'Hara and Stagl, 2001; Stagl, 2002; Renting *et al.,* 2003). Typically, the definition of "local" by is unclear and ambiguous. In a more general term, 'Local' implies certain proximity but consumers also associate it with other characteristics including small scale, greenness and quality (FSA, 2003). FARMA recognises two types of local definition: Local as a radius and Local as a county boundary. First, Local is defined as a radius from the market. A definition of 30 miles is ideal, up to 50 miles is acceptable for larger cities and coastal or remote towns and villages. Second, the definition of local may also be a county boundary or other geographic boundary such as a National Park that is similar in size to the radius option. It has also recommended a maximum travel distance of not more than 100 miles (FARMA, 2016- www.farma.org.uk). The local character has an environmental benefit by minimising the transport distances and simultaneously oil consumption, and provides better economic benefit by increasing the financial return to farmers allowing them to capture most of it and keep more profit through bypassing middlemen in the distribution chain, and in consequent provide consumers with relatively affordable ethical or authentic food. The closer connection help build a bond of trust and cooperation between producers and consumers (Jarosz, 2000; Sage, 2003; Carolan, 2006).

A second defining feature of AFNs is the commitment/dedication to producing food that differs from conventional agribusiness in size, scale and production techniques. Farmers in AFN's organic stratigiesall its holistic and environmentally conscious cultivation techniques (Kloppenburg *et al.,* 2000). The majority of these farms are small in terms of acreage (under 50 acres). They rely on household labour, apprentices and interns and, in some cases, upon seasonal farm workers. Nevertheless, larger farms may employ year-round workers. Lamine (2005) description of such change of scale is decisive: ''Uncertainties generated by global food crises are answered through guarantees and promises provided in the frame of local systems, because things are not perceived as going well on a large scale, these systems propose a change of scale'' (Lamine, 2005).

Third, the alternative governance structures further distinguishes the alternativeness of these networks. AFN's involves and relies on vertically integrated structures involving the farm household directly in the farming business through distribution and retail activities that occur near the farm, instead of making their sales dependent on brokers, wholesalers, corporations, processors, or supermarkets. The diversity of products in AFN's generate more economic viability for the actors involved, where farmers benefit from increased products margins (La Trobe, 2001; Pretty, 2001), opportunities for diversification and entrepreneurship (Bentley *et al.,* 2003; Morris and Buller, 2003) or building of new skill sets (Brown and Miller, 2008), whilst consumers may gain via more reasonably priced, fresh and healthy food (La Trobe and Acott, 2000; Little *et al.,* 2010). Furthermore, AFN's may also serve the wider local community by generating more jobs and allocating income opportunities for non-agricultural actors (Sage, 2003; Ilbery *et al.,* 2004). These features contrast with the perceived widespread economic exploitation of actors in the conventional food chains.

The fourth characteristic of AFNs is their basis in multiple environmental, social, and economic sustainability features. For example, ecological sustainability, represented by reduced food miles and carbon emissions, and a move forward in the sustainable farming agenda by adopting and relying on organic agriculture systems or other sustainable production systems such as biodynamic or integrated pest management techniques (Renting *et al.,* 2003). Other claims are linked to the social justice characteristics through the argument that AFNs can reconfigure relations between producers and consumers (Whatmore *et al.,* 2004; Kirwan, 2006; Feagan, 2007), bringing them into closer proximity and mutual understanding, the resulting relationships are more respectful, trustful and committed (Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Kirwan, 2006; Smithers *et al.*, 2008). The producers and consumer empowerment under these networks are also another dimension that contrast the mainstream channels. While in mainstream market structure producers and consumers are more like passive actors in a chain dominated by corporate food retailers and their intermediaries, in local food networks both producers and consumers can play active roles argued Lamine (2005). Interestingly the economic behaviour is embedded in, and mediated by, this complex web of social relations (Winter, 2003). This means that the economy under this networks is embedded in institutions of an economic and non-economic nature, where the inclusion of the latter is vital (Hinrichs, 2000; Winter, 2003). In other words, Social relations are important in order to generate the trust necessary for economic transactions to take place (Winter, 2003).

It can be easily noticed that common among these characteristics are the oppositional characteristics to the conventional food supply systems (i.e. industrial businesses, large-scale agribusinesses, multinational food supply chains, hypermarkets) (Abrahams, 2006). On a wider scale, AFNs may encourage more harmonious community relations (Winter, 2003), and more democratic participation of actors into food provisioning. Overall, therefore, a range of social, economic and ecological benefits has been claimed to broadly characterise AFN's and these claims have tended to headline the AFN literature to date (Tregear, 2011). Therefore, it can be said that any type of food chains that share these characteristics offer a strong challenge to the dominance of the supermarket productive agriculture nexus, as it can be seen as a space in which producers and consumers can circumvent the increasingly perceived unethical consumption constructed and dominated by powerful actors in the food chain.

3.7.3 Dimensions of AFNs/SFSC's

To better understand the morphology and the dynamics of AFN's (Renting *et al.,* 2003) has stressed on the necessity to go beyond the simple description of product flows. Instead, they urged to focus on the type of relationships between producers and consumers in these particular supply networks, and the role of these relationships play in constructing value and meaning, rather than focusing solely on the type of product itself (Renting *et al.,* 2003). Through this approach continuing Renting *et al.,* (2003) the different ways in which consumer demands and producer supplies are articulated to specific production `codes' such (organic, local/regional, artisanal) (Renting *et al.,* 2003).

In this regard, two interrelated dimensions were identified to describe the empirical variety of producer and consumer relations within AFN's. The first dimension is related to these networks organisational structure and the specific mechanisms undertaken in that to extend relations in time and space. The second dimension is related to the different quality definitions and conventions involved in the construction and operation of AFN's.

3.7.3.1 The organisational structure of AFN's/SFSC's

With respect to this dimension, three positions are distinguished, corresponding to different mechanisms for extending AFN's/SFSC's across distances in time and space. This represents three main types of short food supply chains/ alternative food networks (Marsden *et al.,* 2000; Sage, 2003).These types are face to face, spatial proximity, and spatially extended. It is important to note that, any business might be characterised by more than one of these different categories, especially in extending to international distribution systems (Marsden *et al.,* 2000; Renting *et al.,* 2003).

- **Face to face**

The first category of AFN's is essentially based on face-to-face interaction as a mechanism aligning producer and consumers under these networks. Consumers purchase products directly from the producer where authenticity and trust are believed to be mediated through personal interaction. This category largely coincides with a narrow definition of direct sales, be it through roadside sales, `pick your own', farmers markets, or farm shops (Pretty,1999; Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Knickel and Hof, 2002). Marketing concepts like box schemes, mail order, and home deliveries offer some possibilities to extend the reach of this form of AFN's, but mostly this remain restricted to individual farms. The trend with online trading and E-commerce through internet also provides new variants of `face-to-face' contact nowadays (Renting *et al.,* 2003; Sage, 2003).

- **Spatial proximity**

The second category of AFN's extends beyond the direct and/or face to face interaction and is essentially based on relations of proximity. Food products under this networks are being sold within the region often by people who are accorded as an expertise for their association with the product and may be further legitimised by acting as mediators for the producers themselves (Sage, 2003).

Extending AFN's over a longer distance in time and space are supposed to create more complex institutional arrangements. Most common examples of these are food cooperation's , which is seen as an approach that widens the product range offered by exchanging products between different farm shops or by combining individual products under a regional quality hallmark

(Banks, 2001; Roep, 2002). Consumer co-ops is an example where consumers join their buying power to facilitate the extension of AFN's (Farnsworth *et al.,* 1996; Alonso and Guzman, 2001). Under this mechanism, products are sold a little away from its place of production, and consumers are made aware of the `local' nature of the product at the point of retail. The articulation of activities in space and time by organising specific events, fairs, or thematic routes (Brunori and Rossi, 2000) may contribute to the regional identity of products, attract customers, and thereby stretch out the extent of AFN's/SFSCs.

Intermediary actors are involved in this type of AFN's due to the expanding proximity, this take out the advantage of guaranteeing product authenticity. However, these networks still play an important role in the marketing of organic products (Michelsen, 2001; Miele, 2001; Renting *et al.,* 2003). Examples of these are local shops, regional restaurants, specialised retailers of `whole food' and health shops.

- **Spatially extended**

A third category largely extends relations between producer and consumer in time and space. Products as being sold far away from the production region and consumers may have no personal experience of its particular locality. The extension of these networks could be limited to exportation from the regional to national or may span too large distances around the globe. Popular examples of these are French Champagne wine or Italian Parmigiano Reggiano cheese (De Roest, 2000), it might also include Fair-trade products like coffee, tea, and cocoa (Whatmore and Thorne, 1997; Renard, 1999). What makes the alternativeness of these type of networks is not the distance over which the product has travelled, but the fact that these products are embedded with value-laden information (printed on packaging or communicated at the point of retail)that keeps the individual consumer connected potentially with the values of who produced the product, the production methods employed. The successful translation of information through directness and clarity allows products to be differentiated from more anonymous commodities, which in turn helps whoever buys it to justify the premium price they pay if the encoded information is considered valuable by them (Renting *et al.,* 2003).

3.7.3.2 Quality definitions and conventions embodied in the construction and operation of AFN's

The AFN's are further being differentiated by the various quality definitions and conventions involved in its makeup. In that regard, Renting and Mardsen (2003) suggested in a more general sense, that all AFN's/SFSC's operate on the principal belief that the more differentiated the product becomes, the scarcer it is in the market and the higher the probability it will succeed (Renting *et al.,* 2003). Product differentiation implies that the quality definitions assigned to the product are shared by all those who are involved in the production, and most importantly are sufficiently communicated to consumers to allow them to share its benefit by paying a premium. According to that, two main categories of quality definitions may be identified (Renting *et al.,* 2003).

The first category of quality within AFN's is linked to the producers or products place of production. Specific characteristics of the place of production (natural conditions, cultural and gastronomic traditions) or the production process (artisanal, traditional, farm based) represent a critical parameter that defines the quality of the product. The protected origin regional speciality foods are among the most famous examples of this (Sylvander *et al.,* 2001). While the Farm or cottage foods stress the artisanal nature of production process and reflect on the skills and experiences of the producer, it may only implicitly refer to the cultural heritage and (local) traditions behind them. The quality characteristics defining `fair trade' could be also included however the ethics and social justice attributes, in this case, are paramount (Renting *et al.,* 2003).

The second category of quality within AFN's is linked to the bioprocesses of food production and consumption. This includes products that are distinguished in terms of environmentally sound production such as organic, integrated production, as a response to increasing public concerns over ecology. These particular production methods are seen as more close to traditional farming as they express tendency towards the valorisation of multifunctional forms of agriculture, through their contribution to rural nature and landscapes. Products under this category are also conceived to be more healthy and safe. Consumers may hold a common sense that the application of less chemical substances and avoiding GM substances are more safe and better for their health beneficial (Nygard and Storstad, 1998). These quality characteristics are also more dedicated to a more natural way of animal rearing away from the animal cruelty or the routine use of drugs and antibiotics.

3.7.4 The AFN's ethical alternativeness makeup

In this section, the various 'alternativeness' within the AFN literature are presented. AFN's display various alternativeness that makes it environmentally, socially and economically beneficial. These narratives have arisen out and reflect the diverging interests of various theoretical perspectives and practical organisations of what AFNs can or should achieve (Watts *et al.,* 2005).

The environmental narrative draws on the influence of sustainable agriculture and the environmental movement. The social aspect in AFN's literature has focused on ways in which AFNs have altered social relations around food and in particular on ideas of trust. While the economic alternativeness of AFNs is based largely on the practical-political economic reality of farming and food systems and has predominantly come from work in the rural studies.

3.7.4.1 Environmental Alternatives

The first and perhaps primary organising narrative in the AFN literature is that AFNs could be classified as more environmentally sustainable than the conventional and industrial agriculture systems (e.g. DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Follett, 2009). The European AFN's movement have deep roots in the sustainable agriculture and environmental movements embedded within the organic movement (Allen *et al.,* 2003; Gutman *et al.,* 2006). The AFN environmental discourse is centred on an idealised view of small and local farming that "makes the best use of nature's goods and services while not damaging the environment" (Pretty, 2002). For example, Cutting "food miles" could be seen as the major environmental rationale for localising food supply chains. It relates to minimising the distance food travels till it reaches the consumer's mouth and so cutting the energy and pollution associated with transporting food around the world.

3.7.4.2 Social Alternatives

The social rational of AFN's is related to its ability to bring consumers closer to their food and by establishing direct connection with the origin where their food has been produced and in many cases involve a more direct contact either mainly face to face, although not always common among different types of this alternative chains, between farmers and the end-users of their products(Renting *et al.,* 2003). This has been discussed in linkages to concepts of 'embeddedness' and 'relations of trust' (Watts *et al.,* 2005). Within the sociological literature on AFNs, there is an extensive focus on ideas of 'embeddedness'. Social embeddedness can be defined in terms of the social ties that enhance and modify economic interactions (Hinrichs, 2000). The reciprocity, social connections and trust of direct selling are considered a hallmark of AFN's. The dominant narrative found within the AFN literature is that people are disembedded from their food in the industrial food system and that AFNs, particularly the ones built around 'local' foods helps in 're-embedding' people within the food system. Goodman and Watts (1997) stress that place, social embeddedness and trust in AFNs are all interwoven. 'The local' is posited as the place where embeddedness occurs, and this leads to relations of trust between producers and consumers (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). Feagan (2007) describes the concept of embeddedness as "socio-cultural processes associated with relationships between producer and consumer such that food transactions are re-embedded in community and place."

Developing direct connections between consumers and growers may help in boosting the ethical and social aspects around food, engenders and encourages trust building and cooperation within a community. It could also help to educate consumers about where their food comes from, including the impact of food production method on the environmental and social conditions (Kirwan, 2006; Feagan, 2007; Smith, 2008). This direct flow information may aid the social relations to reach beyond actions within the AFNs. This is done through shaping consumers' knowledge and experience about the food they buy and the system behind it, which can help them to make new value judgments on the basis their newly acquired knowledge and experience to change their actions towards more sustainable ones (Kerton and Sinclair, 2010).

3.7.4.3 Economic Alternatives

An ever-present economic and political imperative shape the actions of individual farmers in the AFNs (Watts *et al.,* 2005). Politically speaking, AFN's may hold the potential for shifting food production out of its `large scale industrial mode' by helping breaking out the long and complex structure that characterise this powerful chains (Marsden et al. 2000), in which a decreasing proportion of total added value is returned to primary producers(Marsden *et al.,* 2000). AFN's also holds some economic rationale through boosting the local economy by increasing the circulation of money in the local region which increases the local spending (the economic multiplier)(Ward and Lewis, 2002; Renting *et al.,* 2003). This also provide an opportunity for farmers to gain back control of their production choices (Welch 1997, cited in Hinrichs 2000), and be less reliant on the industrial system for dictating production standards and consumer preferences(Hinrichs, 2000). To some extent, they also gain control of their pricing, although farmers in AFNs do compete with industrial prices as well (Hinrichs, 2000). Direct interaction with consumers in the AFNs provide an opportunity for farmers to bypass an intermediaries 'middlemens' and get full retail value for their produce (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Griffin and Frongillo, 2003; (Goodman, 2009). Thus economic benefits may be accrued from the social valuation of the scale of the 'local'. Again this demonstrates the linkages between the social and economic political rationales associated with the AFN's.

For consumers who have the means, AFNs can also provide access to good quality produce, unique local products and consumer choice in consuming more 'moral' foods (Morris and Kirwan, 2010).

3.7.5 Examples of AFN's

The importance of alternative food networks continues to grow and, as a consequence, it have seen the emergence and the development of many models of networks or short food chains for a locally grown organic food products such as farmers markets, farm shops, organic markets, box schemes, TEIKEI, and community supported agriculture schemes. These overlapping but non-identical entities represent some of the most rapidly expanding food markets in Europe over the past decade (Whatmore *et al.,* 2004; Moynihan and McDonagh, 2008). Common to all these types of AFN's is their attempts to promote responsible consumption of food which takes into account not only the personal goals of consumption but also other environmental, economic, and social meaning attached to food purchased from these channels. As explained above it does so through establishing and bringing together greater numbers of producers and consumers under a different type of relationships, and represent modes of food provisioning which are in various ways different from, or alternatives to, the prevalent, supermarket model of food provisioning in countries like the UK. Goodman (2009) for example believes that local AFNs open space for sustainable farmers who are attempting to escape the increasingly corporate-dominated organic movement (Goodman, 2009).

3.7.5.1 Farmers markets

These markets represent a new and distinctive dimension to the somewhat 'placeless' foodscape of contemporary Britain. The FM's can be thought of as a similarly liminal space in the sense that it subverts the conventional space of food shopping (i.e. the supermarket) but also reinforces free market entrepreneurialism and celebrates particular reactionary values. It can be seen, then, as bringing together very diverse sets of actors (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000).

Farmers Markets supports all types of farming businesses big or small, arable, livestock or horticulture. Trading at farmers' markets helps to support producers giving them the opportunity to sell their produce direct to the consumer (FARMA, 2016). All stall holders at the farmers market are striving to be successful; if they were not they would go out of business.

Nowadays, there are about 200 farmers' markets listed in the United Kingdom (FARMA-the National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association, 2016). To the public, there are many reasons behind the ideology of farmers markets. They are avenues of local business support and with the common acceptance that local food equates to "good food" in terms of quality and freshness. There is a pervading acceptance by farmer's markets consumers that farmers are trustworthy and provide goods that are of a high quality (Svenfelt and Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010). The motivation of cost, quality, and taste leads the literature discussion as the most important considerations for farmer's market consumers, more than the methods of production (Svenfelt and Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010; Smithers and Joseph, 2010).

Substantial ecological learning opportunities provide the avenue of communication that occurs at the farmer's market, whereby small-scale farmers meet the desire of consumers to have alternative shopping contexts. Consumers and farmers alike seek food education and communication through face-to-face relationships as both expand knowledge through discourse. Farmers share marketing ideas amongst themselves and sometimes even coordinate products so they are not in competition with one another (Alonso, 2010; Svenfelt and Carlsson-Kanyama, 2010). The process of information sharing helped farmers to understand how to price their products within the market, improve customer service skills, as well as boost confidence in their business skills (Brown and Miller, 2008). Additionally, the benefits of direct marketing manifest when vendors educate their consumers about the quality and variety of their products which provide an impetus for farmers to increase their customer bases (Alonso, 2010, Andrée *et al.,* 2010), who in turn enhance their nutritional foundations (McCormack *et al.,* 2010; Racine *et al.,* 2010).

3.7.5.2 Community Supported Agriculture "CSA"

They are local markets with special arrangements between consumers and producers. The CSA holds a "devotion" to the community which is "often the major selling point" that influences members in their decision to participate (Schnell, 2007). The aim of these groups is to provide consumers with fresh, locally grown organic food while at the same time revitalise local food economies. Stagl (2002) argue that the local character and the commitment to organic agriculture are reasons why CSAs stabilise local food security, protect the environment, and preserve small-scale, family farm type food production (Stagl, 2002).

Consumers of this form of local agriculture are similar to farmer's market consumer in that they participate for myriad goals that are social, political, and environmental in nature (Jacques and Collins, 2003; Seyfang, 2008; Sumner *et al.,* 2010). CSA's are different, however, through a goal of greater community involvement (Jacques and Collins, 2003; Sumner *et al.,* 2010). The consumers buy at the beginning of the growing season a share of the farm's harvest and receive in return every week one or two bags of fresh and organically produced fruits, herbs and vegetables of the specific local farm (Stagl, 2002). Consumers themselves in many cases play a role in the production of the shares they invest in, often as substantial aspects of the necessary production labour or as a "core group" of members whose degree of involvement include proper share cost analysis and increasing membership through marketing printed media (Stagl, 2002). Printed media examples include weekly newsletters distributed either in the food deliveries or through email. Such newsletters allow producers to provide updates about the status of certain crops, alert participants to events, and advertise or network with their members (Kolodinsky and Pelch, 1997; Cone and Myhre, 2000; Brown and Miller, 2008; Sumner *et al.,* 2010). Consumer's involvement occurs to various degrees and arises in innumerable roles. A significant difference between large-scale, corporation agriculture and the small-scale, family-operated typical CSA farm is the dependence upon labour assistance. Assistance can come in many forms, including interns, apprentices, family members, and CSA members (Jarosz, 2008). On the other hand, some forms of assistance are for the consumers themselves and can support lower income members. Through various means of assistance, consumers gain access to improved nutrition, enhanced food security, economic savings through an exchange of services, and increased knowledge of their food source (Forbes and Harmon 2008). Similar to Farmers market participation, a benefit of CSA participation consists of knowledge sharing, whereby CSA farmers are in a position to educate their members. They may provide education on such topics as climatic variability, or urban development (as local food becomes a vehicle for arresting encroachment). Members encourage cross-generational communication and further community resilience by exchanging ideas and their "sweat equity" to advance a common goal (Cox *et al.,* 2008; Sumner *et al.,* 2010). In a report Published in November 2011 by the Soil Association on the impact of community supported agriculture in England, CSA's were found to providing multiple benefits to thousands of members, their communities, local economies and the environment. The report confirms that CSA is powerful on many levels. It showed that CSA farms comprise of at least 5,000 trading members and feed around 12,500 people a year. This was seen as a proactive response to concerns about resilience and transparency in the food system and provides a logical step for consumers towards reclaiming sovereignty over the way their food is grown, processed and traded. The report also highlighted the remarkable power of community farms to positively influence a wide array of important social aspects. Where over 70% of CSA members said their quality of life has improved with the name proportion saying their cooking and eating habits have changed through using more local, season and healthy food. Farmers themselves are reaping the benefits, providing a lifeline to many and an opportunity to diversify (Soil Association, 2011).

3.7.5.3 Box schemes or Organic Food subscription schemes (OFSS)

As already noted in the introduction, this study builds on the example of organic and local "box schemes" in the UK. This type of local food markets is particularly interesting since it has experienced strong growth in the UK over the past few years; currently, there are about 500 schemes in the UK (Brown *etal.,* 2009). For the purpose of this study, this section will go more in depth on box schemes.

In recent years, particularly in the British organic sector, box schemes have become increasingly popular. These local initiatives are similar to the CSA and other forms of AFNs in many ways. Their aim is to perform social, economic and ecologic sustainable behaviour in daily life. Organic farming and especially bio-dynamic farming has been mostly the starting point which has evolved in spin-offs and more complex organisations.

Box scheme is "A composition of dominantly fresh organic fruit and vegetables, designed and packed into a box or bag by a farm or trading company, subscribed to by the end-customer on a regular weekly basis, and delivered to a place the consumer has agreed on(either the consumers home door or agreed collection drop off point)". Some more established box scheme operators now offer a wide range of other products including bread, cereals, tea and coffee which are locally sourced, organic, or fair trade, etc.

A number of different models of box scheme exist, these can be CSA schemes as above described, however, they are not necessarily so. All types of box schemes are based on the central principle of delivering a box of fresh, locally grown, in-season, and in most cases organic produce either directly to the customer's home or to a central drop-off point. Box schemes may run by an individual grower; a wholesaler; a company which buys in produce from the farmer; or consumer groups. Many schemes offer a range of box sizes to pick from and a number also offer customers the opportunity of choosing the contents of their box.

The box scheme that claims organic status follows all relevant organic guidelines presented by either the European organic standards or the Soil Association and has the necessary accreditation from the relevant certifying body.

Customer interaction with box schemes is not necessarily as high and face to face as the farmers' market and the farm shop, once the initial agreement is set up, the interaction could be limited to the delivery of goods. Though the value communication at the box scheme with its customers and the value of box scheme customer feedback are not lessened, box schemes may have multiple methods of gauging the response of customers. The method may differ from one box scheme and another. These methods could be based on weekly or monthly newsletters telling the consumers what is going on in the farm, it could be through the box scheme website and/or social media pages, or through organising monthly or occasion farm visits for their customers.

3.7.6 Box scheme types

- **Commercial and Supportive box schemes (OFSS)**

Organic food subscription schemes can be operated from two economic philosophical backgrounds: On one hand, as a means to generate sales and profit (commercial) and on the other as a means to distribute the benefits to the "members" of the supporting farm's community (supportive role).

The first group of farmer perceives himself as an independent entrepreneur who lives from the revenues of production and retailing. On the other hand, some organic farmers believe that organic food and their contribution to the environment are not tradable as are other goods (Supportive) (Figure 13). They argue, that the land, as well as water and air, cannot belong to a private person or corporation, and healthy food is a human right which may not depend on the wealth of the buyer. The most well-known systemized form of supporting farms is called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

- **Box-schemes and Bag-schemes**

In summary, organic food delivery services can be classified as those of free choice and those based on subscription agreement. The latter are called subscription box schemes. The subscriptions can be brought to drop-off points or delivered directly to consumer homes. Furthermore, box schemes can be distinguished as commercial (for profit or surplus generation called box schemes) and non-commercial (Supportive) (called CSA schemes). The commercial box schemes are either operated by wholesalers in a B2B (Business to business) context or by farmers (Box-schemes), which have direct contact with the consumer and focus solely on the end-consumer.

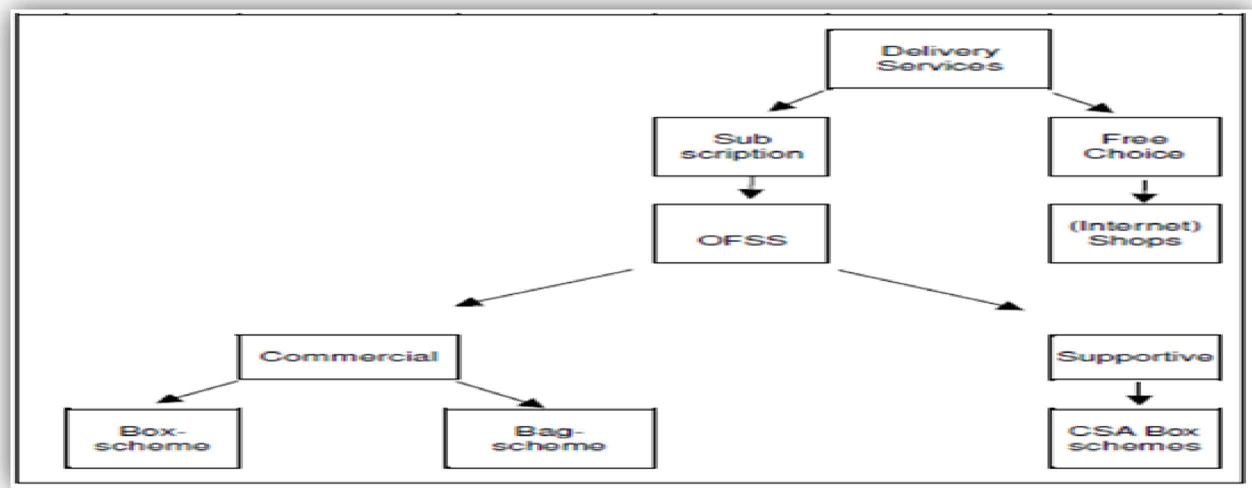


Figure 13: Box schemes types; Source: Haldy 2004.

3.7.7 Box scheme in the UK

In the UK, box schemes are direct selling channel often supply organic-local produce for consumers (Soil Association 2016). The two oldest box scheme companies started both in the early 1990's as a home delivery service. One company referred to the ORGANIC MARKETING COMPANY, which started s OFFS in 1995 and collapsed in 1998 due to operational and management difficulties (Haldy, 2004)

Nowadays box scheme is one of the most popular initiatives in direct producer-consumer links, of which there are over 500 are registered with the Soil Association in the Great Britain (Soil Association, 2016). Most of these are small-scale operations providing sustainable livelihoods (for example, a farm selling a few hundred boxes per week to local town residents. Other direct schemes have grown dramatically into large commercial enterprises (for example, franchises distributing thousands of boxes across a region). Key organic franchises box schemes in the UK are noticeably Riverford and Abel & Cole, they are now successfully offering recipe-based home delivery box schemes to customers and are massively growing in weekly sales through weekly deliveries (Soil Association, 2016).

The soil association is considered as the main contributor in British box schemes. It promotes the subscription of boxes by consumers to reduce Food-Miles (SUSTAIN, 1999), to avoid packing material and as a means of local sourcing of food (Soil Association, 2001). It also promotes the subscription of local organic boxes by consumers by offering an online box scheme search tool including all organic box scheme registered in the different cities and counties in the UK.

3.7.8 Box schemes market growth

Box scheme, home-delivery and mail-order sales increased by 9.1% to £236 million in 2015 compared to 4.4% to £216.3 million in 2014 (Soil Association 2016), this makes £4 million sales a week. The two biggest box schemes, Abel & Cole and Riverford, saw their sales increase by 8% and 7% respectively. Both attribute their success to the increased marketing and new product development as the main factors in their growth and in securing new customers. Both have successfully introduced recipe box ranges, which make cooking from scratch more straightforward for busy people and appeal to the growing appetite for 'occasion shopping' – buying food with a particular meal or special occasion in mind.

Even among smaller box schemes with a turnover below £100,000, which struggled most during the long downturn from 2008, though being isolated from the urban hotspots of organic shopping and lack both the range of products offered by their larger rivals and the marketing resources needed to attract new customers, an average growth rate of sales of 11% in 2015 was achieved. According to the soil association, box schemes have further future potential which is shown by results from a group of eight new box schemes launched between 2011 and 2013 as part of a programme run by the social enterprise Growing Communities – five in London and one each in Kent, Lancashire and Dumfries and Galloway. This group of newly introduced box schemes increased their combined customer base by 22% in 2014 and their sales by 24%, providing a route to market for 28 producers.

3.7.9 Advantages and disadvantages of Box schemes for producers and consumers benefits

This recreation of local food networks pulls the organic niche in a different direction. It brings a different set of advantages and challenges for producers and consumers. A comprehensive list of advantages and disadvantages for the producer and for the customer are presented in (Table 6).

Table 6. Producer Advantages and Disadvantages of Operating an OFSS, Customer Benefits" (Source Haldy 2004)

Producer advantages	Producer disadvantages	Customer benefits
Financial stability: Owing to loyal and regular purchasing customers. Not relevant to site Box scheme have no need for specific opening times or accessibly to customers Reduced food miles Travel time and transport distance are appreciably lower than that of market of or farm	Complexity of management: According to the level of service precision, a box scheme needs more accuracy in various management fields than other direct marketing activities. Complexity of customer service: Depending on the level of service provision, there might be an increased need for communication.	Different shopping experience Direct link to producers and farm Increased awareness of food according to season Reduced transportation time to point of purchase Getting introduced to uncommon vegetables Reasonable prices

3.7.10 Operational and Marketing Patterns of box schemes (OFSS) in the UK

3.7.10.1 Operational Patterns of box schemes OFSS in the UK

In the UK, a large variety of box schemes can be found. A common feature is to sell the box as a whole for a fixed price. The price level for farmer-based box schemes might be lower than the organic produce sold at the supermarkets, whilst in the bigger box scheme companies, the prices are the same or higher than organic produce in the multiples. The content of the box/bag is variably owing to the season and to the number of customers who are allowed to influence it. The level of delivery service is mixed; drop-off point systems are as common as home-delivery. A common Organic Box Scheme portfolio consists of three sizes of vegetable boxes (small, medium, large) two sizes of fruit (small, medium), combinations of both and additional boxes tailored to special customer groups (Breastfeeding mothers or elderly people). In the UK, the prices of the three standard vegetable boxes are often the same or even lower than in the supermarkets (Haldy,2004; Soil Association 2015).

3.7.10.2 Marketing patterns of the box schemes operating in the UK

Two different common marketing patterns of operating box scheme in the UK have been identified according to the level of customisation and according to size.

- **First, Box schemes categorisation according to their level of customisation**

The level of customization simply means the level in which the box scheme may allow their consumers to design and/or alter the content of the ordered boxes. According to Hardy (2004), there are two types.

First, box schemes that allow customers to customise their box content by informing the packing company about their "likes" and "dislikes", e.g. vegetables or produce they prefer instead of produce they do not want in their delivery (e.g. Riverford- Abel and Cole). This has major implications for operations, as it must be certain that the specific boxes reach the specific customer who requires that box. Home delivery becomes inevitable, and the cost of packing, distribution and administration soars.

The other offers standardised boxes, where the customer has no influence on its content. In packing these offers the possibility of large scale, fast packing flow-line designs with advantages of businesses of scale. Home deliveries and drop-off points are easier to operate.

- **Second, Box schemes categorisation according to their size**

The box scheme categorisation according to size could be divided into groups of big and small box schemes. In regard to the big box scheme, the box schemes would mainly share a more complex organisational structure that would allow them to manage growth whilst expanding their food boxes offerings to add value to the customer.

Smaller farm based box schemes on the other hand, are less proactive and less inclined to growth. Change in the operational set-up would cause more disruption to the ongoing business and bears more risk of failure due to limited resources.

Chapter Four: Research methodology

4 Research methodology

4.1 Theoretical framework

In the context of purchase food commodities, a wide range of different consumer decision-making may be observed, ranging from highly considered and purposive product selection to self-focused hedonistic buying based on attractive product characteristics. It is important that any decision-making framework retains the flexibility to accommodate this diversity of behaviour. For this study, a cognitive framework may provide the most appropriate basis for the study of ethical purchasing behaviour, as it allows for the complexity of such actions that may be subject to extensive intrapersonal evaluation. At the same time, it retains the flexibility for different consumers to pass through the key decision-making stages more rapidly without such considered thought.

Common steps depicted in cognitive consumer behaviour theories include problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice and outcome evaluation. In the case of the purchase and consumption from the box schemes, it is likely that information search and the evaluation of alternatives may have already occurred before participation in the box scheme and occur concurrently in the live consumption practice given the particularity that the consumer in the box scheme does not have any evaluative option prior the delivery of the food box as they would rely on their past participation and purchase experience.

Further it is clear that a wide range of different product attributes is likely to influence consumer’s assessment, however, differences exist between the findings of previous studies. This call for research in this area to compile an up-to-date account of the attributes that are important for box scheme customers in the UK. Despite this, there is growing evidence that ethical attributes play a vital role in influencing consumers purchase and participation decision in the box scheme (Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002; Seyfang, 2006; Padel and Gössinger, 2008).

Literature examining ethical decision-making suggests that such decisions are reliant on the ‘actor’ perceiving an ethical problem, prior to their ethical/moral judgement about the problem starts being made (Vitell and Muncy, 1992; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Rest, 1986; Jones, 1991). In the context of purchasing and participating in a box scheme, these assessments may likely to be thorough. Many theoretical studies on AFN's, though lacks validity, highlighted that consumers who participate in these networks do so for many reasons but ethical reasons are considered to be one of the most important reasons for all given consumers concern over a number of ethical issues that have emerged and associated recently with the conventional food and agriculture sector. Moreover providing the fact that consumers who are active and participate in these channels enjoy a face to face and/or direct contact (through box schemes newsletter, leaflets, websites, and social media pages which could be considered as a way of direct communication as well) with the suppliers who are mainly farmers, having direct access to information from who produce their food could have made them more aware and confident of the difference and the value added attached to their purchase from these networks compared to other products purchased through the conventional supermarket channels, where consumers might be sceptical about many quality and ethical claims provisioned by it, leading them to rely on several forms of institutional assurance schemes (organic or fair-trade certification labels) to trust on the different quality claims.

Most previous research in the area of AFNs has been focusing on firm's perspective (Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Stagl, 2002; Sage, 2003; Seyfang, 2004; Milestad *et al.,* 2010; Boston *et al.,* 2011). While most of the previous research done based on consumers perspective in this area has been of a qualitative nature, with many studies employing focus group discussions and/or interviews with a small number of participants (Hinrichs 2000; Mannion *et al.,* 2000; Murdoch *et al.,* 2000; Gracia and Albisu, 2001; Seyfang, 2006; Lockie, 2009). The relatively few studies that have adopted a quantitative approach, surveying the attitudes and behaviours of a larger sample of respondents, have tended to only draw some general information about consumers motivations to consuming and purchasing locally from Alternative food channels (e.g. CSA, FM, box schemes) (Brown *et al.,* 2009) draw reference to the concept of embeddedness, sustainable consumption, and food citizenship (Wetherell e*t al.,* 2003; Kirwan, 2006; Brown *et al.,* 2009). This study through employing a mixed method approach will provide a fresh approach, examining the attitudes and behaviours of a large sample of customers who are more representative of the British box schemes participants exploring the role ethics may play in box schemes purchase behaviour with paying special attention to the role of the consumer's quality conventions and knowledge about ethical issues on their decision to participate and purchase from such a unique channel for local organic food such as box schemes.

4.2 Research approach

This research seeks to answer the research questions and hypotheses with a mixed methods approach. A mixed methods approach can increase the depth and breadth of the conclusions drawn from the study itself (Creswell, 2013). This mixed methodological approach has gained wide support in recent years, despite what many may consider being a quantitative/qualitative divide (Neuman, 2005; Bryman, 2012). A growing number of researchers have been conducting mixed methods research; mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2013; Hemmerling *et al.,* 2015). Mixed-methods research acknowledges the usefulness of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, encouraging methodological pluralism and eclecticism to draw from the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of either individual approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Acceptance of mixed-methods research has grown to a point where even leading qualitative purists have suggested that it is possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, known as data triangulation (Neuman, 2005).

The research will be undertaken in two main stages, encompassing two empirical studies. Given the complexity of the research area and the significant gaps in understanding that currently exist, the first stage of the research will be conducted inductively, to identify and probe the variables that are important, and to suggest the relationships and processes that are involved. Qualitative research methods are best suited to this inductive exploratory research as they are not limited by the preconceived ideas of the researcher, and would enable the subject to be probed in-depth, ensuring that all key points are identified (Creswell, 2013). The semi-structured interviews conducted from a convenience sample of box scheme consumers augment the survey data. The ideas that emerged from this qualitative research have been conceptualised and, through the use of more positivist deductive methods, the suggested relationships have been tested and the importance of specific aspects in influencing purchasing decisions assessed.

4.3 Scale development

4.3.1 Items generation

"The ultimate purpose of item generation is to ensure that questionnaire items have content validity and that they capture the specific domain of interest yet contains no extraneous content"(Hinkin, 2005). Researchers should provide clear linkages to the theoretical literature and a description of the process used to generate items.

In order to clarify the item statements, prior research on consumer studies, AFNs and ethical consumerism studies was extensively reviewed to compile the item statements. To ensure that measurement items for a scale should cover the content domain of a construct (Churchill, 1979; Segars and Grover, 1998). Further exclusion of those items unrelated to the context, re-wording, and refinement has been made to the compiled items resulting from the literature to make sure that they fit and are able to define consumers concern and preferences in the given context.it is worthy to note that, these items were not used directly in the questionnaire. However, they were summarised used by the interviewer to probe any supposedly relevant items or attributes that have not been brought up by the interviewees during the face to face interviews.

The item extracted regarding the ethical concerns and attributes of box scheme consumers can be categorised according to the three pillars of the concept of sustainability: ecological, social and the economic sustainability as suggested by ((Padel and Gössinger, 2008) (Table 7). These categories were then further broadened in order to ensure the integrity of the measurement model by covering other general symbolic and functional factors that were also proven to play a role in ethical consumer's preference prior the decision making. This includes general quality attributes, such as visual appearance, taste, health concerns, freshness, and food safety, and other convenience aspects, such as box scheme reputation, and geographical closeness. Table 7 provides an overview of the key ethical concerns extracted from the literature and box scheme websites.

4.3.2 Assess the content validity of the items

Prior to item construction, the British box scheme web analysis has been carried out to verify that the attributes/items and concepts extracted from the literature matches with the operational activities and communication messages of the box schemes, and to make sure that the items are consistent with the theoretical concepts adequately.

In this process, ten of biggest British box schemes websites and some of their promotional materials (e.g. leaflets, brochures" have been analysed. These box schemes have been specifically chosen because of their reputation as the 10 biggest and most successful box schemes pioneers in the UK based on a report issued by the soil association (Soil Association, 2016) and the Guardian magazine article on the best-operating box schemes in Great Britain (The Guardian). Their products include meat, vegetables, milk and dairy products. Different claims in their promotional materials were identified, relating their wide operation activities and goals, reflecting the demands of the box schemes itself or a wider responsibility for others, such as for animals, the landscape, rural development, and for nature in addition to economic, ecological, environmental, and social sustainability issues. From this process, it was found that most of the items identified and extracted from the literature widely match the ethical philosophy of the operating box schemes.

Furthermore, some panel of experts (e.g. Academics) was consulted to identify ambiguous items, poorly worded questions, and poor instructions for answering the questionnaire. The panel found some ambiguity and repetition of concepts which led to further exclusion, refinement to the compiled items.

For the purpose of this study 23 items which cover the main ethical concerns and box scheme related to ethical production and product attributes were selected and summarised under the three principles of sustainability, cultural aspects, convenience, quality attributes(Table 7), and another 9 items were allocated for Ethical issues associated generally with agriculture and food industry.

Table 7. Items Extracted from literature

Categories	**Items**	**Ref.**
Ecological	Adoption of environmentally friendly production methods Preserving local natural resources Minimization of food miles Seasonal produce	(Gracia and Albisu 2001, Hill and Lynchehaun 2002, Soler, Gil et al. 2002, Weatherell, Tregear et al. 2003, Vogl, Kilcher et al. 2005, Jackson, Ward et al. 2006, Roininen, Arvola et al. 2006, Padel and Gössinger 2008, Wier, O'Doherty Jensen et al. 2008, Brown, Dury et al. 2009, Coley, Howard et al. 2009, Bosona, Gebresenbet et al. 2011, Zander, Stolz et al. 2013)Padel and Gössinger 2008,
	Preservation of agriculture and manufacture traditions	(Lyson and Green 1999, Browne, Harris et al. 2000, Hinrichs 2000, Murdoch, Marsden et al. 2000, O'Hara and Stagl 2001,

Social	Connectedness to producers Workers' rights(safe and equitable working condition for farmers and farm labours) Transparency "traceability" Producer trustworthiness Support small scale disadvantaged producers "family farms" Localness of production	Curry 2002, Sage 2003, Weatherell, Tregear et al. 2003, Winter 2003, Kirwan 2004, Lamine 2005, Jackson, Ward et al. 2006, Aschemann, Hamm et al. 2007, Feagan 2007, Hughner, McDonagh et al. 2007, Sage 2007, Padel and Gössinger 2008, Seyfang 2008, Smithers, Lamarche et al. 2008, Wier, O'Doherty Jensen et al. 2008, Brown, Dury et al. 2009, Lusk and Briggeman 2009, Zander and Hamm 2010, Bosona, Gebresenbet et al. 2011, Zander, Stolz et al. 2013, Vallauri 2014)
Economic	Strengthen local economic viability Generate better "fair" income to farmers Price affordability	(Lappalainen, Kearney et al. 1998, Lyson and Green 1999, Browne, Harris et al. 2000, Vindigni, Janssen et al. 2002, Zanoli and Naspetti 2002, Weatherell, Tregear et al. 2003, Maye and Ilbery 2006, Aschemann, Hamm et al. 2007, Hughner, McDonagh et al. 2007, Clarke, Cloke et al. 2008, Padel and Gössinger 2008, Seyfang 2008, Smithers, Lamarche et al. 2008, Wier, Jensen et al. 2008, Brown, Dury et al. 2009, Coley, Howard et al. 2009, Lusk and Briggeman 2009, Bosona, Gebresenbet et al. 2011, Zander, Stolz et al. 2013, Vallauri 2014)
Food quality	Healthiness Food safety Visual appearance Freshness Taste	(Steenkamp 1997, Gracia and Albisu 2001, Curtis 2003, Storstad and Bjørkhaug 2003, Lamine 2005, Marsden and Smith 2005, Clarke, Cloke et al. 2008, Smithers, Lamarche et al. 2008, Wier, O'Doherty Jensen et al. 2008, Brown, Dury et al. 2009)
Convenience	Reputation Geographical closeness Recipe guidance	(Pretty 2002, Kirwan 2006, Seyfang 2006)

4.4 Questionnaire development

4.4.1 Qualitative questionnaire

Initially, semi-structured, in-depth interviews have been used in an inductive manner to identify the key issues, factors, and relationships that are important for the consumer in their box scheme purchase and participation, and to explore the potential influence of ethical factors within this purchasing process.

(Austvoll, 2014) presents this as a common procedure in qualitative interviews when the aim is to obtain complex information from the participants and how they experience their own situation and experiences. The topics of the questions are planned in advance but their order is decided as the interview is being performed. Some of the informants allowed me to follow the interview guide as prepared, whereas others talked more freely and did not depend entirely on the questions asked. Semi-structured interviews create a room for the informants to tell their stories, and for the researcher to simultaneously obtain the information as planned (Thagaard, 2003).

A total of twenty-two individual interviews were conducted. Interviewing continued until redundancy was reached, implying theoretical saturation. The qualitative phase has three aims: First, probe the box scheme consumer's motivation for their purchase and participation in the box scheme. Second, probe consumers' awareness of ethical issues and assess their understanding of the key terms used in this regard. Further, explore how factors identified before in the literature of ethical decision making as impeding the ethical behaviour (e.g. Price perception/sensitivity degree of behavioural control or confidence (locus of control)- Knowledge and awareness- Quality perception) may affect or influence consumers to continue purchase from a box scheme. The questions regarding consumers' shopping options for food and the relative considerations to boycott specific products or shops for some ethical reasons in respondents' decision-making are present, providing an understanding of knowledge in this area.

As mentioned the questionnaire questioning route will be inductive; however, as highlighted above, themes and attributes that had emerged from the literature may be introduced by the researcher if they were not raised by the participant to ensure that views and reactions were gained on all of the key aspects of ethical food choice (See Table 7 - list of items) .

In order to explore box scheme consumers decision making to participate and purchase from a box scheme, the study aim initially to find out the underlying motivation and the experiences of consumers who had chosen to engage in a box scheme. This would further help me to identify important factors in the food system that affected the decision-making (e.g. problem recognition) related to box scheme participation. Additionally, I have tried to explore the role of a number of key variables identified before in the literature of ethical decision making as impeding the ethical behaviour (e.g. Price perception/sensitivity degree of behavioural control or confidence- Knowledge and awareness- Quality perception) affect or influence consumers to continue purchase from a box scheme. This would help understand how the particularity of box schemes or AFNs in general, may have influenced consumer ethical decision making by making it more smooth and easier.

4.4.1.1 Questionnaire design

A protocol of questions design was developed with established interview guidelines (Bernhard, 1988).The main body of the semi-structured questionnaire (guideline) was split into two parts; the first part explores the factors that motivate the consumers to participate and purchase from a box scheme, with the second part of the questionnaire discussing ethical issues directly.

The first part of the questionnaire starts broadly, with participants asked to explore what are the factors that motivate them to participate in a box scheme. From this, discussions were then probed to glean more in depth meaning behind the mentioned motivating factors and the relative importance of such factors in respondents' decision-making. Any attributes that did not come out of the discussion, but had been previously identified in the literature, have been promoted and discussed to ascertain whether they had simply been missed or whether they were not, in fact, important to the participants. Discussion about the factors motivating the consumers to participate in the box scheme have been done with no or minimal interference from the interviewer if needed to ensure that each participant identified the attributes that initially came to mind for them. This shall serve the purpose of providing an up-to-date list of the attributes considered by consumers. Also, it was important to assure that the factors highlighted are grounded in the consumers' vocabulary to ensure that they were correctly understood in the subsequent quantitative research phase, and enabled future stages in the research to explore conceptual distinctions made by the respondents rather than imposed by the researcher (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

4.4.1.2 Ethical issues in agriculture and food production and consumption

Moving on from a general discussion around the motivational factors to participate and purchase from a box scheme in the first part, the second part of the questionnaire concentrated on potential ethical issues in the food industry, participants' views on these issues and their likely impact on purchase decisions from box schemes.

The second part starts firstly with questions to explore what the term 'ethical food' means to the box scheme customers. This was followed by a question to identify any ethical issues that box scheme customers are aware of in the food industry. Within this, any ethical attributes that had not been previously introduced by the participants were raised by the interviewer in a conversational manner to glean interviewee's views on the importance of these considerations. Once the attributes had been identified, discussions about ethical issues raised have been probed to identify the relative importance of such issues and its influence consumers' decisions to purchase from a box scheme and other sale channels. Subsequently, discussions then moved on to explore how the respondents think purchasing from box scheme would help to solve the problem and how that might influence their own purchasing practices. This second part of the questionnaire culminates with the questions asking how the interviewees would seek to find out more information on box scheme suppliers ethicality, before finally asking if the box schemes consumers would consider to "boycotting" some food and shops for any of the ethically mentioned issues.

4.4.1.3 Semi-structured questionnaire testing

The semi-structured questionnaire was discussed with experts and a colleague not familiar with the study to ensure that the questioning route was clear and easily understood prior to the data collection. Further pretesting was done with three box scheme consumers to ensure the robustness of the semi-structure guideline constructed in capturing satisfying the aim of the study. Participants were all in their 20's, 30's, 50's, and 60's, most with small families and educated to high school or University level.

4.4.1.4 Data collection

- **Box scheme selection**

In order to recruit consumers for the qualitative data collection, I corresponded through e-mail and by sending cover letters to two organic-local box schemes inviting them to participate in the study. The two box schemes are located in the county of Berkshire and

Oxfordshire areas of England- UK. Both box schemes were farm based box schemes (rely on their own produce) and they were identified to have a similar ethos. Both schemes promote local, organic, quality sourced vegetables, and deliver not far than 100 Km Radius from the location of their farms. Once the box schemes accepted to participate in the study by including their customers, for confidentiality reasons another cover letter was distributed to box scheme consumers by enclosing them in the weekly food boxes which stated the purpose of the study and provided my phone number and email for inquiry or to schedule a meeting to participate follow in order to according to their convenience.

- **Interviews**

Interviews were conducted face to face with consumers in their homes for interviewees convenience, to make them feel comfortable, and were based on a prepared semi-structured interview guideline (see annexe -- box scheme consumer interview guide). Face to face interviews was chosen as an appropriate data collection tool for many reasons: on the one hand, due to the limited amount of time and resources, and the difficulty in gathering box scheme consumer's in groups in one place for discussion due to consumer's limited availability. On the other, face to face interviews was previously recommended over focus groups as means to minimise self-presentational concerns (Wooten&Reed li,2000) and to reduce the pressure on interviews to "do and say the right thing"(Bristol &Fern,2003).

A total number of twenty two interviews were conducted. The redundancy of only twenty two in-depth interviews is in line with a number of guidelines that emphasises developing in-depth analysis through long in-depth interviews of the life stories expressed by a relatively small number of participants (McCracke, 1988; Mick and Buhl, 1992; Thompson, 1996; Fournier, 1998; Holt, 2002; Connolly and Prothero, 2003; Carrigan *et al.,* 2004; Shaw and Riach, 2011). As a means also to reduce the pressure on the interviewees, they were advised prior the interviews that the study aims to investigate their broad opinion and beliefs and that there were no right and wrong answers to the interview questions. The different motivational rationale for AFN's participation that had emerged from the literature was introduced by the interviewer if they were not raised by the participant to ensure that views and reactions were gained on all of the key aspects of box scheme choice (See table 7 Items generation).

Table 8 : Interviewed box scheme consumers description

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
1- Penny	60 or older	F	Retired
2- Lisley	60or older	F	Health care - retired
3- Dave	60 or older	M	Agriculture
4- Lynette	60 or older	F	Retired
5- Sara	50-59	F	Education
6- Susan	50-59	F	Education
7- Tania	50-59	F	Entrepreneur
8- Rachel	40-49	F	Government employee
9- Tom	50-59	M	Education
10- Julia	50-59	F	Non profit
11- Jo	60 or older	F	Agriculture-Farmer
12- Sian	30-39	F	Non-profit org.
13- Judith	21-29	F	Agriculture
14- Maggie	30-39	F	Employed for profit
15- Avril	60 or older	F	Retired
16- Jackie	60 or older	F	Retired
17- Jane	50-59	F	Retired
18- Alexandra	30-39	F	Health care
19- Alice	40-49	F	Health care ‘Nurse’
20- Peter	40-49	M	For profit ‘IT’
21- Charlotte	21-29	F	Student
22- Helen	40-49	F	Education

- **Data collection**

The data collection took place between the December 2015 until the end of January 2016 and consisted of semi-structured face to face interviews with the box scheme consumers. A total of twenty-two individual long interviews were conducted. Interviewing continued until redundancy was reached. The interviewees, who were all box scheme members were invited to participate in the study by attaching a cover letter in the weekly vegetable boxes delivered to their homes or the collection drop off point. The interviews lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and, with the participant’s permission, the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed as part of the analysis process. Further descriptions and observation notes were taken. Interviews were fully transcribed and an analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed those values and motivations that are important to boxing scheme consumer decision making to participate in a box scheme.

4.4.1.5 Analysis of Qualitative Data

A review of the various methods available for analysis of qualitative data indicates three main tools. These are protocol analysis, process analysis, and content analysis. Amongst these three analytical techniques, content analysis is suggested to be particularly appropriate for classifying textual material by reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data (Fist 2005). The content that is analysed can be in any form, to begin with, but is often converted into written words before it is analysed. The original source can be printed publications, broadcast programs, other recordings, the internet, or live situations. All this content is something that people have created (Fist, 2005). Content could be divided into two types: Media content and audience content. Audience content can be either private or public. Private audience content includes open-ended questions in surveys, interview transcripts, group discussions (Fist, 2005). However, the central problems of content analysis originate mainly in the data-reduction process by which the many words of texts are classified into much fewer content catégories (Weber, 1990). There are various computer software packages (e.g., NUD*IST, AQUAD, ATLAS/ti, CAQDAS, HyperRESEARCH, and ZyINDEX) available to perform this analysis (Catterall and Maclaran, 1998), but because of the sample size and narrowness of the qualitative data they have not been employed. However, information or data collected from the interviews have been content analysed manually, using Nvivo guideline, to identify patterns and explore possible relationships. These relationships were then used as a framework for the analysis of the quantitative data generated in the UK. A manual content analysis on these interviews extracted direct dialogue evidence that fixes consumers within the four themes of ethical consumption motivation.

4.4.2 Second, Quantitative questionnaire

The questionnaire was largely quantitative in nature, a mixed-model approach was adopted in the questionnaire design, encouraging respondents to provide qualitative comments in a number of areas to help elaborate and explain their stated views (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Within this mixed-methods framework, a pragmatic philosophical approach has been adopted to allow the benefits of each method to be fully embraced (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

4.4.2.1 Questionnaire goal

The literature review on AFNs has probed the area identifying the ways in which quality and ethical attributes may impact upon food consumers to choose to participate and consume food from AFNs like box scheme. Understanding of the level of influence and possible interaction of these factors, however, remained incomplete, due to the fact that most studies have investigated the concept either superficially through employing either sole qualitative method or general quantitative methods investigating the motivation and perception of such networks, or by focusing solely on theoretic part in an attempt to unveil more specifics about these networks and solidify more its ground stance by attempting to confirm its alleged role in contributing to rural development. So it was necessary to focus more on consumers perspective to understand the factors, decision making justifications that lies behind their participation and purchasing from an alternative food network like the local -organic box scheme , given the long-standing development of this supply channel in the UK as a mean to promote more local and ethical consumption behaviour (Soil Association, 2016). Further, this part of the study aims at covering a large sample of box scheme consumers as possible to fully explore the relationships that had been proposed and extracted from the qualitative part of the study and to provide a measure of their importance for different groups of consumers. There is not one unified view on ethics, ethical consumption, or attributes of food choice especially food purchased from AFNs, indeed different groups of consumers are likely to hold quite different attitudes and opinions on such issues (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000; Parrott *et al.,* 2002; Renting et al, 2003). Further, it is suggested that each person may not hold a singular view with their attitudes on such issues, varying dependent on their awareness and concern about the ethical issues of the food industry (e.g. recent food scandals, the impact of market globalisation on agriculture) and their conventions about the quality.

4.4.2.2 Questionnaire development

To fully explore these aspects it was necessary to administer a detailed questionnaire to a random sample of local and organic box scheme consumers who participate and purchase from as many box schemes operating in the UK to ensure responses could be gleaned from a sufficiently large cross section. The use of questionnaires shall also ensure that the responses were structured and organised in such a manner that they could be effectively and efficiently analysed.

4.4.2.3 Questionnaire design

An extensive literature review provided the foundation for questionnaire development. In order to minimise the potential effects of social desirability bias, the specific aims of the questionnaire were not clearly laid out in the instructions to respondents. It is thought that any prior prompting of potential ethical aspects in the food industry would have either consciously or sub-consciously affected respondents' perceptions or reported perceptions towards their food choices.

Most of the questions formulated invited a closed response, aiding clarity and making them less time to consume for the respondents to complete. Further, closed questions were pre-coded to be efficiently processed and analysed. While it is acknowledged that closed questions constrain response, this is not considered to restrict the survey's validity as the dimensions, attributes, and response categories were derived from many tools to ensure the validity of all the items included; 1. the data extracted from the qualitative semi-structured phase of the study. It was based on previous literature analysis on AFNs and verified through pre-testing and pilot stages. Further, all the results from the qualitative interviews will be used in order to enrich the quantitative research findings to ensure its validity and reliability. Open-ended questions were added where appropriate to provide respondents with the opportunity to elaborate their responses.

A range of questioning styles was used including Likert scales, with monotonic statements (Finn et al., 2000), and importance rating dimensions. Likert scales require respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with statements (Finn *et al.,* 2000) Since the introduction of the Likert scale, researchers have attempted to find the number of scale points which maximise reliability. Findings from these studies are often contradictory with some claiming that reliability is independent of the number of scale points, while others have maintained that reliability is maximised using seven points, others five-points, four-points or even three points (Philip and Hazlett, 1997). In this research, five-point scales were used in the Likert questions, following the suggestions of (Oppenheim, 2000) responses invited between Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither; Disagree and Strongly Disagree. While those questions employing importance scaling invited a response between 7 (very important) and 1 (unimportant), as suggested by (Moser and Kalton, 1971), providing scope for adequate differentiation between a range of attribute questions.

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

- **Section one:**

Investigates the consideration underlining consumer participation at box scheme and recognition of food market issues.

This first part of the questionnaire was predominantly concerned with rating the importance of various attributes of box scheme food choice as identified in the in the literature. A total of twenty-three possible attributes of choice is presented, including various quality aspects. As such it would not be clear to the respondents from this first page of the questionnaire that ethical dimensions were of particular interest attributes were of particular interest to the researcher, minimising the potential for social desirability bias. Food choice questions from box scheme were adapted from (Steptoe *et al.,* 1995; Lindeman and Väänänen, 2000). The scale used aim to assess the degree to which the respondents place importance on motives in making purchasing and consumption decision from box scheme with a 7-point Likert-type-scale, ranging from “1 =extremely unimportant “to “7= extremely important”.

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

- **Section two:**

It was used to explore consumers perception of the local box schemes and organic food

In this section, the questionnaire moved beyond questioning the box scheme purchase and examined in detail attitudes and opinions specifically in relation to ethical aspects and concerns about the Agriculture, food industry, and food market. Firstly, respondents were asked to rate the importance of ten potential ethical issues. Open-ended questions regarding thoughts of boycotting any particular products or shops were added to provide respondents with the opportunity to elaborate their responses regarding whether or not they are likely to boycott any products or items they may think violates some of their ethical consideration and concerns. Perceptions on the box scheme local and organic products were probed, including how such attributes are likely to influence purchase decisions and feelings that the respondent is likely to have about consuming and purchasing this particular types of food from the box scheme.

The final two questions in this section were related to the box scheme food purchase but were used to understand the purchasing habits of the respondents and facilitate the analysis of different groups within the sample. Question (A) identified the food stores that were most frequently attended by box scheme food consumers through giving five different retail channels including both the conventional retail market like Supermarkets and different types of short food supply chains namely Box scheme, Farmers Market, Farms shops, specialised organic shops. This question employed frequency scaling inviting a response ranging from Never- Rarely- Occasionally- Often- Always. Question (B) probe to identify the respondents' typical frequency of box scheme purchase. Different responses were presented for that purpose including Once a week, Twice week, Once on Fortnight, Once in a Month, Once in six months. Data from this question would enable responses to be grouped based upon their level of box scheme purchase and would allow establishing a relationship between their purchase from box scheme and their household income and ethical commitment

- **Section three: Socio-demographic characteristic**

This part of the questionnaire focused on gathering the characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, marital status, occupation, educational attainment, household size, monthly household income. Additionally, whether the respondent had children, how many, and their ages was surveyed to enable any influence that children of different ages might have on perceptions and attitudes in this area. Slightly later in the questionnaire respondents were asked in open-ended questions to estimate the percent of the monthly household income spent on food generally, the estimate of the monthly food expenditure spent on box scheme, and finally how long they have been taking part in the box scheme.

4.4.2.4 Quantitative Questionnaire testing

Multi-stage pre-testing of the questionnaire have been conducted to help ensure its content was unambiguous, well understood and that the response classes provided for the closed questions are appropriate. The questionnaire testing phase took part as an iterative process, meaning that changes have been made to the questionnaire as they become apparent prior to gaining the next respondents views. The questionnaire testing has been conducted in two phases. Firstly, initial questionnaire testing has been done internally by asking known friends, co-researchers who take part at box scheme to complete the questionnaire and highlight any ambiguous, unclear questions and items. The second phase of questionnaire testing took place with few box scheme customers who took part in the qualitative first part of the study comprising a convenient sample of 10 consumers. They were simply asked to go through the questionnaire survey after the end of the qualitative survey in the presence of the researcher providing them with the opportunity to clarify or discuss any points that were not clear to them.

4.4.2.5 Box schemes selection

A cover letter was compiled on a headed paper including the Organic research centre (ORC) logo and Palermo University and briefly explained the survey and the importance of response. It was sent to many operating box schemes in the UK to request their participation in the study by allowing us to contact their customers for the survey purposes. They were assured that the study is done for sole academic purposes and that their customer's information will remain confidential; also they were promised in the letter that a summary copy of the study should be sent to them by the end of the research and anonymous. Contact details were provided to enable the contacted box scheme operators to discuss the study with the researcher if they wished to do so. Further during my attendance at the organic growing alliance conference that was held in Bristol in the UK, some box schemes who attended the conference were contacted and introduced to the study and invited to participate.

In this process, prior contacting and sending the cover letters to the box schemes, many box schemes websites, social media pages and some of their promotional materials (e.g. newsletters, leaflets, brochures) have been analysed to make sure of the consistency of their goals and vision for their activities, See Table 8). Some of these box schemes have been specifically chosen because of their reputation as the most successful box schemes pioneers in the UK based on a report issued by the soil association (Soil Association, 2015) and the Guardian magazine report on the best-operating box schemes in Great Britain (The Guardian). They are mostly specialised in vegetable production. Different claims in the box schemes promotional material were identified relating their wide operation activities and goals and reflecting the demands of the box schemes itself or a wider responsibility for others such as for animals, the landscape, rural development, and for nature in addition to economic, ecological, environmental, and social sustainability issues. From this process, it was found that most of the items identified and extracted from the literature widely match the ethical philosophy of the operating box schemes. Also as mentioned earlier it was made sure that the box schemes share the same motivational goal and more or less their business practices are consistent with one another.

From this process, twelve box schemes accepted to collaborate in this research work by allowing me to contact their customers for interviews purposes (See Table 8 - Study box schemes Description).

Table 9. Study box schemes description

Box scheme name	Activities and aims
Growing communities	The enterprise has several activities linked to sustainable local food (e.g. Links with farms, therapeutic placements, volunteering, training, a box scheme, and shop and farmers market) but over a half of the enterprise, turnover comes from box scheme activities. Weekly boxes of organic fruit and vegetables are sourced, from its own farm, local farms and Europe (except bananas) go to 140 homes. Growing Communities aims to support rural businesses through boosting its economic benefit, preserve the ecological environment and works for the community to break down urban/rural divisions. It provides seasonal produce as much as possible, and allows and welcomes farm visits during the work days. Members are told each week where produce has come from. (www.growingcommunities.org)
Coleshill Organics	The enterprise sells produce through a box scheme and at a farmers market in London. It encourages a sustainable and traditional use for the farmland. Over 70 traditional varieties of vegetable, fruit and salad crop are delivered through the box scheme. Coleshill Organics grow totally organic vegetables, it aim at supplying the local community with fresh and high quality produce together with supporting the wildlife, protecting the environment through organic farming practices and using eco-friendly vans for transport , reduce packaging, recycling and re-use the vegetables boxes, encourage seasonal production and consumption, and cutting the miles the food travels. It aims at educating people about the benefits of organic and local produce by allowing farm visits and camping inside the farm. (www.coleshillorganics.co.uk)
	The enterprise defines itself as trying to create a fine balance between working in tune with nature and being commercial growers, through producing at a scale and cost that makes the business sustainable financially as well as environmentally and ecologically. The box scheme accounts for approximately 40% of its sales. It operates all the year round, using 90% of its own produce and sometimes source from

Shillingford Organics	other local shops and farms at the peak season. The enterprise aims at providing its customer with high quality fresh locally produced vegetables and meats, and it does so by ensuring instant delivery to its customers up on harvesting. Its cares about bio diversity and wildlife and environment protection by adopting organic production practices. (www.shillingfordorganics.co.uk)
Tolhurst organics	The farm is located just outside the village of Whitchurch-on-Thames in south Oxfordshire. Tolhurst organic one of the longest running organic vegetable farms in England. They have held the organic symbol for 40 years. They supply weekly veg boxes, fruit and bread to over 200 customers around the area. Their goal is to promote local food as possible, to provide food to eat more within the seasons, as they believe that eating out of season has severe environmentally implications. Minimise food miles by delivering just to some drop off points in the designated areas, offering food boxes at reasonable prices, They grow as many of the vegetables as possible by themselves and in an average year manage to produce at least 85% of the value on their land. However at periods of short supply between March and mid-June, due to the ending of winter crops and the fact that spring planted crops need time to mature, they buy in to supplement for their own produce during the * hungry gap* choose reputable certified organic suppliers and we ensure all produce is always seasonal and that it is not grown in forced conditions in a greenhouse. They do not allow their customers to choose the contents of the box to keep their box scheme affordable and accessible to all, as they see if they allow their customers pack to individual requirements it would double the cost. The delivery round covers Reading, Pangbourne, Wallingford and Oxford areas where their produce is dropped off to points run by Neighbourhood Reps(Resident Representative), every Thursday. (www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk)
Farmaround	Farmaround is a box scheme set up in 1994. It is London's first organic box scheme. Their goal is driven by their desire to reduce the negative effect of industrial farming on the environment, wildlife and biodiversity and human health through promoting the benefits of organic farming and food to the planet and one's health, and in particular for the protection of wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Besides that, they also work with several animal welfare charities like compassion in World farming as they work towards improving the lives of farm animals - seeking to ban factory farming and live animal exports. (www.farmaround.co.uk)
	It is a local, family-run organic box scheme based on a family-run mixed organic farm of 70 hectares outside Swindon, growing vegetables and produced beef since the last century.

Purton house organics	They deliver freshly produced fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs and extras around Swindon, Cirencester and Marlborough. They also run regular open days where they welcome farm guests to visit the farm and see and enjoy what is going on. Their original message started by resisting the pressure that was put on farmers towards intensification in the last two decades and decided to run their organic fields and box scheme to pursue the organic ideal and keep producing delicious veg at lower prices than the supermarkets. Their box scheme aims at supplying great quality food produced in a way that works with nature and creates biodiversity. Their mission statement read as follows: All our activities on the farm respect nature, wildlife, and encourage biodiversity – both plants and animals (even crawly ones). We work with nature, rather than try to dominate it – it makes a lot more sense in the long run, as nature will always win eventually. (www.purtonhouseorganics.co.uk)
Ashurst organics	Ashurst Organics Is a vegetable box scheme started in 1994 based in Lewes, East Sussex. The farm is located in sight of the South Downs, four miles west of Lewes in Plumpton, East Sussex. They grow more than 40 varieties of vegetable on fifteen acres to supply the boxes to nearby towns and villages. They also sell twice a month at the Lewes Farmers Market and to local shops, cafes and caterers. They aim at reducing food miles and decrease the environmental degradation due to the intensive farming and the excessive use of chemicals. Also they aim at reducing non-necessary food miles. At certain times of the year when local seasonal vegetables are limited (Hungry gap) they supplement the boxes with vegetables from other local growers who have glasshouses to extend the season and increase variety or they buy from further afield. However, the UK comes first, then France and Spain. None of their vegetables is airfreighted. (www.ashurst-organics.com)
Plowright organics	Plowright organics was formed in 2003, delivering a handful of boxes to Goathurst, Enmore, Spaxton and Bridgwater. They have received the second place in the ‘Organic box scheme of the year' awards in 2004 and being named a runner up in the Somerset life ‘best organic product and trader' award in 2006. They are committed, organic producers. They aim at producing affordable organic food on a small scale despite the difficulties and the hard work required. As the owner says “we would not want to grow them any other way. Their goal is to develop sustainable organic system that provides good quality seasonal

	vegetables to local people and in so doing, helps to remake connection between land and people. (www. plowrightorganic.co.uk)
Growing with nature	Growing With Nature was established in 1992, it is considered as the UK's longest-running organic vegetable box scheme. They began to growing food organically in 1982 because of their concerns over the impact of chemical farming methods on people's health and the environment. .They supply locally-grown organic produce, to Lancashire and north-west areas. As they developed and started it set itself to some goals such as reducing the footprint on earth and on environment from agriculture and transportation, minimise packaging of paper to reduce packaging waste, minimise food miles by travelling the shortest possible distance from field to plate (Their average is 2.38 from field to plate as verified by Liverpool university in 1999), and supplying their customers with fresh produce by harvesting one day and delivering the nest for sales and other delicate crops. Each of their vegetable delivery contains fresh seasonal produce grown by them and other local growers. As well as growing vegetable and salad crops Alan and Debra the founders of growing with nature are active running the Organic Growers Alliance (www.organicgrowersalliance.co.uk) in which Alan is the present chairman. The alliance aims to represent and support organic growers throughout the UK.(www.growing-with-nature.co.uk)
Northeast organic growers	North East Organic Growers growing organic veg and supplying it via a box-scheme to customers throughout the North-East of England They are farmers' co-operative based in the village of Bomarsund, near Bedlington, twelve miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne. They were established since 1995. They grow organic vegetables on ten-acre site, and run a "box scheme". They aim at making fresh locally grown organic food available for consumers at all households income. So they run a "box scheme" which they consider a cost-effective way of buying certified organic seasonal vegetables and fruit on a regular basis. Most of their produce is freshly picked within 24 hours of delivery. As most of the box schemes in the UK, during the hungry gap periods, produce not grown by them is sourced as locally as possible from other certified organic growers and wholesalers. (www.neog.org.uk)
Tupanny farm	Tupanny farm is a farm based on a 2.4-acre site between Emsworth and Southbourne. The goal is to grow fruit and vegetables in a special way that protects and preserves the environment. Among their main goals also is to provide learning experiences at their

	organic smallholding to the young's by organising many educational and social activities and musical concerts during the term times. (www.openharvest.coop)(www.tuppennybarn.co.uk)

By analysing these box schemes websites and social media pages(Facebook - Instagram) promotional material (e.g. websites, leaflets, and newsletters) it appeared that the common feature that characterizes most of the searched box schemes in the UK is its role in creating a fair, ecological and sustainable food system(Table 8). Roughly all their mission statement elaborates on that and reflect their aim to supply consumers of all incomes high-quality seasonal produce; to encourage cooperative working among its members and consumers; to encourage transparency about food supply chains; even in hungry gap seasons they try to source all produce from the UK as possible and only if necessary to source from other European regions from socially responsible producers and co-ops promoting direct local marketing, and from fair trade producers outside Europe; to favor local , seasonal produce and supplement (not replace) with imports; to minimize packaging, waste and food transport; to offer educational farm visits to raise awareness of the environmental and social aspects of local organic production.

From these, it can be acknowledged that the main aim of the local-organic box scheme is to form a coherent vision for sustainable food strongly differentiated from the produce available through conventional channels. Through emphasising cooperative institutions, minimise agriculture environmental impact by adopting organic agriculture production techniques and strengthening local links between community and farmers as a response to globalisation.

4.4.3 Consumers sampling approach

As already said, consumers sample have been recruited through contacting the box schemes, enabling views to be gleaned from those who are involved in box scheme purchase. However, due to customer confidentiality, the box scheme could not give their customers personal contact details without taking their consent first. For that purpose, another Organic research Centre and Palermo university headed cover letter have been compiled, this time it was sent to the box scheme customers by enclosing them in the weekly fruit and vegetables boxes/bags. The letter generally encourages the box scheme customers to participate in a survey including face to face interviews at any place and time convenient to them. It briefly explains the aim and how important is the study and the survey to the researcher and why it is

I think that the knowledge they have is of great benefit to study. Contact details including email and phone number were provided to enable recipients to contact back if they accept to participate in the study or in case they want to talk and enquire more about the study with the researcher if they wished to do so.

For this study, the ability to reach a nationwide sample using a remote method that removed any effect of the researcher's presence was felt to outweigh a possibly lower response rate. Initially the questionnaire was planned to be sent out with the weekly vegetables boxes and returned by a postal method by including a pre-paid post envelope with the return address detail on an enclosed covering letter, but due the limited availability of budget and time and the confidentiality that the collaborated box schemes stress on, it was decided to be set online on an online survey tool Survey Monkey.

Once no further modifications appeared necessary, the questionnaire was placed online using an online survey website called Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). The survey web link was included at box scheme weekly newsletters including a short note to introduce and inviting box scheme consumers to take part in the study by logging on the website and complete it. Another short note which stated the purpose of the study and provided a link to follow in order to participate were further posted at the box schemes website and social media pages inviting the box scheme subscribers to take part (See annexe 2-3). The box scheme participants were also contacted via e-mail from some coordinating box schemes, and those email contained the same information as the cover letter that was handed out.

Nevertheless, the online data collection method of questionnaire administration might have introduced some limitations to the sample. The potential limitations of electronic methods are acknowledged: firstly, the survey not being equally accessible to those not using the internet, the second potential limitation is the inability to prompt respondents if they are unsure of the meaning of a question, or to ask for elaboration on particular answers as they occur are also acknowledged; extensive pre-testing and piloting of the questionnaire ensured that the questions were framed in the clearest possible way and that elaboration was explicitly sought where most useful.

4.4.3.1 Sample Size and response rate

According to (Cohen 1992), the larger the sample size, the more findings may be reported as significant. Cohen (1992) suggests that at a-level of 0.05, and with a statistical power of 0.8, then 783 participants are required to detect a small effect size (r = 0.1), 85 participants to detect a medium effect size (r = 0.3) and 28 participants to detect a large effect size (r = 0.5) (Cohen 1992). Based upon this guidance, a total sample size in the region of 400 or more if possible was sought, with this number being sufficient to conduct sub-sample analysis, but not so large that non-substantive findings may be reported as significant. The population surveyed was all customers from box scheme based in England-UK.

The surveys took place in the winter (Mid-February) till spring (End of May) of 2016 in England. At the end of March 2016, a total usable response of 370 (80.61%) was received.

It was decided to resend out multiple reminders including a short study invitation cover letter(message) including the survey web-link to the box schemes customers' in order to increase the response rate improvement and achieve large enough sample yet further. These electronic reminder letters and posts were highly effective in generating further response rate, a total response rate of 95 (20.69%) in total. At the end of May 2016, resulting in a total useable response of 416. The response rates to each mailing are summarised in (Figure14 and Table 9).

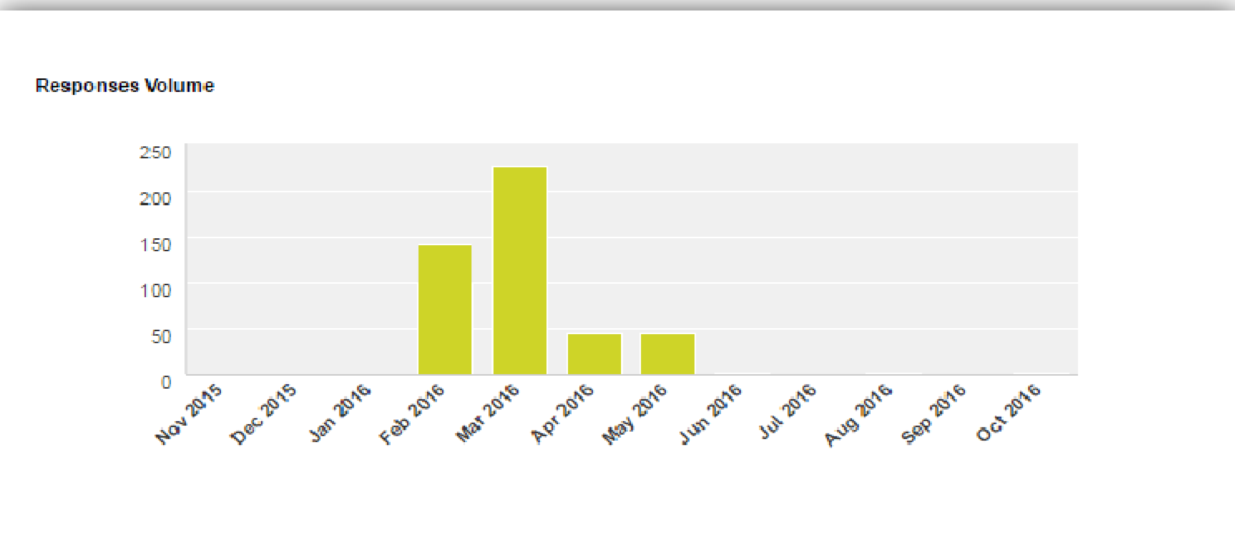


Figure 14: sample size and response rate

Table 10. Sample compilation and response rates

	Received surveys	Response rate
Mid Feb Till the end of the month	143	31.15%
March	227	49.45%
April	45	9.80%
May	44	9.58%
Total received surveys	459	
Total usable	416	
Received un-usable	43	9.36%

4.4.3.2 Incomplete survey responses

A total of 459 box scheme consumers responded to the survey and took part in the survey by accessing the survey web link that was sent to them in the invitation cover letters enclosed in the vegetable boxes, posted on the box schemes newsletters, websites, and social media pages (Facebook & Instagram pages). After analysing the data more closely, forty-three of the participants submitted a survey that did not answer more than half of the online questionnaire sections. It was appropriate to eliminate those additional incomplete responses from the overall analysis; thus reducing the sample size to 416 responses. After eliminating those responses, the amount of data missing was kept to a minimum, it was randomly scattered throughout the data fields of the assigned statistical scales assigned, the researcher chose to replace any missing question response with the neutral average response on the scale to avoid any chance of corrupting the analysis with bias. Therefore the missing data on the item scales did not significantly impact the overall score.

4.4.4 Quantitative Data Analysis

The questionnaire was coded and the data gathered have been analysed using computer based statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). A review of literature in the field of consumer behavior research (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998) suggested that a standard analytical procedure like Principal Component and factor analysis models represent the most powerful and versatile approach to testing; they can be used to identify underlying factors, especially to group box scheme subscribers on the relative emphasis they place on different ethical attributes(Environmental, social, economic, private or personal) when they participate in a box scheme.

The data were entered into computer software package SPSS, with the first stage of analysis utilising descriptive statistics. The second and the third stage of the analysis included were done utilising principal component analysis "exploratory factor analysis" and K-means Cluster analysis. In the next section the analytical technique employed in the study will be described more in detail.

4.4.4.1 Principal component analysis

In order to understand how different motivational factors outlined by consumers to participate and purchase from a local and organic box schemes in England Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been conducted. PCA or exploratory factor analysis is a statistical technique used for replacing a large number of variables with a smaller number of "constructs - variables" that reflects what different sets of variables have in common with each other.

PCA is one popular technique to construct a representation of the data by transforming high dimensional data into lower dimensional data (Jolliffe, 2002) where coherent patterns can be detected more clearly (Ding and He, 2004). In another words, it is a data-reduction technique that help reducing a large number of overlapping variables to a smaller set of components that reflect construct(s) or different dimensions of construct(s).

PCA approximates many interrelated objects by extracting their data differences into several independent principal components (PCs). This reduces the dimensionality of the matrix data and simplifies subsequent interpretations (Konishi, 2012). Through using only some of the components, samples can be represented by quite a few numbers for many variables. Principal component analysis is a large-sample procedure. To obtain reliable results, the minimal number of subjects providing usable data for the analysis should be the larger of 100 subjects (O'Rourke and Hatcher, 2013).

PCA could be described as an orderly simplification of interrelated measures. By performing PCA or exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the number of latent constructs and the underlying factor structure is identified.

The objective is to cull items that did not load under the appropriate component of the consumers' motivational themes of their decision making to participate in local organic box schemes.

However, it is worth to note that the results of the analysis should not be used alone in making decisions of inclusions or exclusions. Decisions should be taken in conjunction with the theory and what is known about the construct(s) that the items or scales assess. In most cases, factor analysis needs a rotation of axes to make data interpretation most readable.

4.4.4.2 Principal component rotation

Definitions of rotations abound. Among the most helpful definition is that offered by (Yaremko *et al.,* 2013), who defined factor or PCA rotation as follows: "rotation of factor axes identified in the initial extraction of factors, in order to obtain simple and interpretable factors"

Rotation is originally an integral part of factor analysis, with the objective to aid interpretation of the extracted factors (components).

The construction of the principal components as linear combinations of all the measured variables makes the interpretation of the extracted components and the assigned loadings not always easy. The same idea of rotating factors can be used to simplify principal components.

The purpose of these techniques is to provide replacements for the PCs that are simpler to interpret without much loss of variance.

- **Types of rotation**

Rotation methods are either orthogonal or oblique. Orthogonal rotation assumes that the factors in the analysis are uncorrelated. There are many different orthogonal criteria such as: equamax, orthomax, quartimax, and varimax. Notably the varimax and quartimax are the most common used criteria. In contrast to the orthogonal rotation, oblique rotation assumes that factors are correlated. Orthogonal rotation is mostly preferred over the oblique given the simplicity to understand and interpret (Brown 2009) .

Since the main goal of rotation is to make the extracted data set simpler for understanding and interpretation, the choice of the type of rotation depends on the condition of achieving simple structure.

According to (Thurstone 1947) five criteria shall be met for simple structure to be achieved:

1- Each variable should produce at least one zero loading on some factor
2- Each factor should have at least as many zero loadings as there are factors
3- Each pair of factors should have variables with significant loadings on one and zero loadings on the other.
4- Each pair of factors should have a large proportion of zero loadings on both factors
5- Each pair of factors should have only a few complex variables.

In the process of carrying out principal component analysis of the obtained survey data, varimax rotation has been applied. Varimax rotation is the most common of the rotations that are available. It involves scaling the loadings by dividing them by the corresponding communality. According to (Jolliffe, 2002) orthogonal rotation, often make little difference to the results.

4.4.4.3 Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis groups data objects based only on information found in the data that describes the objects and their relationships. The aim of cluster analysis is to categorize n objects in k ($k>1$) groups, called clusters, by using p ($p>0$) variables. As with many other types of statistical procedures, cluster analysis has several variants, each with its own clustering procedure. The cases or observations in each identified cluster share many common characteristics, but shall be dissimilar to cases not belonging to that cluster. Thus, clustering can be regarded as a form of classification in that it creates a labelling of objects with cluster labels.

- **Cluster analysis Techniques**

There are various types of clustering techniques (e.g. Hierarchical versus partitional techniques, exclusive versus overlapping versus fuzzy, complete versus partial). Each of these techniques are different with its own properties which lead to different segmentation solutions. Therefore it is very important to carefully select the appropriate algorithm for each type of data. Practically speaking, the distinction between the hierarchical and partitioning methods (Also known as the k-means procedure) seem to dominate the area of data driven segmentation: k-means if the researchers choose partitioning techniques and Wards if hierarchical clustering is used (Dolnicar, 2003).

- **K-Means cluster analysis**

K-means is one of the oldest and most widely used clustering algorithms. It is a prototype-based clustering technique that was originally designed as a method to allow very large data sets to be clustered by creating one level partitioning of the data cases. It requires the number of clusters to be specified in advance (3 clusters has been chosen), and the initial number chosen may split natural groupings or combine two or more groups that are rather different from each other.

The K-means defines a prototype in terms of centroid, which is usually the mean of a group of points, and typically applied to cases (objects) in a continuous n-dimensional space.

- **Strengths and weaknesses**
  - ✓ Strengths

A clustering method that doesn't require computation of all possible distances is k-means clustering. K-means is simple and efficient and can be used for a wide variety of data types.

  - ✓ Weaknesses

K-means have a number of limitations with respect to finding different types of clusters which make it unsuitable for all types of data. In particular, it cannot handle non globular clusters or clusters of different sizes and densities, although it can typically find pure sub-clusters if a large number of clusters is specified. It also has an outlier issue, therein when outliers are present, the resulting cluster cetntroids may not be representative. In accordance to that, it is often recommended to discover outliers and eliminate them beforehand.

Regression analysis:

Regression analysis is the process of finding a mathematical model that best fits the data. Often sample data is used to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. The ultimate goal is to create a model that can be used to predict the value of a single variable.

Simple linear regression is regression analysis in its most basic form is used to predict a continuous (scale) outcome variable from one continuous explanatory variable. Simple Linear regression can be conceived as the process of drawing a line to represent an association between two variables on a scatterplot and using that line as a linear model for predicting the value of one variable (outcome) from the value of the other (explanatory variable).

In a linear regression model, the variable of interest y_i (the so-called “dependent” variable) is predicted from K other variables (the so-called “independent” variables) using a linear equation. If y_i denotes the dependent variable, and X1, …, Xn, are the independent variables, then the assumption is that the value of Y in the data sample is determined by the linear equation:

$$y_i = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon_i$$

where y_i represent the dependent variable total expenditure on local/organic vegetable box schemes. The independent variables are the Social & Economic variables such as: build relationship of trust with producers, support alternative trade outlets, Ability to share quality feedback with suppliers, support small scale disadvantaged farmers, support local organic producers with better income, Implications on increasing disconnections with who produces food, Implications of industrial food systems in distancing consumer from food origin, Implication of food market globalization on local economy, and Supermarkets impact on reducing income earned by local farmers. Environmental variables that include: respect for the environment, Minimise food miles, Reduce packaging, Help reducing food waste, Increasing environmental issues from agriculture, Implication of globalism of food trade on increasing food miles, increase food waste issues due to the rejection of ugly veggies by supermarkets. Health & safety variables that include: Organic produce, Healthy eating, Usage of pesticides and chemicals, Safety risks associated with industrial food products, Food safety issues, Quality variables which include: Freshness, Taste, local produce. Convenience variables such as Reasonable box prices, Ability to pick what you want in the box, Product cleanness, Visual appearance of box items, and box scheme participants demographic factors (i.e. Age, Gender, Education and Income), and boycotting supermarket activity.

Chapter five: Results & analysis

5 Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the primary research which incorporated the qualitative phase of the study (study phase one), and the quantitative survey (study phase two). Initially, the findings from the qualitative research are discussed and preliminarily interpreted, and the key elements and relationships are distilled into a decision making framework (Figure 15). The chapter then progresses to present the results from empirical study two, the key findings from the quantitative questionnaire.

The results of qualitative and quantitative data are presented as follows. In the section 5.1 results on qualitative analysis gathered from the twenty-two, interviewees are presented, while in section 5.2, with the sub-sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, the results of the quantitative analysis are presented, which include a descriptive statistical analysis of the quantitative data gathered, a Principal Component Analysis and a Cluster Analysis.

5.1 Results from qualitative analysis

In order to explore the nature of box scheme consumers decision making to participate in the local organic box schemes, face to face interviews was held with some box scheme consumers at their homes to provide them with a comfortable environment to open up and share their knowledge more in depth regarding their motivations and decisions. The interviews were done following a semi-structured guideline designed for that purpose. The interviews were held between December 2015 and January 2016, with two groups of box scheme consumers participating in two different box scheme located in the counties of Berkshire and Oxfordshire in England- UK. Here we reflect on the analysis from these interviews which suggests that consumers decisions to participate in these networks is driven by their awareness and to differing degrees by their concerns and anxieties related to some ethical (environmental, economic, social) aspects discussed earlier in the literature related to food consumption and production which has many implication in shaking consumers' confidence on the current prevailing dominant food market systems. Consumers who participated in the study were chosen because they participated in this particular type of alternative food channels rather than any personal characteristics. This study has no intention in theorising box scheme consumers as different or the same as each other, or to stress on the suggestion that they are different from people who only participate in the mainstream consumption practices. Instead, its aim in identifying the particularities of those consumers decision making to participate in this type of alternative food networks and whether or not their decision was driven by some rational choice phases highlighted earlier in ethical decision-making theories. So from this point of view, one important element in this preliminary phase of the study was to understand consumer's motivational nature by understanding their level of knowledge, awareness, and reactions to some aspects related to food consumption and how it could have influenced their participation in this particular type of food channels.

In terms of consumers' decisions to participate in this type of alternative food networks, consumers who took part in the interviews have revealed many awareness's and concerns related to their bodily experiences of food. In particular, they reflected a wide range of anxieties relating to a broad range of ethical aspects of food production and consumption beside other personal or private concerns, that have motivated them to look for a different approach in their food consumption and shopping in general.

Consumers were not asked directly about their ethical concerns, but as the interviews go, they revealed many ethical and personal aspects that derived their decisions from participating in a local-organic box schemes. As these ethical concerns were brought up in the first part of the guideline which mainly focused on the factors that were mostly taken into their consideration when participating in a local-organic box scheme, the interviews continued to glean and grasp more in-depth views about their ethical motivations and reasoning. Through this process, many ethical anxieties that the box scheme consumers hold on were identified amongst the consumers participating in the research interviews, concerning a wide range of environmental, economic, social, and personal concerns relating to bodily safety and health (Figure 15). The ways in which box scheme consumers constructed these ethical concerns are presented more in depth in the following sections.

5.1.1 The perceived problem of food safety issues

- **Genetic modification**

In terms of the recognised issues relating to the safety issues of food and, in particular, the potential effects associated with food production techniques on one's personal health and safety, and on the environment, box scheme participants reflected on some of safety concerns related in particular to the Genetic modification that they are anxious about and had made them sceptical about the safety and ecological consequences of its use. As the following responses demonstrate, the perception of GMO frames some safety anxiety for many consumers.

In general terms, consumers were not easy with the unexpected consequences in regard to the usage of genetically modified substances. They reflect their anxiety about the possible negative impact these substances might have, especially on the environment. These sentiments can be found below:

I'm not easy about genetic modification because I don't want species moving around having unexpected effects on each other. The species that have not been modified may get affected strongly and there might be some hard unexpected consequences. I mean with genetic modification you are changing something without being able to predict the consequences. (Alice)

I also don't believe on this GM thing because it gets out of the environmental sequence, you are producing something that might do wonderful things but you have taken it out of its environment. The environment has not changed and I don't think it will work I don't believe it is going to work it is not under balance. (Avril)

The only reason I think it is unethical is because it amends to man better than nature , man is a product of nature , nature is not a product of man , nature made man and we must assume that the natural way is the better way than any other and these big organisations will persuade or they are trying to persuade countries to have it saying this is going to help you and you must go for this and we will provide the seeds and they will have to go to these specific companies for the seed all the time. It is unethical for that one reason isn't it? (Dave)

Some other box scheme consumers were more politically concerned in regards to the usage and the spread of the GMO's, and the environmental consequences that might be associated with it. Although some interviewees were kind of more straight and honest to reveal and explicitly declare their lack of knowledge about the GMO's and the potential implications that might be associated with it, they revealed their anxiety about the political and financial power of the companies backing the GMO's usage who are driven by profits while discarding the possible ecological and environmental consequences it may have.

There is the issue of GM foods, I heard that they go and get their way in some countries and then force them to use their seeds , and then they become dependent on them and they have to buy more seeds and the issue is spreading , and whether or not it's doing any harm to the environment they don't know !! So yeah you never know how it going to end up, it's too risky and the point is if there is any chance that it is risky so why doing it! (Sue turner)

The trouble is of course a lot of drivers for what goes on are financially driven rather than anything else. They have got people want to invest on things because they can make money out of it and they do not care about anything else and it is something that put us on guard again. (Helen).

This company that is promoting GM stuff I am yet not sure about it, but am sitting on the shore. I am concerned about the power of the company that push for the genetically modified material. The argument is that this will resist the pest but then slowly the seed and the beneficially wild life will be depleted, won't it? (Jackie)

As could be seen in the interviewee's statements presented above, farmers dependency in sourcing this GM trait from few number of companies was another issue linked to food security that pushes the consumers away from the idea of getting near to the GM production and consumption due to the unexpected risks it may have.

One more note was brought up regarding the risk of losing the original and traditional varieties of food were recognised as an issue that might put peoples and countries food security at risk. The alleged homogeneity of food varieties that might be associated with the GM crops usage was another issue that put consumers off with regard to the GM production.

There is issue of the gm crops, I don’t have a complete back ground about it and I don’t know what impact GM can have. All I know is that GM seeds may produce itself in another field and spread to the rest of the country without knowing the consequences of its use. I consider that an ethical. Having a whole variety of wheat and what you ending up homogenised traits which are very risky, and could be dangerous food security issue. Again it’s about thinking through what is the impact of what I am trying to do on the world. (Helen)

Finally, one respondents revealed that they would rather rely on traditional breeding and hybridization techniques which may allow for an acceptable margin of error, instead of stumbling on something like GMO’s, therein any associated consequences might be way too quick and huge enough to make it impossible for any reconsiderations in case the consequences associated were found to be too heavy and dangerous for the environment, surrounding ecology, and one’s personal health.

For me we should go to traditional hybridization and breeding and start with a slow change with some chance to predict and see if there will be any unexpected consequences and if the unexpected consequences are serious when u combine things or not, but with genetic modification things are too quick and too large and it may be impossible to go back from unexpected consequences so I am very against genetic modification. (Alice)

- **Processed food**

The potential health and safety effect of food produced by the large-scale manufacturing sector was also recognised by some customers. Some interviewees revealed their scepticism about the industrial and manufacturing methods of food processing which made them majorly sceptical about what those companies say or do. As the following respondent demonstrates, the elements used in food processing were perceived to put one’s personal health at risk of picking up diseases which can cause many complications to one’s health such as the metabolic disease” diabetes”.

I think the food market needs controlling specially the manufacturing sector; it is in such poor quality. I mean no body is dying of hunger but all they are doing is picking up all source of deadfall elements like diabetes. I think there is a great ignorance about food values. I personally don’t believe on anything the food manufacture say and I don’t

believe anything they say in advertising because they are doing exactly the opposite. So I think you have to make your own judgments. (Lynette).

- **Economic issue**

Various economic issues linked to the globalised food retail and the large scale industrial production sector, in particular, the supermarket strategies, specifically in regards to their deals with small-scale producers at the local level was repeatedly recognised as important due to the negative implication these systems have on the economic and financial viability of the small-scale local producers. Significantly, box scheme consumers who participated in the interviews were aware and anxious about the implication of these globalised and standardised systems which are defined by the logic of markets and profits; on local small-scale producers, in terms of, abandoning small-scale producers and farmers, and underpayment associated with the farm gate price squeeze farmers suffers from, and increasing food waste.

- **Supermarkets abandoning small local farmers**

Consumers discussed the supermarkets standardised market strategies that oblige small farmers to comply with specific production and quality specifications which was assumed to make the job more harder than how it is on farmers, by leaving them abandoned and unable to compete and sustain a stable economic livelihood due to failure to meeting big chains quality and quantity specifications and requirements.

The supermarkets practices with local small producers with all its high and sometime impossible quality specification and standards. It's a big problem because they don't work with them cooperatively, they don't help them. You see supermarkets are really beautiful and they have very good ideas bringing all kind of food in one place but what am talking about is critical. (Alice)

In relation to that, some other box scheme consumers were able to identify the link between farmers failure to meet market requirements set by those big market chains and the increasing food waste issue, which have also been recognised to not only negatively contributing in reducing farmers income but also to increasing the food waste issue, due to the rejection of the deformed fruit and vegetable supplied by farmers which does not meet the market quality criteria/requirement.

Another issue is the amount of waste increase by the supermarkets by rejecting to receive farmers produce or throw or giving it away because it's not in the right shape or size. This is ridiculous because they taste the same. I think also this have something to do with reducing farmers income because they have the clout and farmers have to sell to a very few places which I know brings the price down. (Sue Turner)

Also food waste is a very important ethical theme in the food market, I believe that the box schemes help reducing waste. Spreading awareness about that is easy to communicate to general public as well. I know that in France they

recently set up "no-waste"-laws for supermarkets. I would like this to happen here in the UK and in more countries. (Charlotte)

You know I have seen on the TV that you can see a whole heap of carrots which are in no form wasted because people don't want to put them into the market because they think people won't eat them. This is absolutely unfair to farmers, it's the total non-sense (Avril)

The globally oriented supermarket retail chains which stand behind the global trade systems have been also blamed, in fact, accused by box scheme consumers for being un-fair and unethical due to their profit making driven strategies. In particular, the reliance on cheap imported food products was recognised by interviewees to be unfair and unethical for the disadvantages such strategies have on the local small-scale farmers. For example, cutting any hope for small-scale producers through leaving them unable to compete with the imported product price and quality was an issue repeatedly brought up by interviews respondents. This is reflected in the following sentiments:

I think also the globalization of the open market allows the big corporation to source food from around the world whether from Europe or Africa. So I think small scale local producers are disadvantaged because they are not being able to compete in the market which put them at risk economically.(Rachel)

The power that comes from the supermarket chains threaten small farmers business and welfare let's say. I think the increasing globalization of food trade is where the problem lies, they are so huge and getting out of control. So it could be that there is cheaper food coming in from elsewhere, but it also could be that they have perceived that the sales of the food they are going to get just dropped. I think of them as supermarket, the retail sectors the one that sell food in big quantities. (Judith Davies)

The globalization strategy taken by the supermarket to source any and everything from abroad just because its economically speaking cheaper and would give them a chance to make more and more profits away from the local farming and local production. (Penny)

Market globalization that makes them so big through making easy money practices and easy profit practices made it uneasy from the small producers. Supermarket and industrial sector has never been nice to small producers and smaller shops, all these small shops has been swallowed up by them. It is very unfortunate. (Lisley)

It's a small and big again, big business against small. I was thinking about it today, that you can go to the supermarket and park your car for free and do shopping while all this small businesses in town are dying and that's killing small people. That is wrong, it is small against big all the time this is the issue. (Julia Vickers)

Another issue of preventing the local farmers from having control over what they produce from the point of production to the point of sale was also recognised in relation to the globalised supermarket power and increasing domination of the food sector.

They are sometimes preventing local producer in their own home lands to grow their own and if they did they will not be able to sell it because something else in larger quantity is being shipped in. So, leaving them in despair and decreasing their income which implicate on the quality of life they have access to eventually. I don't like the thought of that under any circumstances. Preventing people in your country to produce and sell their produce just because

you are controlling the market and controlling the importation and decided to import what could be grown in your country just because it is cheaper. You do get stories of local farmers have to get rid of their produce or some sort perishable products because the supermarket have their agreement to buy them from Spain for example get tomatoes from Spain for example and not a local farmer. (Penny)

Squeezing the local organic farmers economically was an issue significantly recognised by many interviewees. The consumers talked anxiously about the mainstream retail chains increasing power and domination. They were being accused of squeezing local producers economically by making unfair deals with them which prevent them from making adequate returns (income) for their efforts to produce an authentic food (Organic) which take in its account health and safety, and many ecological factors.

It tends to be more expensive to grow locally rather than import cheaply, because you are paying a higher farms workers wage. So, if you got to make money you get to the cheapest and cannot be worried about the farmers and farm workers' wages and that's what makes the price you paying for vegetable cheap at supermarket. (Alice)

I think that small scale producers are being squeezed, those people who tend to work all round the clock actually to produce food for us, these people who enjoy what they doing which is farming, they are doing it because they like doing it and that what impress me but I feel sorry for them as they don't get adequate returns for their efforts. They tend to be organic farms and they tend to grow what people wanted. (Peter)

Exploitation of the people producing the food, people needs a reasonable deal, not being exploited, not being exposed to nasty chemicals and things like that. (Jane)

Also there is this issue of farmers get ridiculous payment by the supermarkets, so yes this idea that people go to the supermarket buy something in a really cheap price and not asking themselves whether who produces this received a fair price for it or not, it's disgusting. It's a big issue I think. So I think yeah this sort of things in the supermarket should not be exist. (Sue Turner)

The big mainstream retail chains have been also criticised by box scheme consumers due to their increasing power and control of the food sector, which prevents them from being questioned over their behaviour in the market. In particular, consumers mentioned the supermarket sudden changing demands from local producers which economically jeopardise their businesses by making it too less profitable.

The globalised food sector made it so hard for the small scale. You know at a flicker they make demands and they are like at a flicker of a switch they would say we do not want this we are going to half down our order and so someone has invested in and lost, again its short termism. It's devastating when it comes down to them. (Jane)

I heard that the supermarket can change demands about their orders in the last minute and a whole lot of stuff goes to waste and that is wrong (aggressively speaking) because it hurts the farmers economically and jeopardise their business and living..(Avril)

Imagine they make a deal with a farmer to supply them with 50 kilos of parsnips for a certain date and the date comes and the farmers get them ready get them packaged and ready to send out and then the day before the supermarket says I only need half of that quantity and they can't do anything with the rest. I have heard they have to

bury it and compost it. It is dumped which is not fair either for farmers because it reduces their income and may put all their business at risk.(Jo Linzey)

- **Environmental**

In addition to the many economic and safety anxieties about the wider economic and safety issues linked to the industrial and global food trade and retails sectors, negative ecological environment issues associated with these systems were among the most prominent areas reflected by box scheme consumers in the interviews. In terms of the industrial sector reliance on the usage of synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilisers for production and profit maximisation, implications for increasing food miles from the increasing transportation.

- **Usage of pesticides and chemicals**

Box scheme consumers criticised the industrial production systems strategies that adopt an intensive production technique that relies on the usage of synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilisers to increase production and to maximise their profits while overlooking the implication of that on the environment, health, and the surrounding ecology such water, soil, etc. They suggest that these practices are not needed considering all the environmental issues, health, and food waste issues that it may bring on board. Sentiments that reflect this view are presented below:

One other issue is the intensive farming , that we actually produce too much of stuff and all what come with it of using chemicals and artificial substances to intensify and maximize the production and the question is do we really need all that. (Sue Turner)

I find it unethical for some particular forms of farming that uses pesticides and artificial chemicals to maximize its production level at the cost of environment, ecosystem balance and human and animal health as well.(Rachel)

The use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, I have to admit I don’t know enough about it but I know that fertilizers have to be often used naturally so I wonder why would we add from an external source something artificial except to increase a production to a level not necessarily needed and then we complain about food waste. And I fear that pesticides residues may affect people’s health and environment so I prefer to avoid it. (Jackie)

This current food market have a lot to answer for, especially the big big ones. And even vegetable growing now is a huge sort of industrialized set up. They are producing year after year after year and I don’t know what chemical fertilizers they are using to allow them to do that and help them produce extensively like that and they are profit minded so they care about intensification and profit maximization. (Maggie Haines)

Consumers in different interviews revealed their anxieties about the pesticides and artificial chemicals usage by questioning the impact it has on the environment and the surrounding ecology such as biodiversity, wildlife, and soil and water quality.

Destroying the wild life using all this harmful and synthetic pesticides so it have its multifaceted effect in harming many thing around including people, health, environment and natural resources as well. It is unethical to spray crops with pesticides that are going to kill important insects like killing bees. What about pouring stuff like pesticides and chemical fertilizers into the land and it goes into the water streams and kills all fish and aquatic life. It is unethical. (Penny)

Pesticides and synthetic chemicals being used which has many things to do with increasing environmental problems like pollution, water pollution for example and the risk of high contamination, killing bio-diversity. (Allessandra)

I understand that synthetic pesticides in agriculture have some negative impact on environment and biodiversity as it kills some insect and parasites which upset the natural ecosystem balance.(Helen Wright)

Consumers also have recognised the potential effect of using pesticides and chemicals on people's health and safety.

Pesticides usage has many things to do with food safety through putting people's health at risk besides increasing environmental problems (Allessandra)

Crop spraying which have bad implication on environment and people's health (Sian Webb)

- **Food miles**

Another environmental problem linked to the increasing food miles was recognised by box scheme consumers. The consumer was significantly aware of the environmental problems resulted from the globalised food trade and the increasing reliance on fossil fuel in food transportation such as climate change issue.

I suppose also part of food miles using up the carbon foot print when you are flying tons of food and its impact on climate change. Trucking everything around, the whole business and distribution you know. We should be using the railways more in this country but we has no more railways and everything goes in the road and petrol and diesel it's all wrong isn't it? But that what it has been set up to be sadly. (Jane)

The increasing food miles and relying on food that travel thousands of miles to feed us I think that's a big issue that we will have to sort it out in the future as it implicate badly on environment like the climate change issue. Why relying on luxury food when we can use our good farmland to produce our own food instead of taking all farm land for buildings (Tom Parke)

Generally, they revealed their concern over the increase of the food miles which have led to a dramatic increase in the environmental footprint due to the increasing carbon emissions from the fossil fuel burning. They suggested that such an issue is unreasonable given the availability of an alternative local or regional production.

I'm also concerned about the climate change and carbon emissions, well with food miles increase and by relying on fossil fuels I agree it brings different varieties of food to us here in the UK which I understand that we can't really grow much but if you looked at it from another angle you would easily see that it do more harm than good and at that point I ask myself do we really need to bring all of that here, I don't believe so. (Maggie Haines)

Also products which is coming from Spain, Kenya South Africa have flown for a long distance which I find unreasonably increasing the miles the food travels. So it harm our planet's environment by increasing the carbon dioxide emissions which I find all could be avoided by sourcing our food locally or at least regionally. (Rachel)

Some other consumers criticised the governments for their lack of consideration of the problem. The government was criticised for not taking any coping strategies to fix or reduce the problem by setting more strict rules on those who control the food sector to cut down the unreasonable amount of food traded in the UK. While the food sector (Mainstream retail chains) have been accused of being focused only on their market strategies that aim to maximise profits, leaving out any negative consequences their profit oriented minds might lead to.

Agriculture and food trade impact on environment like climate change, which is a very serious threat. Nobody especially governments are taking it seriously enough because the only way to counter climate change is to cut down on consumption and food trade. I mean obviously if you want to cut down on carbon emissions you have got to cut down the amount of food traded by air and sea and roads by larger food sectors all the time. These larger sectors have got to realize they cannot just import things from abroad using airplanes and huge Ships and Lorries on the roads every day, wasting resources, but no governments are saying that to them. (Dave)

Food sector is spending so much money on wasteful activities that contribute to change consumer preferences and has its cost on environment as well like so much flying and transportation and the use of oil in transport. (Lisley)

There is a lot of horrible stuff down there, I don't understand why food travel from one country to another and its going on another direction as well, it's just non sense. It is just somewhere; somebody is making money by doing it. It is all political the whole thing. (Julia Vickers)

The consumer heightened awareness about the implications associated with intensive farming practices and the reliance on synthetic pesticides and chemicals demonstrates not only an awareness about of the negative effect of this practices , but also revealed a heightened awareness about the necessity to protect the environment and the importance to protect and conserve the biodiversity, wildlife, water and soil qualities, by following different alternative approaches that might help reduce the problem.

I know that there are some alternatives or some strategies where you have some vegetables or grass between the vegetable and insects, so you would allow for keeping a high biodiversity and protecting the environment as well and that seems to be a better way to do things. (Tom Parke)

I think also that following a seasonal diet is the way out away from being dependent on vegetables that come from abroad which are out of seasons. So basically eating in season food could contribute to reducing food miles and consequentially decreasing the Negative environmental impact of farming and food trade. (Lisley).

- **Social**

The interview participants expressed fewer anxieties about some social aspects related to food like the ability to trace the food back to its source to get knowledge about who and where production has taken place. In this case, most participants were most concerned about the environmental, economic, and safety aspects related to food consumption and food shopping, and would do and act on their concerns regarding these aspects by sourcing food from whoever provides them with an adequate compromise in relation to these aspects. With the exception of some participants, they revealed their concern about some social aspects by recognising some as being important due to the witnessed implications of being distanced away from the food they shop and eat, by not knowing who is in their food and where it has been sourced from.

In this regard box scheme consumers reflected upon anxieties in linkage to supermarkets and the industrial food systems contribution to increasing the gap and loss of connection with the food they consume. They stressed that losing the sense of connection by not knowing who is produce their food and where it has been sourced from is among the reasons why they started and continue using the box schemes and continued trying to reduce their supermarket food shopping and to search for more local food to build this sense of connection again with the soil and the farmland, and the economic and the social conditions of those who take the effort and burden to produce for them.

Losing the sense of connection with what we consume, that is why I have reduced my supermarket shopping unless you are buying something fair-trade or organic where you know very well where it came from and under which conditions it has grown. But also to be fair they are getting better in regard to that. But I mean you have to say at least where the fresh stuff came from. (Sian Web)

I think a major problem is that we got massive companies now that have a lot of power and you have this sort of treaties so this is what relatively new. We have been having that for quite a long time now. We have lost the contact with the soil and farming and all this moral things behind food production, which I think is the problem of the industrial companies out there. (Julia Vickers)

Repeatedly the consumers revealed their concern about not knowing to whom their money goes, where food has been grown, and under which conditions the food they are buying has been produced in high dudgeon, which reflects and increasing interest in building a more closer connection with their food.

If I don't know who grew my food and where it come from and everything. Then I don't know where the money that I paid goes to and I don't know how people who do the actual hard work on the field are treated and I don't know how they treated the land and the waste and everything. (Helen)

You need to be in the know politically and who is benefiting and how can ordinary people know as we don't always know. When they do things you are told that people will be benefiting but you do not know whether that is true in the current and long run. (Helen Wright).

Another respondent reflects on this issue by revealing her concern over how the increasing distance might affect food security in the UK by not having any control over food through being dependent on food imports which increase the lack of knowledge about the source of food and how good it is!

My worst fear is that we stop growing food in this country or hardly do any and everything comes from abroad and we become dependent on food which we have no control over, we have no knowledge of its source and how good it is. So at least we have got some way of coming back to it through box scheme. It is a problem when it comes from abroad it is very difficult as you have no control over it. (Helen wright)

In addition, some participants viewed it as a cultural disaster which negatively contributes to increase food ignorance among food consumers and the future generations, suggesting that a balance is needed between the local and the global sourcing of food to minimise this knowledge gap, to revive this sense of enjoyment and pleasure regarding food shopping and consumption.

It's harsh to see children think that fish finger actually comes from fish, ugh it is stressful. Another one inspecting where the tree comes from, it's a disaster its cultural disaster this has been all caused by the increasing distance between actual food that we put in mouth and where it has grown or how it has been grown. So there is a lot of ethics to what you eat. But I don't mean that we should totally stop it though, a small of it would be useful but it's a balance, I think everything should be balanced because I love my coffee my tea my cocoa and my wine all this stuff that can't grow locally. (Alice)

In some ways it's not fun to shop for food because it's separate and disconnected from who produced it and where it really came from. It's almost has nothing to do with them really. Sometimes when I was doing food shopping at a supermarket I go there get my things and I want go out as quickly as possible to go home. I try to minimize the gap by shopping at different shopping systems like farm shops and box schemes. And yeah it is a gap because I don't know who is getting my money and who is making the profit, I have no idea. (Tanya)

Finally, some interviewee's recognised the problem of losing the connection with their food blaming the global food production and trade for not being responsible enough in creating smooth and trust building mechanisms by being transparent and providing credible information, which made them more sceptical about what are being communicated out in the food labels of global food companies.

I always want to know what I am buying and where it comes from and sometimes it's not easy through the supermarket to get the knowledge and information about what are you buying. At the supermarket you can't be absolutely certain about the food you are buying especially where it has been grown and under which conditions to be at least fairly informed about what are you feeding your family household with because you are being held

responsible for that. So yeah mainly because I expect that whoever I am buying from should have at least a good level of the sense of responsibility I have. (Allessandra)

The problem of being distant from trust and information. I always find it hard to believe the things that are spoken out in the labels of the global companies. Global companies will often disguise the fact that its global company at one end of a long chains. They will produce smaller companies with pretty sounding names. (Jane)

In addition to the many ethical concerns that consumers reflected on, participants in different interviews stressed upon anxieties related to food markets conditions, in particular, regarding the major supermarkets and the global food trade strategies due to the many negative environmental, social, and safety issues associated with these systems. They revealed that they tend to be more sceptical by distrusting any information that comes from them.

I am ambivalent about big companies they have access to everything especially to marketing experience. So I think they are becoming or they are the masters in eluding people about what they sell, which is all the way unlike the small farmers venues such as weekly farmer markets and veggie box schemes. Big food companies operating here in the UK are eluding people about their real and true intention. I have been always skeptical over their strategies. (Sara del tufo)

In relation to that, some have viewed the issue more politically by criticising the government for not taking any action to re-regulate the food market, instead of leaving it totally controlled by globally oriented profit-minded enterprises that overlook the consequences of their strategies and practices. Respondents repeatedly stressed that their anxieties about the market conditions and the negative externalities it brings have positively influenced and persuaded them to support smaller and more local-organic food outlets.

The Government at the moment wanting to have less to do with it which I found bizarre , they are not going to worry about animal welfare in the same way as they were and they just want the industry to govern itself and I just think it's not going to happen, it is not going to happen because industries is driven by profit and therefore I think we do really need someone who is overseeing what goes on and being prepared to lay down the rules we are following to make sure that we do follow things because if you leave things to self-govern itself people just don't. I think if anything ramped up to anything big it gets out of people's power and they just get told to do so by people above them and it just get difficult. Then the gain is all the issues like farmers not receiving an adequate income for their production so they just go out of business, more environmental issues like climate change and abandoning the local farm land and the local producer till we become totally dependent on others. (Helen)

The current food market is too large too powerful and with those two things comes corruption and dishonesty, I think big food corporations are corrupted and dishonest. Because it is mainly controlled by supermarkets it seems very odd and so few, there are about six major supermarket. (Peter)

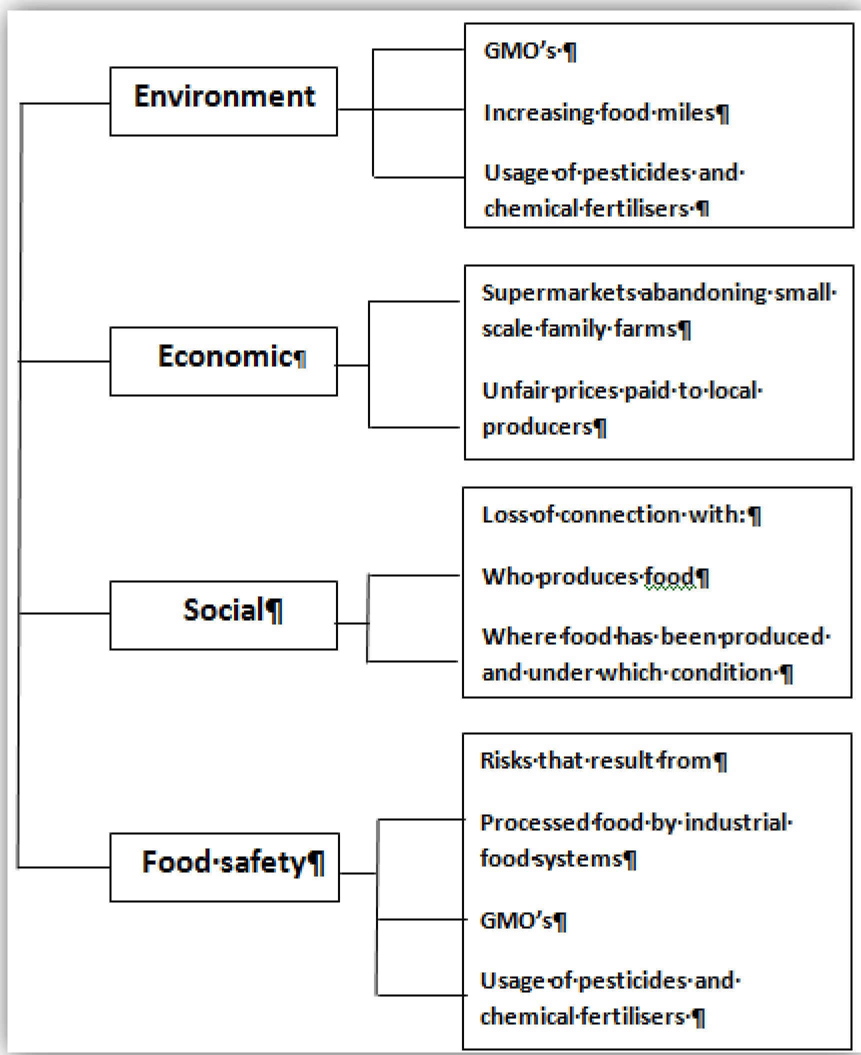


Figure 15: identified ethical concerns

5.1.2 Box scheme consumer's motivation

The motivations of the local organic box scheme consumers were discussed to explore the extent to which consumers participation in a local and organic vegetable box scheme in England is linked to some ethical values that consumer hold on in their search and consumption of food? Further how consumer ethical values played a part in their decision to purchase food from box schemes. Survey respondents were invited to answer, in their own words, what they consider when they participate in organic- local box scheme.

Several patterned themes of consumers motivations emerged. Organic vegetables box schemes members conveyed a wide array of sentiments, priorities and values in explaining their decision and choice to participate in an organic and local box scheme.

The research shows that box scheme consumers are generally motivated by a wide of multifaceted elements and factors which are increasingly influenced by a range of social, economic and environmental aspects and moral concepts of food production and consumption. These could be broadly considered as altruistic reasons for purchase, as they benefit other factors which are not directly translated into consumer personal benefits. Besides other cultural and hedonistic motives such as health benefits, taste, freshness, and convenience. It further reveals as showed and presented in the previous section that the box scheme consumer's ethical concerns played a vital role in their decision to buy from a local organic box scheme. This includes wide environmental concerns, economic fairness concerns, social concerns, animal welfare issues in conjunction with the globalised food market dominated by the retail chain powers, the industrial food sector and the large agribusiness.

To easily represent the factors brought up by the box scheme consumers, the presentation of these themes and motives in this section will follow Padel and Grossinger categorization of various consumer ethical concerns according to the three pillars of sustainability, namely (Ecological, Social, and Economic) (Padel and Gössinger,, 2008), along with other revealed concerns which could be considered as more personal or self-interested concerns and motives such as health, high quality, and convenience. Thus our results capture a blend of each and reflect a diverse array of concerns by box scheme customers.

This section discusses the main factors that the majority of interviewees considered in their decision to participate and join a local organic vegetables box scheme.

- **Ecological**

The data revealed that consumer ecological concerns were an important guiding principal in box scheme consumer motivation and decision to participate in a local-organic box scheme. Discussion particularly highlighted box scheme consumer's desire to "protect the environment", "reduce food miles", and "conserve the wild life and natural resources". Each element will be discussed below in more details including consumer responses.

Box scheme consumers considered environment protection aspects in their shopping at a box scheme. They stated several concerns about the intensive farming in the UK, and the relative environmental consequences of pesticides and artificial chemical fertilisers usage on biodiversity and natural resources, water and soil, as reflected in organic purchasing from a box scheme. For example, they reflected their knowledge about the organic farming practices, considering it as an environmentally friendly production techniques that highly prioritise the conservation of natural resources and protect the environment from the myriad issues linked the reliance on synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilisers under the conventional production systems.

The fact that organic has grown with more environmentally friendly farming methods is very important to me. You see we have lounged to a natural environment scheme as well; they are trying to promote keeping the acres that they have got as natural as possible but also managed. I don't like the idea of the deterioration of the environment, it's terrible. If you have great field's being plodded with chemical fertilizers and pesticides and insects and birds and wild life in general is being destroyed, you know all that has a knock on effect. I think that is the main reason behind most of the natural environmental degradation and deterioration is the chemicals they are spreading in the fields and chemical fertilizers that they put into the earth which sometimes runs often to the streams which has a bad effect on the aquatic environment and life as well. I think they are doing so because it's just easier to kill off the weeds artificially and taking out hedges so they are having more area to get more production from the area of the land they have than they would if they kept it environmentally friendly and they do it to get money its always money. (Avril)

I do always care about organic for some health reasons but to a lesser extent, it's mainly about environment because it is kinder to the planet I guess, you are not putting too much pesticides and artificial chemical fertilizers. So I suppose that help to keep the wild life and bio-diversity safe and help to maintain the natural environmental balance. This planet is really quite small and the population is getting bigger and bigger and we need to look after it I guess, not to rape it. (Jackie)

Further, some respondent's regarded organic farming as more sustainable. They clearly expressed concerns over the power of the pesticides and chemical fertilisers companies and the impact that could have if they managed to make farmers dependant on them over the food supply and security in the UK.

I wanted to do box scheme because I know organic farming is better and there are very intensive farming in the UK. It is more sustainable I believe. I think it is important thing that the farmers do not apply chemicals, the synthetic ones I mean. It affects the soil and water quality, and biodiversity. I know that there are massive companies of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and this sort of thing which is anti-environmentalism. I think also the same case for the GM stuff I am sure there are massive companies that own this things. I think if food producer become dependent on these things, we may end up without food supply, that's scary. (Sue Turner)

I think it's better for the land and the soil to grow organically and all those things. I don't like the sort of getting the soil completely mineral practical and putting chemicals on it and they all get drain away into the water and all that sort of thing and that's to do with growing organically. (Penny)

- **Food miles reduction**

Box scheme consumers explicitly mentioned cutting the miles the food travel as one of the main reasons why they decided to give a local scheme a go to get their fruit and vegetables from. They regarded the increasing food miles as central to their decision to shop at a box scheme given its negative impact on the environment due to the increasing carbon emission from transportation that depends on fossil fuel. They related the food miles reduction as a contribution to protecting the environment as less energy and fuel are being used for transportation.

I have chosen to shop locally particularly to contribute in protecting the environment by reducing food miles. We shop locally at a box scheme because it really hasn't travelled very far. That was the main clear aspect.(Alice).

I prefer to buy produce that come from a local area, as we are conscious of food miles , so I would try not to buy fruit and vegetables that have travelled around the world. That's a core factor really that it has not travelled very far (Rachel).

Food miles is why I looked for a local scheme, because we should be saving power and energy used with all the environmental issues knocking on like climate change due to the increasing carbon emission and that sort of things. We need to think before we fly or ship things around which I consider a big issue. I think we can ship things thousands and thousands of miles, but it should be restricted to things that we cannot grow here in the Britain but you find that whoever is responsible about the current food system don't bother to grow here anymore because they know they could get it from somewhere else.(Sue Turner) .

Box scheme consumers also link the increasing food miles to the current policies by the current food systems in the UK. Sue stressed that food importation should be only allowed to commodities that cannot grow in the UK. However, she explained that this is not happening because the current food systems in the UK seemingly prefer not to grow in the UK, as they could rely on outside source to get the food from.

In another interview (Helen) critically criticized the mainstream supermarket chains for increasing food miles due to the fact that food keep hanging around all over the country and being stored a lot before it arrives at the supermarket shelves, which as she explained leads not only to negative implication on environment but also low quality of food.

It didn't travel for a long way to get to me so it contributes to reducing the miles our food travels. I think food does not have to travel for a long distance. I know that ridiculous things goes on here in this country particularly by the big supermarket chains , they get food from somewhere, then box it up, then shuffle it in some lorries, then travelling about all up and down the country, so you get lorries always on the motor way and more fuel being used, then hangs about in some warehouses, then gets sent off in another lorries for somewhere else to shop, and you probably end up driving to the shop to pick it up, this is crazy and ridiculous. The irony is that by the end, we may end up getting low quality produce because it has lost its goodness by losing it nutrients and not only but we contribute to affect the climate and environment due to the excessive amount of fuel used in transportation!! whereas the way this particular box scheme works is once the crop ripen naturally on the soil it gets picked up into one van and delivered the next day to us that's it, it's one van journey , fresh, and healthy. So it's better for me and my family and environment. (Helen).

Only one consumer revealed that they don't mind buying food that has travelled long miles as long as they are fair-trade certified as it may contribute to sustain farming and support the small poor family farms in developing countries.

I care about food miles but I also tend to think about those poor family farms and farmers in other developing countries, they rely on us to make their living. If I say oh, hi, I cannot have your produce like banana's or grapes because it has got food miles; these people are going to suffer, aren't they? I tend to think that that is probably true and that is why I buy my bananas and grapes that are fair-trade ones that come from countries in Africa or Latin America. Presumably with fair trade on them, people who grew them get their chance to living some sort of sustainable existence and that's why I enjoy it as well. (Jackie)

- **Eat seasonally**

Some other box scheme consumers have associated their preference to eat in-season food as a way to reduce the impact of increasing food miles on the environment by making them less dependent on food coming from abroad. For example:

The fact it's seasonal as well, so it encourages us to buy things in season not shipped from somewhere else just to suit consumer demand. I think that following a seasonal diet is the way out away from being dependent on vegetables that come from abroad which are out of season. So basically eating in season food could contribute to reducing food miles and consequentially decreasing the Negative environmental impact of farming and food trade. (Rachel)

I like to eat in season; the majority of the offseason food has been fright on by using oil. I think it is quite unnecessary because people want fruit and vegetables out of season and I consider the impact of that on the environment.(Lisley)

I like to eat seasonal food. I suppose eating seasonally cuts down food miles. Nowadays we have too much choice and because of that the planet is creaking by increasing the miles food travels for unnecessary off seasonal stuff. I think box scheme and sourcing my food locally contribute in minimizing the problem. (Jo Linzey)

- **Economic**

Box scheme participants also considered some economic fairness issues to be central to their decision to participate in a local organic box scheme; an example of this was the high sense of care towards the small scale local farmer's economic viability. It reflects the consumers desire to reward the small scale farmers for being committed to growing things in respect to the environment and for taking the risk to produce high-quality healthy produce free from any additives or chemicals that may harm or put people's life at risk.

Another motivation for the consumer to buy their food at a box scheme was related to the farmers (box scheme operators) ability to obtain a full retail price from it and to remain in full control of their products until its final point of sale. This not only enables them to maximise its value added potential but also to provide a legitimacy for the production methods employed. Yet, there is also evidence of a mutual intention to support an exchange context that is deliberately distinctive from supermarkets, in which both of them can regain some control over their respective roles within the food system.

Consumers desire to support the local organic box scheme was further underlined as vital in their decision to participate in a box scheme. The consumers' attendance at a box scheme was underlain by a belief that organic farmers who supply them are quite small, abandoned and completely lack any marketing knowledge skill in hands of bigger food corporations so that they would require their support otherwise they might end up failing, and get out of business:

I would like to support people who grow organic vegetables because I don't think it is so easy for any small farmer to go organic and to run a box scheme on his own without our support. (Penny)

It is a good thing knowing that I contribute to help these small farmers to thrive. We have reached a point where they can't do it without us and we all need food so why not to be responsible enough and do it right. (Tanya)

I just think it's quite a difficult time for anybody in business in a small way and I would rather give my custom to them. The sense of support here is very important they are the very small against those markets giants. They need and require support otherwise they will end up failing, losing and getting out of business for the benefit of their opponents while we will lose a good source of high quality healthy food so I think by supporting them it's a win-win. (Lynette)

I would like to support my box scheme producer because I am sure that the box schemes or any other small businesses like the box schemes need support by buying from them. Supermarkets are quite huge now and so globalized and so powerful, so I don't think that our small farmer behind our box scheme would have any chance standing against these giants without peoples support through buying from him instead of others. (AVRIL)

....that's one more reasons why I want box schemes to be better promoted, the local small scale producers doesn't know how to promote themselves because they lack knowledge, skills, and services in hand of bigger corporations. So it's our role to support them and spread the word to make sure they stay with us. (Sarah del-tufo)

I believe it's important to support those abandoned small producers against the market big boys. It is a small scale; they are kind of like the brave ones that sticking out against the mass production and everything else that comes with it. I mean its mass production; it has its real advertising and finances that can help them. But box scheme are not. For example I don't think that the box scheme I buy from have any kind of advertising, they just happen to grow food and they need us to keep producing and survive the tough world they are living in nowadays.(Tanya)

Box scheme consumers also exhibited a political will to support a retail outlet that is different from the dominating big, powerful and global supermarket chains, in which local small farmers/ organisations could have a better competitive advantage by selling directly and obtaining full retail price:

I want to buy directly from a local producer. Economically speaking, it benefits the local farmers more. It's true that you can find some local produce being sold at the supermarket as well, but there are a lot of middlemen's and other people involved in the supply chain and they are taking a lot of the farmers income for themselves , to benefit themselves.(Lisley)

I would rather support small scale producers like the box scheme I get my veggies from, because they are really quite small family business. It's really important because they are small organization and competing against the big boys, the big boys food people and even agribusiness. (Jackie)

Support small farmers by buying regularly from them, I think they need support because they are small and they need some sale channel otherwise they will sell to supermarket or other retails channel and get a low income for themselves. Buying from farmers through box schemes help them get all the income for themselves. But they won't be able to start a box scheme unless they know it's pretty regular so they need our support and won't survive without it. (Helen wright)

Supermarkets were further often acknowledged and criticised as not being transparent and fair in terms of its deals with local farmers. The ability to shorten up the food supply chains by making it more direct with producers was seen as invariably important to reduce the supermarkets domination of the food sector and its negative impact on local producers, which guarantees to whom the money goes:

I always thought what if we could manage to limit the number of middlemen, if one can shorten the supply chain. The dealings between the food market giants and their suppliers are not always transparent in fact I would say it's never transparent. Its where the big bully boys , the bankers put profit before anything else which is to be discouraged so that is why one wishes to reward the opposite to that to keep the change, so the money I pay actually goes to the person who is producing. (Jane)

Supermarkets and discount retailers push prices for producer; farmers suffer a lot from that. That's why I buy directly from local producers. I find box scheme is the most convenient way to do it. (Charlotte).

If they don't earn enough income they are not going to survive I mean you hear and see this horrific things about supermarket ordering people to grow hundreds of tons of vegetables and then they decide not to take from them , and then the farmers goes out of business because they can't cope with the supermarket. The power of the supermarket is horrendous and how much better to bypass that and just for the farmer to be funded by people who actually eating the stuff and prepared to eat what he can produce (Peter).

Shopping at a box scheme was also viewed as a co-operative effort by some consumers, who wanted to personally reward the producer's commitment towards environmentally friendly production and their effort to provide them with 'high quality' food:

I would like to reward them for their believes, for their commitment, and for something that they are doing that is not going to reward them as profitable as other things but at least having the mind-set to take on board the bigger issues which is the environment and the legacy that we are leaving for future generations. (Jane)

Imagine, farming of any kinds is quite tough but organic farming is probably even more so, it is quite nice to support farmers who do something for the environment, and supporting the choice they made to be organic farmers. (Rachel)

Obviously to support people who are happy to adopt more sustainable farming practices, they need support otherwise they are not going to survive. They need support so that they can keep doing what I regard as better practice, in term of the agricultural practice, they can make a living and they can be rewarded. (Julia)

Finally, some consumer's desire to support smaller farms and smaller producers were linked to the food safety issues that have been associated with the large scale industrial sector. It was believed that with keeping production on a small scale there is a better chance of having fewer safety issues and other that is mainly linked to large-scale operators due to their heightened interest in creating more profit at the expense of providing high quality and less exploitative food toward the environment, producers, animal welfare, and people's health and safety. This sentiment was shared by many respondents:

I wanted to support smaller farms and smaller producers. It's really awful thing that everything around us is based on an industrial basis with everything. The food system and food consumers (us) need to think about what are we doing and buying, its where the problem starts and we may get food scare and health problem again. For example, with what goes with mad cows when you only had to bring a cow in the house to assure that everything is ok! I always think that its only when things get too big that it get worse and we lose a sight of what this all about and its profit rather than providing food for you. I also think Farmers are not paid enough either, we should pay more than we do. When things are done in a large scale and its cheap but not very good really, you tend to ask yourself why is it too cheap and you think that they might be mistreating animals, mistreating farmers or farm labors, mistreating the land, mistreating people. So I don't want buy cheap. Of course I do sometimes but I would rather not buy cheap and be mistreating anybody. So it is better supporting small scale and you know you are not doing that or there is more chance that you are not doing that. (Sue Turner)

Smaller farms and the more natural way of doing farming. Being small could help the sustainability of the current agricultural environmental systems on which the ongoing large strategy with intensified systems cannot maintain that balance. (Tanya)

The thing is that most of the organic farmers are pretty small scale, aren't they? There are some who are large now but the majority are very small. It's all like we have to stop doing the intensive and all of that get to stop doing it and see what works and go back to more natural farming and get away from that chemical based farming and that sort of things (Sian webb)

I want to support these small scale farmers because I trust them and I want them to keep producing top grade organic food in terms of everything health for my personal perspective but also environment and biodiversity etc..(Lynette).

- **Social**

The direct interaction between consumers and producers through box scheme was highly appreciated by box scheme consumers. However, it was highlighted that the type of interaction between them and producers is not always as direct as it may sound but receiving a weekly or monthly newsletter from farmers and letters during Christmas for instance, makes their the interactional relationship more personal and makes them feel connected to their producers, and more and more connected to their food.

I never been to their farm and I never met them , but we get a letter a couple times of year , for example Christmas letter from the farmers saying what is happening on the farm. So, I think that's makes the connection with the farmers, this is quite interesting (Rachel)

I think it's very good idea that through box scheme we could have a direct contact with the farmer who is producing our food. Each one of us have had his own job and sometimes you don't have time to read about what's going on in the sector which is responsible to feed us. So, having contact with the farmer who is producing our food every now and then and have a quick chat about food and what is going on is such a great opportunity. It gives us the connection with our food (Maggie Haines)

The fact that he comes by every week and drop the boxes at my door makes it more and more personal. It's a sort of little community that I have got know now. Having a quick chat about how things are going back in the farm and how his family and children are doing. It keeps you more connected with your food I guess, more close to it. (Avril)

The possibility of having a direct interaction with food growers and place of production through participating in a direct sale channel like a box scheme has been perceived by consumers as adding enjoyment to their consumption. The direct communication consumers have with the box scheme either through the face to face interaction, farm visits, the weekly or monthly newsletter, and websites was also regarded as a learning opportunity, as they could gain knowledge about the production methods and the different varieties of vegetables growing in different seasons.

I find it decent to be always in touch with farmers who grew out food. I found that interesting to see their passion about agriculture and food. (Alice)

...it is really lovely to sit around a dining table to have dinner knowing who produces our food that's and where it come from and under which circumstances this product came to our dinner table. (Jackie)

I like being in touch with farmers, receiving their newsletter which keeps me well informed about the soil and what are they really doing to grow vegetables and learning what is vegetables growing in each season. (Maggie Haines)

It is great keeping in touch with farmers who are the real people behind the food you eat and enjoy through receiving a direct monthly newsletter from them, go to their websites and be always updated about what is going on out there in the farm, learning about the different vegetables varieties growing in each season and have knowledge about it. So yeah, I always think that shopping at a box scheme is another learning factor which makes you part of the system. (Allesandra)

Our box scheme farmers also do some newsletter every now and then where they write some of their thoughts and views about sustainable economic food production. I must say, its brilliant knowing how and what farmers think about for the sake of better food systems, it's just fabulous. It keeps me well informed about the soil and what are they really doing to grow vegetables and learning what is the vegetables growing in each season. (Peter).

Consumers revealed their intention to purchase and attend in a commodity exchange context that is distinct from supermarkets in terms of connection to where and who produces their food. A comparison was often made between box scheme as a direct sale channel and the supermarket, where lack of connection with the place of production add high scepticism to the production authenticity in terms of the methods of production and the conditions of who is behind their produce

They have keep the personal touch, I don't get this from Sainsbury's , they don't tell me how Sainsbury's family is getting on and how they are spending their millions, they don't think I am that interested and I am! Mr and Mrs Sainsbury's they don't tell you how they are spending their money they make from their shops. I think they better keep quiet about it. (Lynette)

I just prefer the thought of a small supplier that you actually know and you have been also there at their farms and shops. You hear that supermarkets are not very friendly to their suppliers quite often and you don't like that thought so you prefer somebody you have heard of , somebody you can see and who is local it's something obviously better. (Judith Davies)

I prefer to know where my food is coming from because I know exactly where my food is coming from the box scheme, in white church which is on the road to Southampton. I always thought that buying locally from a box scheme is way better than taking it from the super market shelf where you have no idea what the background of what you have taken is. (Avril)

This is why I buy from a box scheme; I want to know how my food is produced, and what money goes to actual producers. Being careful out who is affected by your shopping, what the value chain look like and who is involved in production and under which conditions, for that reason I have avoided shopping at specific supermarkets and some products. (Sarah Deltufo)

Trust building in food producer and the production methods employed has been recognised by the majority of box scheme consumers as important to their decision to participate in a local direct sale channel like a box scheme. The ability to know who produces their product and where food comes from through participation in a box scheme was frequently highlighted by box scheme consumers interviewed as an important means to develop a relationship with their food suppliers based on trust and mutual respect, which give consumers greater confidence in the food they buy.

I know who are behind my food box and I know where their farm is, these factors contribute I guess to trust building between one another. So I know for instance that even our box scheme farmers has to buy some vegetables now and again to go in the boxes and I mean I'm trusting him to get them from a credible source. (Jackie)

Its trust really and actually knowing that somebody has a belief system that you can bind to and you can trust them to do their best to do things in a way that you feel it's the right way. I have seen these big schemes (Riverford & Abel & Cole) with my own eyes, and I feel like I can't trust them. I can find it more difficult to trust with all this big marketing campaigns. As soon as u get a lot of money spent on marketing and see lories being all down delivering things, it might be fine but I don't know. (Helen)

There is a trust element if I know the person where I support. It's the sustainability thing, it's the long termism. I think because its traceable you can say, because it's a short food chain. If I have a contact with the person who is actually producing my food I see and find that very important. So that when you dealing with a small scale individual or a group of individuals you build on some sort of trust and a bit of mutual respect and interest. (Jane)

I think they are always different from the supermarket when you receive this letter you get it from the farmers, people who do all the hard work and the heavy lifting it must be honest while with supermarkets you always feel like whatever they are saying it's just for making more profits achieve more sales bar to stay in high competition with another retail sector. It's merely about the consumer and food. (Helen Wright)

Trust building in box scheme producers has been related also to the integrity and the accountability it is based on, as it allows consumers to get back directly to the source of their food to either complain or to inquire about the production methods. This sentiment could be seen

I do trust box schemes because if you have anything wrong you can always complain. You can communicate with them so easily or better than that you can just phone whoever is in charge or responsible for the collection point. And the best about it is that they are all very kind and responsive. (Lynette)

- **Quality**
  - ✓ Freshness

Consumers also mentioned that getting access to high-quality food as a reason to look for locally- organic food. The quality has been mainly linked to "Freshness". The fact that their vegetables are being delivered directly by farmer's right after harvesting was another contributing factor towards consumer's appreciation and positive experience about getting their vegetables from a box scheme compared to supermarkets. This may further support consumer's loyalty and commitment to purchase from the box schemes, given the positive quality perception.

I always wanted to eat something fresh, being at a box scheme gives me that as its directly delivered as soon as its picked or harvested. Also once you receive the box you have to eat at the right order as well. When it arrives you have to check which is the most perishable and you eat that first. (Alice)

The food quality itself is something very important to me including the freshness. The fact that all the vegetables delivered by the box scheme has been picked up from the soil at the same day is one of the reasons why I participate in a scheme instead of just going for shopping at the supermarket where things have been stored for weeks and didn't really spend enough time on the soil to become fully ripened. (Allesandra)

The best thing about the veggie boxes is that they are picked a day or two before the delivery so they are mature and fully ripened and undoubtedly fresh. We rely on the veggie box in getting our vegetables that is Local that is Seasonal and Fresh. (Dave)

  - ✓ Taste

Consumers also made a link between the products freshness and good taste. The fact that products delivered by box scheme take its time on the field to ripen and being delivered instantly after harvesting contributes to less water and nutrients loss which has been perceived to contribute to better taste by few consumers.

The sorts of vegetables we get from box scheme are fresh because it's delivered to us right after it has been picked up from the soil. It has been just picked so it haven't lost much of its water or nutrients, I think that's also why it tastes better. (Penny)

Taste is something important to me, taste depends on ripeness and maturity, doesn't it? The best thing about the veggie boxes is that they are picked a day or two before the delivery so they are mature and fully ripened.(Dave)

- **Healthy eating and Safety**

Ensuring healthy eating was another personal reason considered important for some box scheme consumers as a reason to shop for organic produce. Analysis revealed that consumer's interest in organic food was strongly influenced by the desire to make sure of what they eat and maintain high security regarding what they feed their family with.

Obviously I am thinking about the health of the family and I have to make sure about what they eat. It make sense to eat organic and I try to eat and feed them organic food as possible because I can't afford everything to be organic but having a box every week gives me a basis of organic food . (Helen)

I don't know what you do while them spraying, I usually suffer so much if I get something that has got any pesticides on it. So I have a personal interest, I can't take chances myself. (Lynette)

I'm concerned about that things that have been produced chemically using the synthetic pesticides and all this kind of thing that is why I go for organic. I have children in my family and I want to ensure that they have access to healthy food or at least food that do not put their health at risk. (Alessandra)

It's very contentious, you read quite a lot of articles because there have been claims that organic is healthier, it's not necessarily. I wouldn't say, I suppose is not healthier but at least it's not as toxic or less likely to be as toxic. So the business of not ingesting more unnecessary and potentially piousness chemicals and residues that would build up in one body is among the main reasons why I care about organic. (Jane)

- **Convenience**

The services provided by the box schemes have also influenced box scheme participant's positive perception of box scheme. These factors bring convenience to consumers. However, it is worth to note that, it might not be the reasons why consumers' choose to shift their consumption pattern by participating in a box scheme in the first place, but their feeling of pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction with the box scheme services provided could have helped them to sustain their behaviour by regularly purchasing from a box scheme. This will be presented in the sections below:

- **Introduction to new vegetables**

In particular, some respondents reflect on the opportunity they have with the box scheme to try new vegetables, local or traditional varieties. They mentioned that although they may not be familiar sometimes with what is inside the food box, they find it interesting, fun, and enjoyable to try new things and be more adventurous.

One other thing is the introduction to new vegetable varieties, having a veg box with many varieties of vegetables, I see it and I tell myself I never had this sort of things. So I found that very interesting. (Sue Turner)

There is always a pleasure opening the box and find what's in there! It introduces many new veggies for me. I enjoy being introduced with other products e.g. kael sprout I never knew how to use it before but when I found it in the box I asked the farmer and he introduced to me how can I use it and I loved it. (Sarah Del Tufo)

Actually convenience, the fun of having a box of vegetables not knowing what's going to be in them each week. I love such element of surprise, it like having a harvest festival, I always have that element of excitement, ohh what will be in the box today, its lovely and it takes some of the decisions making out because you tend to think oh right what am I going to cook this week , what am I going to do , and how am I going to use this vegetables.(Jane)

I enjoy having a box of vegetables including some vegetables that I never tried before so I am really enjoying trying new stuff.(Jo Linzey)

I also like the idea of getting introduced to some unusual vegetables. Often when it has been something unusual they enclose a little message or recipe or something explaining how to use it and anyway if there is anything you don't know how to cook u Google it these days, isn't it? Its better to be a bit adventures. (Jackie)

- **Home delivery/Drop off collection point service**

Home delivery or delivery to an agreed drop off collection point have also been brought up by consumers as a factor that has contributed to increasing their convenience, through saving their shopping time for instance. Having food products that meet the quality and ethical standards delivered directly to consumers were perceived to contributing in saving consumers shopping time so that consumer does not have to bother moving between shops in search of food that have the same quality and ethical bar as they require and prefer.

All the vegetables that are delivered by the box scheme come fresh out of the ground and delivered directly to our door step. It is very convenient to have a local scheme that delivers to the door. I don't need to go and buy if it comes to me. So it just hot luck! (Alice)

First of all I found it very convenient for a given vegetables of locality that I want. Well its more convenient than going to the supermarket and trying to find them. (Avril)

I used to walk down the road because I used to collect my box from somebody quite close by, but for the last 3-4 years I have been the drop off point so very convenient, lovely.(Jane)

5.1.3 Factors impacting ethical behaviour

As presented in the earlier parts of this thesis, many previous studies in the field of ethical consumption indicate that consumer's attitudes towards ethical consumption have become more positive, as they become more informed and educated, and aware of what is required of products as well as their rights and responsibilities. However, most of these studies emphasised that the shift towards more ethical consumption choices cannot always be taken for granted; as it might not be reflected in actual behaviour, a phenomenon known as attitude

– behaviour gap or "Halo effect". The discrepancy in consumer behaviour was suggested to be owed to a number of reasons for example price perception, quality perception, and product availability may intervene in the choice situation, consumers uncertainty about which firms conduct ethical practices and which does not, consumer may not know which products are ethically produced and which are not, consumer confidence and control of the impact of their decision, and consumer acknowledged desire for commitment and sacrifice(Hurtado 1998; Shaw et al., 2000; Bray et al., 2011).

The ways how these factors affect consumer decisions to participate in a local organic box scheme are examined in more depth in the following sections

- **Consumer knowledge and awareness**

Box scheme consumers interviewed appeared aware that purchasing local - organic food has implications for preserving and protecting the environment, biodiversity and landscape, local employment, fair trade and social justice. They also showed to have a rich knowledge about many issues that are greatly associated with the current global and domestic food systems. This could be related in particular to the current structure of the box schemes which foster shorter distance between producer and consumers and direct communication and interaction between consumers and producers which could be seen at the forefront of ethical consumption. Box scheme characteristics could have facilitated consumers ethical decision making as it allows them to bypass the uncertainty and lack of information and/or sometimes what could be called confusion of information overload usually associated with products offered at the conventional mainstream market. The direct communication between consumers and their food producers either through face to face contact or through box scheme newsletters and websites as many interviews regarded have boosted consumers education about their food and the production methods employed and allowed them to build solid knowledge about the current issues and short-termism of the strategies embodied in the current food industrial sector. A situation which no doubt not only helped them to make a more precise informative moral judgment based on strong knowledge and beliefs which result in a strong motivation and specifications but also helped them to establish a strong commitment towards those small local suppliers. In the on hand to help such good business going. On the other to help those disadvantaged producers in obtaining more secure income for their efforts.

- **Product availability**

Consumers revealed that local and organic box schemes provide them with products that meet the qualities they require and prefer besides meeting their ethical value standards. These are reflected in many of the above sentiments. The fact that box schemes provide their subscribers with organic and locally seasonal produce seems to be satisfying their customers' needs of an alternative products that contributes to respecting the environment by reducing the amount of pesticides and chemical fertilisers that were mainly perceived to hold many negative consequences on the environment, killing wildlife, affecting soil and water quality and biodiversity with chemical contamination. Furthermore, the local identity of the box schemes and the ability to establish a form of direct communication seems to be helping in overcoming issues of being distanced from where their food has been sourced and who produced it which have been recognised by many interviewees to increase the trust building with producers. Also, this was found to ensure them of who is getting their money.

- **Quality perception**

Product quality as presented above has majorly been positive. The consumers were mainly looking for a fresh product which is believed to contribute to better taste and high nutritional value. Also, the organic make-up of the box scheme products was something also sought by box scheme consumers to ensure product safety through being free of chemicals.

- **Price perception/ sensitivity**

Price has always been reported to play a major role in people's ethical purchasing decision. For example (Shaw and Clarke 1999) suggested that the price of ethical goods could outweigh consumer's ethical concerns. Also, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggested consumers tend to tradeoff between their ethical values and price.

Notwithstanding this, the majority of box scheme consumer's interviewed view price as less of an issue when they shop at a box scheme. They appeared less sensitive toward price. They repeatedly stated that the food box prices they receive are reasonable and good value for its price, especially if compared to supermarket prices. Some reasons appeared to be contributing to that; generally box scheme consumers were able to justify the costs of the food boxes with the quality associated with it, even if it cost a little higher than what is offered in the supermarket. For example:

I care about pay the right price for the right food and I think box scheme is the right thing to do as its local, seasonal, organic, and fresh. (Dave)

I think food from the box scheme is cheap compared to other sources with the quality we get I mean. (Tom Parke)

I don't mind the box prices although I would not say it's cheaper than the supermarket. No, I wouldn't say so, but I think it is better in terms of the quality it entails. And I don't mind if it's more expensive than the supermarket if it is better. (Lynette)

I would like to build this relationship with small scale farmers economically and socially if it's not too much financially disadvantageous. I am fortunate that am not on benefits but I still have a budget and am obviously aware of market values and am not willing to pay completely over the odds but in the same time I am willing to pay for things that I feel ethically comfortable with and that it is sustainable. So to sum it up, I accept that I will probably end up for some extent paying a bit more because I want to know the provenance or its organic or whatever but obviously I have limits and if I feel something is over the odds, i will look at the price and you know I am human so if I feel that something really over the top I will not buy it and I'll change my menu planning or I will just not buy the organic version but I prefer to buy organic. (Jane)

I will be not completely honest with you if I said the price is not something I am concerned about. Yes, veggie and fruit boxes are expensive sometimes, but I think the reason for that is because it has been produced small scale but I am happy to do it. (Sian Webb)

Sentiments above showed that consumers tend to justify the price with the quality offered and attached and the value they seek compared to what is offered at the supermarket counterpart. They generally perceive food box cost as reasonable and even "Cheap" for the value and quality they are receiving "Good value for money".

Another factor that could explain this seemingly lack of concern for the price is consumers awareness of the costs associated with food. Some respondents were aware of the costs externalities to the environment and on people who grow it and this is why the price is not their most important priority when they shop at a box scheme. This sentiment could be seen in the following responses.

I think that the box prices is extremely good value, I consider myself privileged to be able to afford to support an organic box scheme, and you know the stuff I get from the box scheme is amazing. I do not like the way our food is too cheap, I find that so weird and I tend to ask why it is too cheap. I find it weird to buy grapes or berries from the co-op and they tell me you need to pay 2 pound for panet of grapes and here I think where they have come from? Who looked after them? Who grew them? Who flew them over here? And then they went in Lorries to the central base then to the co-op town?? And how for goodness sake did they do that for only 2 pounds? It does not make any sense. How did they do that unless they were deceptive!? (Jackie)

I don't think actually that it is more expensive either. The organic box is not expensive; I think it's the same price as the supermarket. Sometimes you find cheaper in the supermarket, I tend to ask myself why it is too cheap and you think that it might be mistreating the animals mistreating farmers or farm labors, mistreating the land, mistreating people so I don't want buy cheap. Of course I do sometimes but I would rather not buy cheap and be mistreating anybody. So it is better supporting small scale and you know you are not doing that or at least there is more chance that you are not doing that. (Sue Turner).

I don't know how supermarket are in supporting local growers but I believe that supermarket have great purchasing powers to be able to apply their prices with and over growers. So, I am happily prepared to pay a premium knowing that it is going to a local growers rather than paying it to a supermarket, so that make sense. (Rachel)

- **Consumer confidence in their behaviour**

Our analysis suggests that box scheme consumers have the belief and confidence that shopping at a box scheme will produce more efficient and effective results in response to their ethical dilemmas which covers a broad spectrum of concerns ranging from the environment to economic, and society. And that could explain their commitment to purchasing from a local-organic box scheme.

The importance of belief and confidence on consumer ethical decision making have been explained in a plethora of studies about ethical consumption behaviour. Consumers' confidence and beliefs on the impact of their actions towards their ethical dilemmas have been broadly related to various concepts such as the concept of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) present in the theory of planned behaviour (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006), the concept of moral maturity as suggested by McDevit *et al.,* (2007), and lastly Forte's concept of perceived locus of control (Forte, 2004). All these concepts suggest that consumer's belief and confidence in their actions can make real difference in terms of solving ethical problems, and are more likely to engage in ethically conscious behaviour by translating their ethical concerns into ethical behaviours(McDevitt *et al.,* 2007; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013). While (Forte, 2004) suggested that individuals decision making is related to the perceived locus of control. An external locus of control tends to believe that ethical issues are beyond their control and largely under the control of luck, chance, or other individuals, whereas those with an internal locus of control are more likely to make ethical decisions as they credit themselves with substantial control of events. (Forte, 2004; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013).

Box scheme consumers consistently saw the relevance between their personal values and ethical purchase. They always maintained that they would like to make a difference through purchasing from a box scheme to their perceived issues. These sentiments could be seen in the following responses:

I tend to positively discriminate my food. It's about local economy after all and supporting who need support most. I try not to go often to supermarkets because I am comfortable about the way they do their business in terms of their employment practices and the farmers deals. Other for some environmental and political reasons because it became clear to me more than ever that the only way for Israel for instance to produce avocados is through destroying environment, so thank you I find with my locally seasonal produce, I don't want to be involved in destroying our

planet. I have the sense of being part of the movement; I'll be devastated if the box scheme decided to close (Sarah Del Tufo)

I think if they sell directly to customers, they don't have to go through the big supermarkets and struggle with all the unfair deals being offered to them by the supermarkets and other big retail chains. I think they can gain more money through the direct selling. (Allessandra)

Sourcing food locally is a win-win I think. Farmers generate more income by eliminating high and unfair market competition. You get high quality produce especially freshness, and contribute maintaining the environmental stability needed by avoid using pesticides and synthetic chemical which put the environment, natural resources we have at risk Like water, natural habitats, and bio-diversity.(Julia Vickers)

We love local. Local food is important because it involves less transport and transport is based on oil and also it employs local people and support local farmers. Everything that is being sold in the supermarket is coming in by air, and it pretty benefits the use of oil. (Dave)

It is quite nice having a bit of control over my food by getting veggie box at least one time I am in control of what I eat. (Helen)

The obligation of "Doing their bit" or "Face the responsibility" was also highlighted through purchasing and participating in a box scheme which is perceived to be morally different than shopping at the mainstream counterpart that is perceived to host many of ethical anxieties' towards many issues in relation to environment, economic and social aspects such as, increasing food miles, lack of transparency and fairness to producers, and distancing consumers from their food.

The thing why I am doing this, it is anything that encourages organic I think must be in the right direction. It's not because we think it taste better or it is more economical or any other reason. I think we must encourage organic agriculture because it is the future. All the bad practices we encouraged post the war time by thinking that the only way to fight food shortage is through spreading chemicals to our land into our earth was wrong and unfortunately we have just realised that too late. I always think about doing something more sensible like growing food and growing it properly, but if you want to go for farming, you had either to own a farm or be able to buy one which was not practical. So I had to face the responsibility. (Lisley)

It is a tiny bit in an ocean sadly because not enough people are aware. The whole business and trading ethic needs to change. We are so much and buying in every industry not just agriculture that the only way for them to succeed is to get bigger and bigger and that's not going to work anymore in a finite world. We have got to look for a quality that not only affects our taste but planet other people and society and getting bigger and stronger and more powerful and richer is not the way anymore there needs to be different business ethic. If one of the major political parties was promoting this, I would vote for them. (Jackie)

I consider purchasing from a box scheme as my little effort to put into practice and to have that element of knowledge and control, and to know where the stuff is coming from and feel happier about its production. I feel more comfortable buying vegetables that have grown more locally, in a more environmentally friendly way. I think box scheme is a good example of retaking control of all elements of life because I don't like the fact that elements of my life are controlled by global companies. It's about empowering the small helpless individual. (Jane)

The question is how are we going to achieve any changes , it actually has to start at a grassroots level. If two people in every street in this country said we are not going to buy eventually may be there would be some impact. But in so many ways the world is so numb. So yes one has to take ones individual stance I think. (Jo Linzey)

we are reliant on importing and that is why we are not manufacturing anymore and that why I care about getting things back into the local scale as far as one can, may be that all one can do, that's very sad. Because if we let things go without fighting , it can drive people out of agriculture. (Judith Davies)

The above sentiments can be linked explicitly to the concept of locus of control provided by (Forte, 2004). Consumers expressed above that participating in a local box scheme allow them to have more control of elements of food production. They considered it as their little effort to reshape the structure of food systems that cover a broader range of different business ethics through promoting different production systems that respect all elements of production including small producers, environment, and society. Consumers felt their actions of participating in a local organic box scheme by could make a difference (Internal locus of control).

To summarise, Box scheme consumers appeared to be more informed, educated, and aware of what is required of the products and about the issues that could be seen as ethically not right in the mainstream and industrial food sector counterpart. However, this awareness does not mean that they have stopped shopping at supermarkets, because they actually do, but they are more careful with their purchases as they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as consumers. They revealed that they mainly prefer to shop at co-ops and other organic shops beside the weekly farmer's markets.

5.2 Quantitative study findings

5.2.1 Descriptive statistics

5.2.1.1 Box scheme consumer demographics and characteristics

The different populations sampled for the study survey represent consumers who are already participating in a small and medium sized local- organic box schemes in England-UK (n= 416). By analysing the key demographic variables of 416 consumers participating in 11 different local -organic box schemes in England, the demographic characteristics of box scheme consumer survey respondents are found to be relatively homogeneous (Table 11). **Gender.** There was an overrepresentation of female response comprising 86 percent of the survey responses. This result matches previous research on alternative food networks consumers' demographics (Lang, 2010) where box scheme participants were mostly women.

This could be easily attributed to “women’s” responsibility of shopping for food and kitchen for family feeding. **Age.** Whilst the sample of box scheme consumers surveyed included adequate representation of each adult age group it can be seen that older groups were overrepresented and younger groups underrepresented. The total age range extends from 21 to 60 or older years of age with older groups mostly overrepresented starting from the range of 30 to 39 which is represented by 29 percent to the range of consumers aged between 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 come after with 23 percent and 24 percent respectively. This makes more sense considering that consumers in their young age might be more dependent on their families for food and for major food shopping. While middle and old age consumers are more independent and free to make decisions which reflect the greater opportunity for planning and taking actions for their food shopping. **Marital status.** 41% of the box scheme consumer sample was living with their partners without children present, while 36% were living with their partners with children, and only 13 % of the consumer's sample was single. The numbers of persons per household were majorly 2 to 3 persons accounting to 64% of those who participated in the survey, while only 20% of the box schemes consumer sample had 4 to 5 persons in their household with 88% of this sample consumers had no children aged less than 5 years old. **Education**. Consumers with high educational background were found to be more involved in the participation in the box schemes. The average educational attainment level is relatively high with the majority of consumers holding a university first degree 42 percent (undergraduate) and post graduate degrees 41 percent (Master degree or above), while only 13 percent had and A level education. **Occupation.** Sample consumers surveyed who had a job either through being employed or self-employed were significantly high by holding a share of 57 percent and 23 percent respectively. Although the occupation type they happen to be involved in were divided between different occupancy for-profit, non-profit, government, healthcare, and agriculture. Lastly, **Income** profile of the consumers, box scheme consumer respondents represent a range of income variability amongst mostly moderate incomes with 47 percent in the moderate monthly household income range between £2000 and £4,999, while 20 percent had a relatively low monthly income range between £1.500 and £1.999, only 15 percent had income less than £1.499 per month, and the rest of consumer respondents have a very high monthly household income range between £5000 - £9,999 and greater than £10,000 with a share of 9 percent for both. This result matches that of Britain’s population income categories as stated by the office of national statistics, low <

£2600/month/; medium £2600–4300/month/; high > £4300/month (Office for National Statistics - www.statistics.gov.uk/).

Table 11. Box scheme consumers demographic characteristics

Profile and structural characteristics variables	No.	Percentage of sample
Sex		
Male	60	14%
Female	356	86%
Age		
17 or younger	--	--
18-20	--	--
21-29	42	10%
30-39	119	29%
40-49	94	23%
50-59	100	24%
60 or older	61	14%
Marital status		
Single with children	26	6%
Single without children	54	13%
Living with partner with children	149	36%
Living with partner without children	172	41%
Living in shared accommodation with children	2	0.5%
Living in shared accommodation without children	13	3%
Household size		
1 person	54	13%
2-3 persons	266	64%

4-5 persons	84	20%
More than 5 Persons	12	3%
Presence of children less than 5 years		
Yes	50	12%
No	366	88%
Highest academic qualification		
No academic qualifications	2	0.7%
GCSE (Grades D-G) or equivalent	1	0.3%
GCSE (Grade C or above) or equivalent	13	3%
A level or equivalent	54	13%
First degree (undergraduate)	176	42%
Master's degree or above	170	41%
Occupation description		
Employed	238	57%
Self-employed	97	23%
Full-time carer	7	2%
Student	15	4%
Retired	39	9%
Out of work	5	1.3%
Unable to work	12	3%
Other	3	0.7%
Employer type		
For profit	111	27%
Non-profit	57	14%
Government	28	7%

Health care	45	11%
Agriculture	23	5%
Education	73	17%
Currently not employed	59	14%
Other	20	5%
Monthly household income		
Less than £1.499 GBP	64	15%
£1.500 - £1.999	83	20%
£2000 - £4,999	194	47%
£5000 - £9,999	37	9%
Greater than £10,000	38	9%

5.2.1.2 Motivation to participate in a local-organic box schemes

Table 12:Mean importance of attributes of motivation to participate in a local organic box scheme

Dimensions		Code	Mean Score	ST.DEV
Political	**Q1.4**	**Support organic local farmers with better/fair income**	**6.06**	1.05
	Q1.8	**Support small-scale disadvantaged organic farmers**	**6.01**	1.03
	Q1.17	**Build relation of trust with producers**	**5.48**	1.33
	Q1.27	Ability to share quality feedback with suppliers	4.788	1.35
	Q1.5	To know who grow your food through participating in a box scheme	5.23	1.38
	Q1.24	**To know where your food comes from**	**5.61**	1.28
Environmental	**Q1.11**	**Minimise food miles**	**5.95**	1.16
	Q1.7	**Eating in season**	**5.93**	1.08
	Q1.20	**Eco friendly production methods**	**6.25**	0.93
	Q1.22	**Preservation of local resources (e.g., Soil,water)**	**6.14**	1.01
	Q1.25	**Reduce packaging**	**5.98**	1.11
Health and safety	**Q1.14**	**Healthy eating**	**6.20**	0.95
Product quality	**Q1.9**	**Freshness**	**6.42**	0.66
	Q1.18	**Product taste**	**6.16**	0.853
Convenience	**Q1.1**	Ability to pick what you want in the box	3.85	1.81
	Q1.2	Visual appearance of the box items	3.48	1.57
	Q1.3	Reasonable box pricing	5.31	1.06
	1.12	Product cleanness	3.31	1.67

	Q1.19	Recipe suggestions	3.68	1.56
	Q1.6	Box scheme reputation	4.71	1.45
	Q1.13	Easy Box/bags accessibility in terms of geographic closeness	5.31	1.20
	Q1.10	Local produce	6.31	0.822
	Q1.26	Organic produce	6.34	1.05

Rated on a scale between 1 (Not at all important) and 7 (Extremely important)

n=416

This section will outline the reported importance of different attributes of consumers motivations to participate in a local organic box schemes, assessing the relative position of political/ethical and environmental aspects and how these considerations interact with other attributes of choice. Any notable changes in the relative importance of attributes will be explored.

When asked to rate how important a range of attributes are in consumer motivation to participate and shop from local and organic box schemes, respondents identified a range of political/ethical and environmental motivations beside some other private motivations such as health and safety attributes and product quality to be of greatest importance. Among the private motivations most important for box scheme respondents, healthy eating, freshness and product taste were identified to be of greatest importance. While support local farmers with better income, support small-scale disadvantaged farmers and eco-friendly production methods and preservation of local natural resources (e.g. soil and water) were the most important political and environmental attributes box scheme consumer are motivated by when they participate and shop from a box scheme. Nonetheless, other attributes such as building a trustworthy relations with food producers, reduce packaging, minimize food miles, eating in season and knowing where food come from were also among leading motivations box scheme consumers carry on when they participate and shop from a local and organic box scheme (See bolded attributes in table 12 for mean value of most important motivations). Other factors that could be related to convenience such as reasonable food box pricing, ability to alter box items, visual appearance of the box items, and product cleanness were less important.

The two factors organic and local produce were among the highest importance for consumers, indicating well understanding among box scheme consumers of what these factors comprise in relation to their participation and shopping from a box scheme.

Table 13.Consumer perception of local box schemes

Code	Description	Mean	ST.dev
LBP-1	Box scheme products are of better quality.	4.05	0.79
LBP-2	Organic veggie boxes are too expensive.	2.44	0.87
LBP-3	Purchasing from a box scheme does not make any difference for local small scale organic farmers.	1.65	0.68
LBP-4	Purchasing from a local box scheme helps minimise the miles the food travels.	4.43	0.68
LBP-5	Unlike supermarkets, participating in a box scheme allows us to develop connections with who produces our food.	4.22	0.784
LBP-6	Box scheme is a fair and transparent way of buying food.	4.33	0.68
LBP-7	Box scheme products are good value for money.	4.09	0.75
LBP-8	Unlike supermarkets, I am able to have a direct contact with farmers/suppliers.	4	0.89
LBP-9	Box scheme is the easiest way to get credible organic produce	4.038	0.981
LBP-10	Box scheme allows us to build connections with where the food come from.	4.24	0.75
LBP-11	Box scheme is the easiest way to get local produce.	4.14	0.89
LBP-12	I know where my money goes when I buy from a box scheme	4.20	0.85
LBP-13	Eating locally from a box scheme is better than eating food transported over a long distance.	4.64	0.56
LBP-14	Eating seasonally is important for the environment.	4.60	0.62
LBP-15	I trust box scheme on its organic claims	4.46	0.68

5.2.1.3 Local Box schemes perception items

Table (13) above includes the box scheme consumers average rating of fifteen variables regarding their perception of local – organic box schemes. It includes variables such as box scheme local produce, product quality, product credibility, box scheme credibility, price perception, and different other variables regarding box scheme ability to have a positive implication on multiple range of ethical aspects (e.g. environment, economic, and social) which has been identified earlier in the preliminary qualitative phase. Each of these variables is rated on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = unsure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

Overall respondents' perception towards local box scheme items were positive, almost all box scheme consumers who completed the survey perceived that participating in a local box scheme would make a difference for local farmers by representing a share of 92 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed with a negative statement presented to them in the questionnaire. This reflects box scheme consumer's confidence in their ability to help and support farmer's livelihood and strengthen their economic viability through participation and frequently buying from local producers. Some 77 % of box scheme consumers either agreed or strongly agreed that products delivered by box scheme to be better in quality. However, further 21 % hold a neutral view on this aspect. This could be explained by the fact that the box schemes participating in the study deliver raw organic and local vegetables and possibly fruits to consumers', in which consumers might not see any difference in the visual or the organoleptic characteristic of the product other than that of freshness quality attribute. While 10 % of box scheme consumers perceived box scheme products to be expensive, nearly 60 % disagreed with this statement, with the remainder of the response (31%) holding a neutral view. Possibly unsurprisingly, the vast majority of respondents believed that participation and purchasing from locally from a box scheme would contribute in reducing the miles food travel (94 % either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement).

In relation to the vegetable box prices, 80 % of box scheme consumers viewed products delivered by their box scheme to be good value for money, while 18 % hold a neutral view on this aspect. This could be related to the concept of good value for money ethos proposed by (Lang 2010), wherein consumers evaluate the prices they are paying not only against the different ethical values consumers hold on and the ethical and quality benefits the product carries, but also it is evaluated in comparison to the values and prices of similar products offered by different other sale channels.

Similarly, almost all respondents by 96 % either strongly agreed or agreed to believe that eating locally grown food is better than eating food transported for a long distance. Interestingly, almost the same share of respondents also think that relying on seasonal diets is important for the environment, by strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This in specific reflects a huge environmental awareness and concerns on part of the box scheme consumers regarding the environmental implication of the increasing food miles due to the increasing dominance of global food trade which primarily relies on transportation of off-season food worldwide for consumer convenience and to increase their profits by relying on cheap imported produce.

By either agreeing or strongly agreeing, 84 % of the box scheme respondents perceived box scheme to be helping in allowing them to build a closer link to those involved in the production, unlike the supermarkets which leave them abandoned away from knowing who contributed in producing the food they are eating. Similarly, 75 % of the box schemes consumers' respondents have declared their ability to have a direct contact with producers of their food, while about 19% hold their neutral view on this aspect. The slightly higher rate of box scheme consumer responses perceived box schemes to help in building a connection with where their food has been sourced with 88% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this sentiment. It is worthy to mention that there are a myriad ways of establishing a connection with where food has been grown and who produced it or establishing a direct contact between box scheme suppliers and their customers which are not necessarily always face to face; box schemes and their consumers' might be able to establish a form of direct contact with their box scheme suppliers though receiving a regular monthly newsletter provided by their suppliers which enlightens them with any recent updates been carried out in the farm, educating them about the production systems and the values and goals who is behind their products and benefits that goes back to them. In support to that, about 84 % of responses were aware of where their money goes through participating and purchasing from a box scheme, and 12 % remained neutral). Further communication ways could be through the box scheme websites and social media pages (e.g. Facebook) which not only provide customers with up to date information but also it is provided with online box order placing a system which contributes high to boost their level of convenience with box scheme purchasing and participation. This latter point could have played a major role in supporting consumers decisions and commitment towards box schemes, wherein the box schemes does not only stop at providing their customers with high value-added local and organic produce in terms of quality, protecting and/or preserving the environment, and establish a sort of direct connection, but it also tries to add value to its marketing strategies to help achieve higher customer convenience to help them face the rigors mainstream market high standard technological strategies. Box schemes reflect on the difficulty on local products availability especially at the mainstream supermarket stores with about 80 % agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that the box schemes provide them with the easiest way in accessing locally produced vegetables. However, further 14% of respondents declared a neutral perception on that, suggesting that locally produced products could be easily found in different other sale channels. This makes sense given the availability and the existence of a number of food channels specialised in local and organic produced food in England such as farmers' markets, farm shops, and specialised shops. Although for the rest of respondent's, box scheme might be the easiest way of having access to local food considering the fact that the boxes are either delivered to the doorstep of their homes or to an agreed drop off collection point which helps saving their time and effort to search for the same products carrying the same local values. 75% of box scheme respondents with strongly agreeing or agreeing also consider a box scheme to ease their access to a credible organic produce. A further 16 % were neutral to this statement, while 8 % refused this statement by disagreeing. Those respondents who sustained their neutral perception or refused the statement might be judging the products authenticity by relying on the presence of the organic label provided by either the private or public certification bodies that must be present on any product holding organic claims which indicate that the products have been produced according to the organic regulation and standards.

Withstanding this 93% of box scheme consumers' responses indicated that they trust box scheme with its organic claims, and 90% perceived the box schemes to be a fair and transparent way of buying their food.

- **Summary**

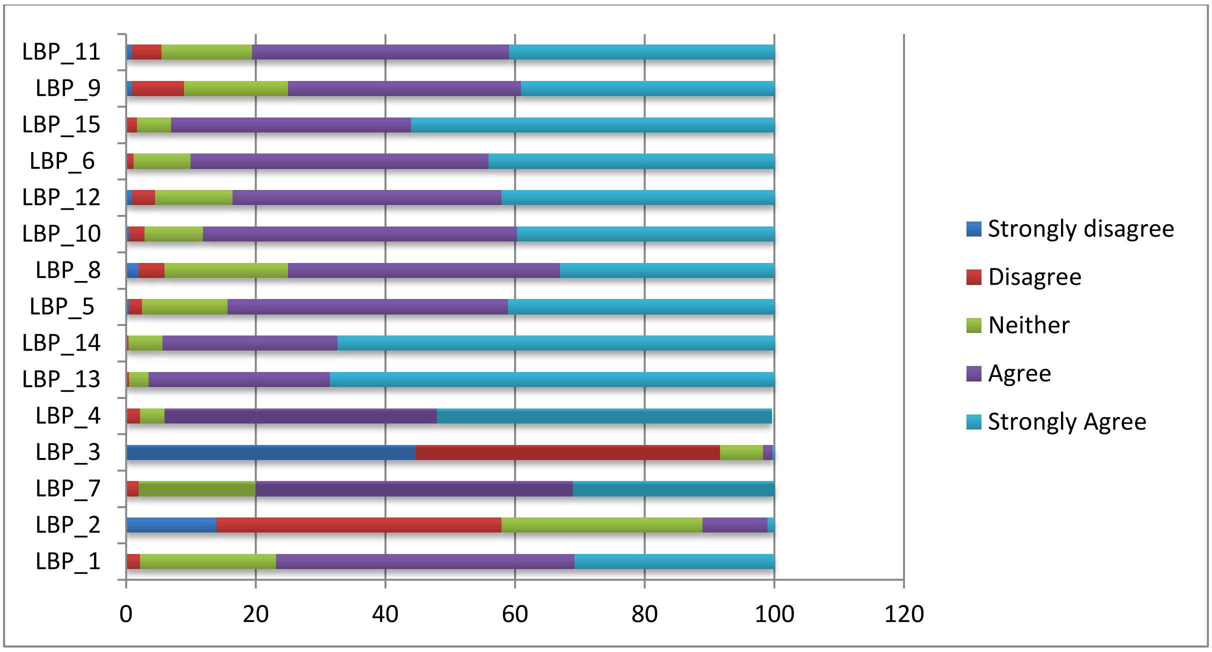


Figure 16: Summary histogram perception of the local organic box schemes

In summary, the results from the box scheme respondents perception of the local and organic box schemes were generally positive. Overall, the respondents perceive the local- organic box schemes to have a positive implication on a wide range of ethical aspects including various environmental, social, economic features and other quality aspects. First, in regard to ethical features of box schemes, **Ecological benefits**, consumers perceived the local nature of the box scheme they participate at to help in contributing to reducing the negative environmental implications associated with the increasing miles the food travel by global food trade which relies on cheap imported goods and heavy importation of off seasonal produce for consumers convenience and to increase their acquired profits. The increasing food miles by global food trade represented by the dominating mainstream retail sector were generally reported in most of the literature on AFN's to contribute in increasing the environmental degradation due to its reliance fossil fuel which increases the environmental footprint by increasing the CO2 emissions. In line with that, they further perceived the reliance on on-season food diets to help to reduce the problem by decreasing the need and consumption of off-season food and consequently food trade of these commodities. **Economic benefits,** respondents reported that local box scheme would also contribute to making difference for local farmers economically. Allowing the farmers to have access to the full economic returns of their production with no other middlemen or major food corporation taking the major benefits which cut the farmers loose and might lead them to lose their small business they rely on for a living. Increasing small-scale local farmers economic viability were among the many benefits that hypothetically were claimed to be strengthened by farmers participation in local food networks. **Social benefits**, in contrast to supermarkets which is majorly identified in the literature as the placeless-faceless provision systems that put consumers away from the system of production, place of production, and who produces their food, respondents perception of box scheme ability to put them in a closer connection with who produced their food and where their food has been sourced were majorly positive as well. The direct contact between consumers and producers were believed to help consumers to develop a trustworthy relationship with producers. However, as previously discussed the direct relationship under the box schemes does not always imply a face to face interaction, in fact other forms of direct communication between consumers and producers such as receiving a regular monthly or weekly newsletters, box scheme websites and social media pages could be also deemed to help establish a direct contact between producers and consumers', which would educate consumers about the system of production employed by their farmers and tell them about box scheme producers and/or operators ethical stance that eventually would help establish a bond of trust between both of them. In a direct support to that, respondents were found to trust box scheme producers on their ethical stances such as organic claims and to highly perceive box schemes as a fair and transparent way of buying their food. This could be interpreted as a direct result of allowing the consumers to know who is behind their production, where their food has been sourced, and the knowledge gained from being educated about the system of production and producers stances, which allows them to judge/assess the producer's creditability and product authenticity. **Products availability**, respondents perceived box schemes to ease their access to locally produced food and credible organic produce. **Price**, the majority of respondents perceived the box schemes Box prices not to be expensive, and almost saw it to be a good value for money. This positive perception of prices in specific are found to be consistent with the box scheme claimed efforts and goal to set food box (vegetable-fruit) at affordable price ranges. Furthermore, as already interpreted it could be related to boxing scheme consumer high awareness of the price externalities associated with the cheapness of food products offered at the mainstream supermarket chains. Finally, **Quality perception**, generally the majority of consumers perceived products provided by box scheme to be high in quality.

5.2.1.4 Box scheme consumer perception of organic food and farming

Table 14. Organic food perception

Code	Description	Mean	ST.dev
OP-1	Organic foods are healthier to eat.	4.35	0.79
OP-2	Organic foods are too expensive	2.68	0.95
OP-3	Organic farming is better for the environment	4.68	0.54
OP-4	Organic food is better quality	4.16	0.80
OP-5	Organic food is generally more tasty	4.14	0.77
OP-6	Organic food is more nutritious	4.18	0.86

Generally, box scheme respondent's perception of organic food and production were little less positive than towards the local makeup of the box schemes production and sale channels. In contrast to the box schemes food prices, a greater proportion of box scheme respondents felt that organic foods are expensive with 22 % of responses agreeing or strongly agreeing with the passive statement presented, while about 35 % of box scheme consumers remained neutral to the statement, and 43% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing, indicating that it is not expensive. Similar to the positive perception of the local nature of the box scheme implication on reducing the environmental degradation caused by the increasing food miles and the reliance on fossil fuels, it is hardly surprising that almost all box scheme consumers' respondents perceived organic farming to be better for the environment. Further, the majority believed that organic food is healthier to eat (85 % strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, with only 13 % remained neutral). In addition to that, about the same share of respondents perceived organic food to be of better quality, more nutritious, and tastier (with slightly above or below 85% of strong agreement and agreement with the statement presented(Table 12), and almost the same share of all the rest of respondents who remained neutral in their view with more or less the (average) of 22 %).

- **Summary**

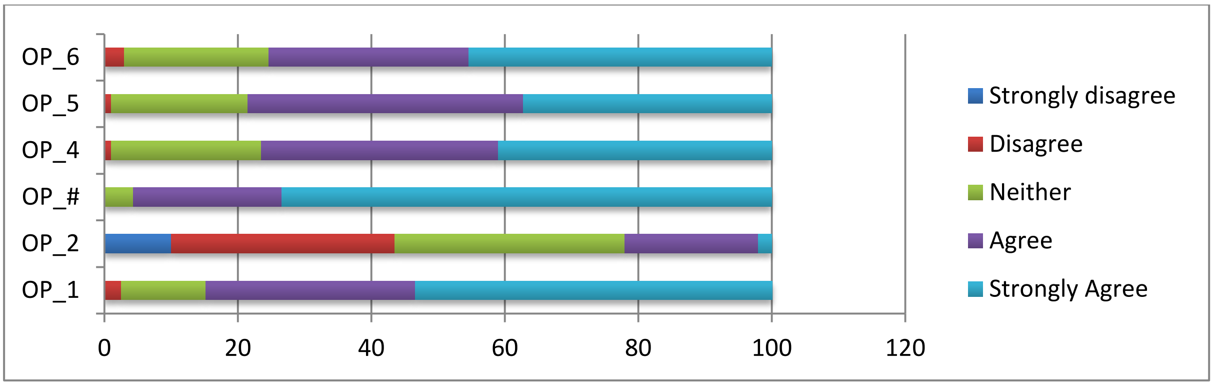


Figure 17: Summary histogram perception of organic food and farming

To summarise the box scheme consumers perception of organic food and farming, the results show the following: **Prices**, consumers perception of organic food prices were generally less positive than their perception of local and organic box scheme prices. A great proportion of respondents viewed organic food prices as expensive. **Environment,** they perceived organic food and farming to be good for environment. **Health and nutritious**, organic was also perceived to be more healthy and nutritious. Possibly consumer increased awareness about the ban of usage of the synthetic pesticides and limitations in using chemical fertilisers in the organic standards supported their perception of the presumably health beneficial attributes linked to eating organic food. Further, the fact that organic food keeps them safer from ingesting piousness chemical residues in sprayed food might also be another explain their positive health perception and nutritiousness of organic food. Finally, **quality and taste**, generally the majority of consumers perceived organic food to be high in quality and tastier.

5.2.1.5 Boycott Specific food items or specific shops and brands for ethical reasoning

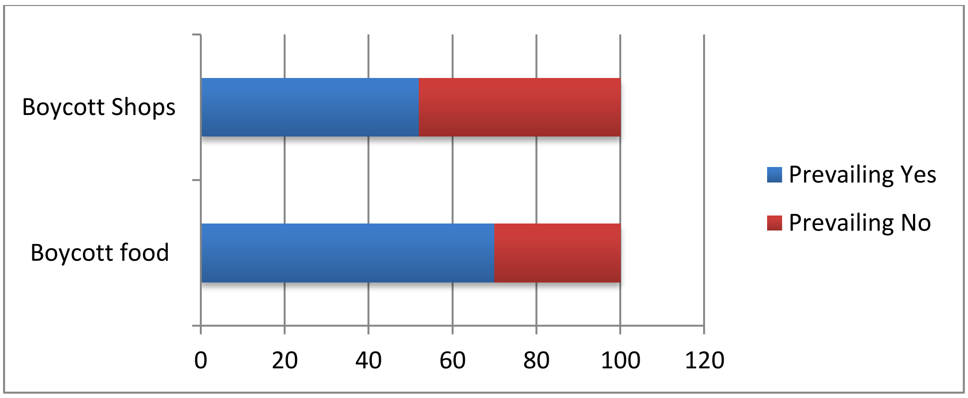


Figure 18: Boycott food items and food shop

- **Possibility to boycott specific food items**

The majority of box scheme respondents identified that there are some food items they would boycott or avoid buying for some ethical reasons (70 %), while about (52%) said that they would boycott or avoid buying from specific shops or supermarkets for their perceived ethical issues. At a particular point, when questioned what factors they have in their mind that they are sensitive about and have had /or would have them boycotting or avoid buying specific items of food, 235 respondents left their answer. 56.59 % of those who responded identified that they have had boycotted items of food that may have negative environmental impacts. Among the environmental factors highlighted, food miles and out of season was the most frequently mentioned with (57.14 % and 43%) respectively. This suggests that the environmental factors are pre-eminent in box scheme consumers' minds when making purchase decisions, especially in other food outlets other than the box schemes. 41.7 % of respondents further identified some factors concerning food safety that they boycott or avoid buying. Within this rate, the usage of pesticides and chemicals were significantly cited (49%) followed by processed food by large industrial food systems (27.5%) and GM food (23.4%). Further boycotting products produced by multi-national food corporations were the third most highlighted reasons for boycotting food items due to the perceived irresponsible strategies towards many ethical factors 8.5 %, the multinational food company Nestle was the most cited brand for a boycott. Respondents perceived the multinational food corporations like Nestle to be focused only on profit making and overlook any consequences that may result from it concerning consumers safety, environmental damage, producers who supply them, etc. (See Table 15).

Table 15. Box scheme consumers' reasons to boycott specific food items and boycott specific shops & food brands

Box scheme consumers' reasons to boycott specific food items						
Total Responses: 235						
Reason	**No.**	**%**	**Attribute**	No.	**%**	**Sample responses**
Enviromental	133	56.59	**Food miles**	76	57.14	I try not to purchase items that have not been shipped or flown from the other side of the world, when there are other more local alternatives (e.g. buying green beans from Africa when they can be grown in the UK) I avoid buying air-freighted vegetables, and fruit and vegetables that are out of season - for environmental reasons principally Recently looked into food miles and I am now looking at where my food comes from and alternative ingredients that are more local. Don't want to buy organic food with big food miles would prefer to buy local non org if need be.
			Out of season	57	42.85	Fruit and vegetables that are hugely out of season or flown halfway across the world. Food which could be bought here in season but attracts food miles if bought out of season. Anything that is not in season - there is no reason to buy e.g. strawberries in winter, when I know that in order to grow them out of season, a lot of extra water and energy had to be used. I have boycotted out of season fruit and vegetables that are flown in to the U.K. From other countries. Climate change - I don't buy out of season produce from far away countries.
Examples of			**Palm oil**	13		We don't buy any products containing palm oil unless we are sure they come from a sustainable certified

boycotted food items For environmental reasons						source. Palm oil unless declared as "environmentally produced" or similar, because of deforestation I won't buy any product containing palm oil (because of its environmental implication),
			Non-organic	33		I try when I have the choice to buy organic products (to avoid soil pollution, pesticide use and pesticide residues in the food as well as greater taste of the product). I try to avoid nonorganic fruit and vegetables that have been produced using pesticides, though there is a trade-off with price and sometimes I am swayed by price.
Safety	98	41.7	**GM-Food**	23	23.4	I do not want to buy GM foods, I am also careful about where I buy meat come from because the issue with the GM feed stuff for animals Gm products- for safety of myself, growers and environment I don't want any of my purchases to support the use of GM in any way. I am concerned about seed sovereignty for small and large scale farmers and well as my health and lack of respect for nature
			Processed food	27	27.5	Any processed food/readymade meals. Foods containing too much salt/sugar and additives that may have considerable impact on my health. I do not buy processed foods eg. burgers, pies, ready meals. I make my own pies, burgers, chutneys and bake cakes etc. My fruit and veg is from the box scheme or my own garden. Anything highly processed with a list of unidentifiable ingredients. – I care about what I put in my body and don't want to support companies that produce terrible food that contain ingredients that are harmful to health
			Synthetic Pesticides and	48	49	Use of pesticides and synthetic chemicals in agriculture. Bad for health, bad for environment, bad for eco systems increases reliance on fossil fuels, allows multinational agro chemical companies to control each stage of the food chain, chemical and pesticides leach into water supply and penetrate further into

			chemicals			food chain etc... Fruit and veg that knowingly have been grown with pesticides and chemicals used Pesticides use, not being organic, what they put in the soil, and what they feed their livestock, and if I or my family got sick from their product. Use of pesticides because I don't want pesticide s in my or my kids bodies. I believe they are harmful
Animal welfare	38	16			16	Non organic non free range meat - due to Inhumane treatment of animals and over use of antibiotics and hormone I never buy meat and dairy, eggs that I believe isn't from free-range, well treated animals. I don't hesitate to boycott food in my support of this.
Large scale agribusiness products	20	8.5				Boycott food produced by huge organisations whose prime motivator is profit. When making money for shareholders becomes a priority all other considerations become secondary Any trademarked vegetables such as 'terderstem' broccoli. -- I don't want to support plants and seeds being trademarked - this is big business taking control away from farmers. I do not trust anything that has a "global" brand. The illusion of choice is very cleverly marketed by the relative few who control the show.
Over packaging	25	11			11	Too much packaging would put me off Don't like buying fruit and veg with excessive packaging I generally avoid buying fruit and veg with plastic packaging.
Examples of	24	10	**Nestle**	13	54	I boycott Nestle because they persuade mothers in third world countries to use formula milk rather than breastfeed. This has contributed to the deaths of babies from gastroenteritis. I never buy from companies like Nestle

boycotted food brands						Try to avoid products from some of the big multinationals (unliever, fritolay etc)
			Fast food chains Macdonalds, Starbucks-KFC	11	46	
Box scheme consumers' reasons to boycott specific shops & food brands						
Total Responses: 190						
Political	100		**Unfair deals to local farmers**	100	53	Any of the big supermarkets if they treat their suppliers unfairly. The economic growth (capitalist) model does not respect smaller scale farmers or the food they produce. If there is a multinational company which produces an alternative that is cheaper than a local organic product I would make a big effort to keep buying the local product to help the farmer/producer stay in business I do everything I can to avoid fresh food shopping from supermarkets - they do not seem to respect the producers, especially regarding costs/promotions paid by farmers, etc etc. I hate the fact that supermarkets seem far more concerned about their own profits than they are about what happens to growers, animals, soil, water etc when producers are put under intolerable pressures Unless there is not alternative, I won't shop in the major supermarkets due to their treatment of small scale producers and farm. I don't like hearing when supermarkets reject whole batches of grown produce because of a perceived slight flaw (maybe too small), or the low prices offered to milk farmers for their product. I shop locally for my meat, bread etc in independent shops, have milk delivered direct from a dairy and use a local box scheme for vegetables. I try not to buy fresh produce from the major supermarkets because they do not treat small producers

						well Most big supermarkets for their appaulling payment to producers
Social	20		**Distrust supermarket claims**	20	11	We only support products that we are sure have been ethically produced which is a hard task as not many companies or suppliers are 100% clean with their information. We mainly support local and organic products and obviously those that have as less impact in their production environmentally-wise. I avoid buying fruit and veg from supermarkets but if I do it will be from supermarkets with a providing a better deal for producers although info on such above issues can be difficult to obtain. Generally I prefer not to buy from shops that have shallow and transparent marketing campaigns where it is obvious that the sum of their interests amount solely to making profit.
Most boycotted supermarket	67	36	**Tesco**	51	76	Tesco. Profit driven, poor deal for farmers. Tesco because of their aggressive incursions to small towns thereby forcing out smaller producers and I try and minimise shopping at large supermarkets and try and support local shops. Tesco – push down prices for prices (making it unprofitable for producers) Tesco due to its long standing operating methods over the years of making producers 'jump to their tune' with many of them now having gone out of business due to the methods Tesco has employed. Investigations recently have now shown that they have been less than ethical I avoid places like Tesco because of their dominance in the market and their lack of respect for farmers. I believe Waitrose has a fairer policy and am happy to pay more.
			ASDA	11	17	
			Lidl	5	8	

Avoid/reduce but not necessarily boycott	85			85	45	In theory I would but in practice I may not do this due to practical reasons - I try to minimise buying fresh produce from supermarkets. Boycott is a strong word, but I like to shop at Waitrose because it is co-operatively owned and shares some of my food prod values to some extent. So I'd never go to Tesco's if I could go to Waitrose instead. Prefer not to buy food and veg from large supermarkets but I have benefit of alternatives We are trying to reduce our dependence on supermarkets, and buy the bulk of our food from local producers, mainly the box scheme. But to be honest I don't buy much food from larger shops/supermarkets as I prefer to shop locally from a box scheme. I also buy Fair Trade fruit from the Co-op.

- **Possibility to boycott specific food shops or brands**

When asked about a particular food outlets or brands that they would boycott or avoid buying from, 190 consumers followed by leaving their comments. Unfair deals with local farmers were highlighted as the most important reason why respondents would avoid specific food stores (mainly supermarkets) with a share of 53% of those who left a comment. Significantly, (76%) of consumers repeatedly identified "Tesco" as a supermarket that they would avoid, possible due to the negative publicity that the supermarket has received in recent years concerning their unfair arrangements with farmers, especially organic dairy farmers in the UK. Additionally, (45%) of respondents revealed that they do not shop for fresh fruit and vegetables from supermarkets with a diverse range of different ethical reasons that have made/ or would make them boycott specific food outlets (supermarkets) (see table---). However, they considered the word boycott as very strong, with these respondents stressing that they do not necessarily boycott but try as possible to avoid specific food outlets and be more careful during shopping at supermarkets by being selective. These respondents repeatedly criticised the supermarket profit-making strategies, the unclear provenance of food, and low retail prices as reasons to boycott major supermarket chains except those they perceive to have high sustainability and ethical records. The majority revealed their preference to patronise small scale local shops such as box schemes, farmers markets, co-ops as the main reason to reduce dependence on and/or boycott major supermarket chains (see Table 15).

5.2.1.6 Frequency of purchase from box scheme

78 % (326 consumers) of box scheme consumer sample purchase from a local – organic box scheme every week and 15% (63 consumers) purchase once on fortnight, and only 5 % (20 consumers) purchase once in a month.

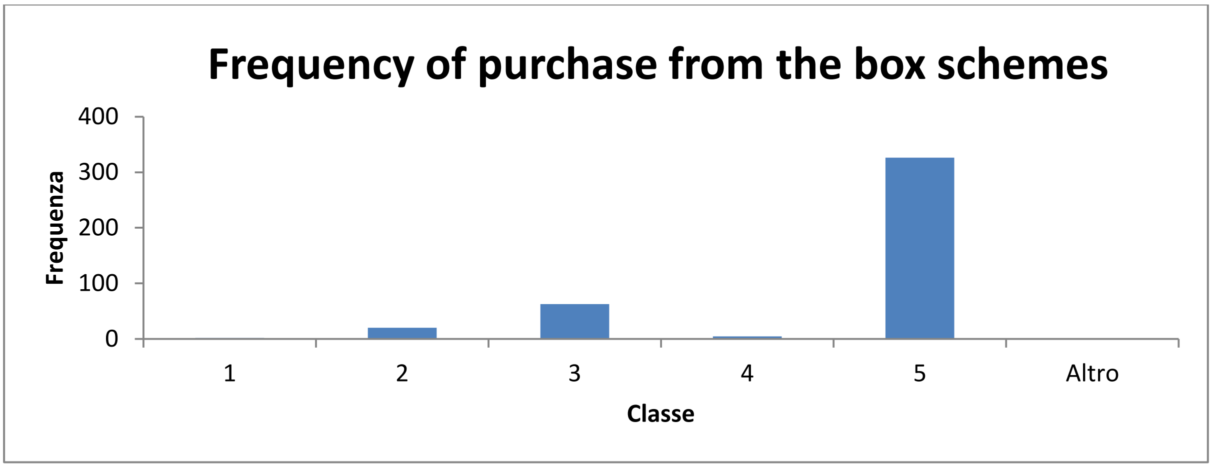


Figure 19:Frequency of purchase from box schemes

5.2.1.7 Frequency of purchase from different food outlets

This section will outline the box scheme respondents reported frequency of shopping /purchase of food in general from different retail outlets/channels including three of alternative food networks in England such as box schemes, farmer markets, farm shops, the mainstream retail channel "supermarkets", and other independent retailers such specialised organic shops, to assess the relative frequency of box scheme consumers shopping and participation at these different retail outlets using a Likert scale from Never to Always shop/purchase. Any notable differences in the consumers shopping habits between the groups of consumer respondents will be explored.

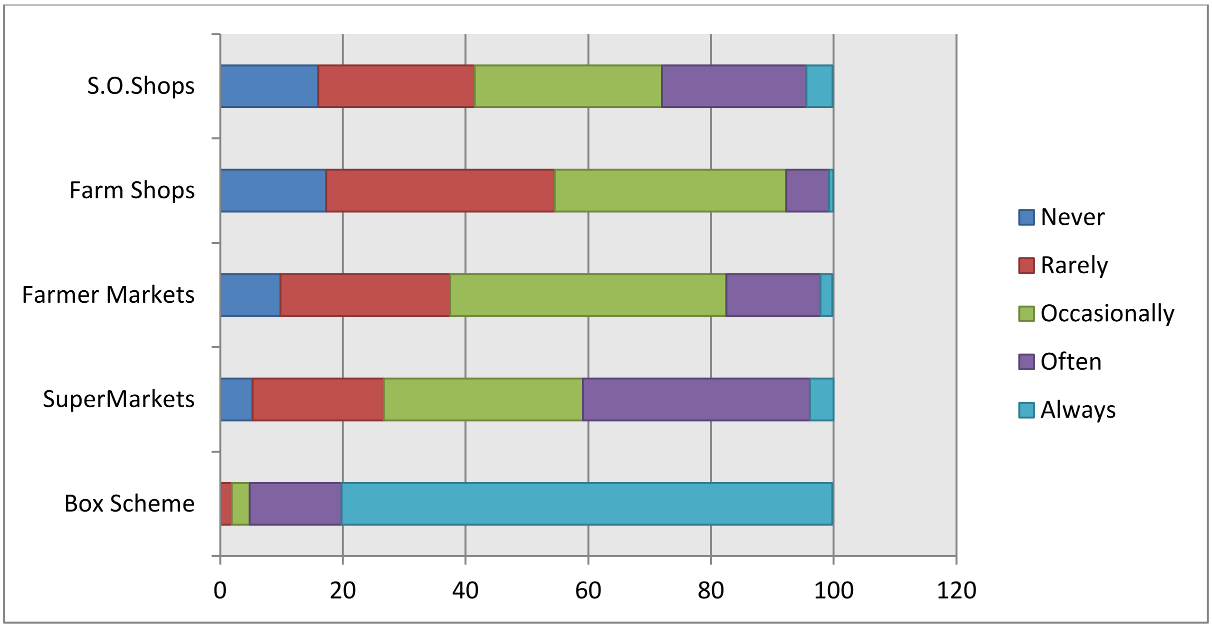


Figure 20: Frequency of purchase from different retail outlets

The presented data in the stacked charts above shows that the majority of respondents 80 % do always shop and purchase from a box scheme while another 15% are often purchasing from a box scheme when shopping for organic fruit and vegetables. In regard to their participation in Farmers' markets, the case is totally different as 45 % of the respondents indicated that they are occasionally shopping at the farmers market for organic fruit and vegetables, and 26 % indicated that it is rare when they shop at farmers markets. However, a further 15 % of respondents reported that they often participate and purchase in a farmers markets when shopping for fruit and vegetables. In regards to their shopping at farm shops which are other forms of Alternative food channels, the reported frequency of shopping were not very different from Farmers' markets, 38 % of respondents indicated that it is occasionally when they shop at farm shops, and more or less the same rate indicated that it is rare when they do any shopping at farm shops for fruit and vegetables, and about 17% of respondents have not shopped there. Interestingly, regarding their shopping at the major supermarkets for fruit and vegetables, the respondents demonstrated very low levels of shopping activity especially in comparison to Box scheme, only 37 % of respondents indicated that they often shop at supermarkets, while about 55 % of box scheme consumer respondents indicated that it is occasionally and rarely when they shop at supermarkets for organic fruit and vegetables, with (33%) occasionally and (22%) rarely. At last 31 % of box scheme consumers' respondents indicated that they are occasionally done shopping at the organic specialised shops, with the remainder of respondents either rarely shop at this specialised outlets with (26%) or Often shop at this outlet for organic fruit and vegetables with (24%).

Overall, respondents were found to be relying on a local- organic box scheme for having access to their organic fruit and vegetables. Most interestingly here is the difference in their shopping at box schemes as a form of an alternative food channel compared to the standardised supermarket chains. The huge difference in shopping frequency suggest that the consumers comfort and satisfaction with the quality products they get from box schemes given the multiple ethical characteristics it holds which meets the many ethical dilemmas they might have could have influenced / stimulated them to make a shift in their consumption experience and habits by participating and regularly shop in a local- organic box scheme instead of relying on supermarkets for their food shopping especially for fresh fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, considering the many added value features/services the box schemes provide to their customers such as direct home deliveries or to an agreed pick-up points and the next day delivery after harvesting which ensures high product freshness, a quality criteria that presumably have further positive implications on other intrinsic qualities such as taste and notoriousness; that could have improved consumers convenience and positive experience with box schemes product and service qualities and encouraged them to at least slightly abandon or reduce their shopping at supermarkets due to the lack of availability of products carrying the meaning and the qualities those consumers are searching for. The product availability was found in different studies to impede/deteriorate consumers ethical behaviour by adding a sense of frustration due to the time is taken to search for the products and the overwhelming search for information the consumer needs to do to be able to distinguish and judge between amid different products ranges. In that regard box schemes by providing the additional convenience features to its services such as home delivery and online order service might have played a major part in boosting up a positive convenience experience on part of the box scheme consumers through saving their time and effort to go down to the supermarket and search for products and products information to make a proper value judgment. The same add value features provided by box schemes might be the reason why they do not shop as frequent at different alternative retail channels such as farmers markets or farm shops considering that the box schemes save their time and effort to go down to farmers markets or farm shops which might also be far from where they are living by receiving their delivery boxes directly at their doorstep or convenient collection point which as commented earlier might add a positive convenience experience to their box scheme shopping. Also, the participation in these alternative channels depends on many other constraints such as the availability and time to access these outlets.

5.2.1.8 Principal component analysis results

Principal component analysis has been conducted in order to determine how many important components in box scheme consumer's motivations to participate and purchase from box schemes in England are present in the data. The components extracted have been rotated in order to make their interpretations more understandable and learn the extent to which the important components able to explain the observed correlations between the extracted rotated variables.

Once the patterns are determined, each group has been attached to given appropriate label naming in order to facilitate the communication and discussion of the results. The patterns extracted from the factor analysis have been labelled descriptively. The descriptive label is meant to categorise the findings. So, the assigned label for each group of the extracted variables reflects what the label/component naming denotes. A descriptive interpretation of the extracted patterns comprises selecting a concept that reflects the nature of the phenomena involved in box scheme consumer's motivation to participate and purchase from a box scheme.

The application of factor analysis allowed us to reduce the initial number of variables (40) into 5 principal components which account for 56 % of the total variance. For the choice of the number of components being extracted, we referred to the major self-value criteria of 1 (known as Kaiser Criteria). The five principal components identified by analysis are named as follows: the first component is "Political '', the second is "Environmental", the third is "Health and safety", the forth is "Product Quality attributes", and the fifth component is "Convenience attributes". Change all the namings assigned to the extracted components.

In the next section, the loadings and factor scores for each extracted component describing the patterning of the data found by the analysis will be presented more in detail (see table 14).

Table 16. Varimax Rotation

Components	Intitial eigenvales			Unrotated loadings			Rotated loadings		
	Total	Var %	Cumulati%	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	8.544	28.481	28.481	8.544	28.481	28.481	5.203	17.344	17.344
2	3.038	10.126	38.606	3.038	10.126	38.606	2.025	16.750	34.094
3	2.002	6.673	45.279	2.002	6.673	45.279	2.724	9.080	43.174
4	1.807	6.023	51.302	1.807	6.023	51.302	1.940	6.467	49.641
5	1.429	4.762	56.064	1.429	4.762	56.064	1.927	6.423	56.064

Table (16) shows the eigenvalues and the percentage of variance. The middle part of the table shows the eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained for 5 components of the initial outcome that are regarded as important. Clearly, the first component of the initial extract is much more important than the rest of the extracted components, comes after it in the level of importance the second component with 3.038. However, in the right-hand part of the table, the eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained for five rotated factors are displayed.

Whilst, taken together, the five rotated factors explain just the same amount of variance as the five factors of the initial and un-rotated components. However, the division of importance between the five rotated factors is very different. As said earlier, the effect of rotation is to spread the importance more or less equally between the five rotated factors. Notably, the eigenvalues of the rotated factors are 5.203, 5.025, 2.724,1.940, and 1.927 compared to 8.544, 3.038, 2.002, 1.807, and 1.429 in the initial outcome. It can be concluded here then that, the rotation of the extracted principal components ensured more or less that the variability explained is more or less evenly distributed between the factors.

- **The extracted components:**

The Varimax rotation produced a plot of 30 variables representing 5 rotated components/factors. We have tentatively identified/labelled the first rotated component “Political ‘’, the second is “Environmental”, the third is “Health and safety”, the forth is “Product Quality attributes”, and the fifth component is “Convenience attributes”. Each of the extracted components with the items loaded on them will be described and explained in detail in the following section.

i. Social and economic

Table 17. PCA results: social and economic dimensions

Social and economic: Political dimensions		
Q2.8	**Implications on increasing disconnections with who produces food**	.778.
Q1.17	Build relation of trsut with producers	.768
Q2.4	**Implication of industrial food systems in distancing you from food origin**	.720
Q2.3	**Implication of food matket globalization on local economy**	.704
Q1.15	Support alternative trade outlets	.683
Q1.27	Ability to shre quality feedback with supplier/farmers	.639
Q1.8	Support small scale disadvantaged farmers	.596
Q1.4	Support local organic producers with better income	.575

Q2.6	**Supermarket effect on income earned by local farmers**	.533

The first component (or factor) extracted was named "Political", as it consists mainly of variables that reflect the economic and social motivations box scheme consumers have when they participate in the local and organic box schemes, for example: build relationship of trust with producers (+0.768), support alternative trade outlets(+0.683), Ability to share quality feedback with suppliers (+0.639), support small scale disadvantaged farmers (+0.596), support local organic producers with better income(+0.575), Implications of increasing disconnections with who produces food (+0.778), Implications of industrial food systems in distancing consumer from food origin (+0.720), Implication of food market globalization on local economy (+0.704), and Supermarkets impact on reducing income earned by local farmers (+0.533). All variables loaded under this labelled component perfectly align with the purpose of each other. It mainly reflects the box scheme consumers desire to support local producers and build a closer connection with where and who produces their food. Furthermore, the highlighted variables (see table17) reflects the importance of the perception of issues regarding the "social & economic "elements in consumers decision making to participate and purchase from a box scheme. This in specific is in line with most of the theories of ethical decision making which indicate that for ethical decisions to start, it is imperative that consumers recognise or perceive the issue. In our case, it is obvious that box scheme consumers perceive some issues related to the global mainstream retails chains, and how it may affect the connection between consumers and where and who has produced their food, and the financial and economic disadvantages the local farmers may suffer from as a result of how these big and powerful chains operates. The high loading of these variables could mean that the perception of these issues is necessary and as highly important as the consumer motivations itself.

ii. Ecological protection

Table 18. PCA Results: Ecological dimension

Ecological protection		
Q1.23	Produced with respect for the environment	.816
Q1.20	Enviomentally friendly production methods	.757

Q2.2	Increasing environmental issues from agriculture	.744
Q1.11	Minimize food miles	.665
Q2.5	Implication of food market globalization on increasing food miles	.650
Q1.25	Reduce packaging	.598
Q1.16	Help reducing food waste	.536
Q2.11	Food waste increase due to rejection of ugly veggies and fruits by supermarkets	.474

The second component extracted was named "Ecological protection", as it is characterised by variables that reflects the motivation to purchase and consume food that has less negative impact on the environment such as: produced with respect to environment(+0.816), environmentally friendly production methods (+0.757), Minimise food miles (+0.665), Reduce packaging (+0.598), Help reducing food waste (0.536), Increasing environmental issues from agriculture (+0.744), Implication of increasing food chains globalism on increasing food miles (+0.650), increase food waste issues due to rejection of ugly veggies by supermarkets (0.474). The presence of the environmental issues with high factor loadings with positive correlations with the other variables, lead us to suppose again that the perception and the recognition of these issues by consumers are decisive and important in determining their motivation in making a shift in their consumption pattern to consume food that has less impact on the environment. Perhaps not as radical as it may sound by making total change, but as shown in the results the fact that consumers have a desire to consume food products that may contribute less to the increasing environmental setback caused by agriculture and food production through participating in a box scheme is enough to reflect their anxiety and desire to contribute to overcome this issue by consume more local produce which is believed to help reduce the carbon emission by reducing the unnecessary thousands of miles the food travels, shops more directly from the primary producers which may help reduce the increasing food waste and food packaging mainly found to be associated with supermarket chains.

iii. Health and safety

Table 19. PCA Results : health and safety dimension

Health and safety dimensions		
Q1.26	Organic produce	.738
Q2.9	Usage of pesticides and chemicals in agriculture	.733
Q2.7	Safety risk associated with industrial food products	.724
Q1.7	Eating in season food	.593
Q2.1	Food safety issues (BSE,GMO's)	.551
Q1.14	Healthy eating	.543

The third component is characterised by variables that reflect the health and safety motivations in box scheme consumers mind. Variables such as Organic produce (+0.738), Eating in season (+0.593), Healthy eating (+0.543), Usage of pesticides and chemicals (+0.733), Safety risks associated with industrial food products (+0.724), Food safety issues (+0.551) all loads high under a component labelled as "Health and safety". The private interest of consuming more healthy and safe food is, as shown in this table, also significantly present in consumers motivation (expressed by the motivations to eat organic produce, and eating more in season, and healthy eating and correlated with the perception and recognition of issues such as usage of pesticides, safety risk associated with processed food produced by the industrial production systems, and safety issues such as GMO's and BSE. The high correlation of these issues with the other variables, could be then that the health and safety pattern of consumers motivation is initiated by the perception and recognition of the health and safety risk associated with the usage of pesticides and chemicals fertilisers to increase production and produce more off seasonally, and the perception of the safety issues associated with the processed food by big industrial corporation and other general food safety issues such as the BSE and GMO's.

iv. Quality dimension

Table 20. PCA Results : product quality dimension

Product quality attributes		
Q1.9	Product freshness	.727
Q1.18	Product taste	.626
Q1.10	Local produce	.458

The fourth was named as “Quality attributes”, as it is characterised by variables that are related to the intrinsic qualities of food, such as Freshness (+0.727), Taste (+0.626), and local produce (+0.458). The local nature of the product although may appear to be less relevant to the quality criteria of the product, this seems rather plausible given the fact that high product freshness could be related to how close the farm and how fast the vegetable box is delivered to consumers upon harvesting which ensures highly fresh produce.

v. Convenience dimension

Table 21. PCA Results: Convenience dimension

Convenience attributes		
Q1.3	Reasonable box prices	.774
Q1.1	Ability to pick what you want in the box	.763
Q1.12	Product cleanness	.720
Q1.2	Visual appearance of the box items	.712

The fifth and last rotated factor looks rather like “Convenience attributes”, as it is characterised by variables which are related to the convenience attributes such as, Reasonable box prices (+0.774), Ability to pick what you want in the box (+0.763), Product cleanness (+0.720), Visual appearance of box items (+0.712) (Table 19).

As such it was possible to examine which kinds of motivations and interests consumers' have in their minds when they take decisions to purchase and participate in a form of alternative food networks such as local organic box schemes in England-UK. It was also possible to see what kind of knowledge and issues that may come into play in their motivations. After all, if it is known what kind of the recognised issues and how important it plays in consumers' consumption and purchase decisions, then these aspects could help the food sector in general and the alternative food sector in the UK to flourish more ethically by providing those interested consumers with products that better meet their demands and reduce some of the issues that is associated with their practices and strategies which may further positively contribute in increasing ethical consumption among wider range of food consumers not only the risk of relying on the private patronage of some ethical concerned group of consumers.

5.2.1.9 Cluster K means findings

Since K-means clustering requires the number of the cluster to be specified in advance, 3 clusters have been determined.

The first cluster is mainly characterised by consumers who were mainly motivated by dimensions such as political, and environmental dimensions. Consumers in this cluster are relatively younger in age (middle aged), have a higher level of education and they are mainly affluent consumers with higher income levels especially in comparison to those in cluster 2 and 3. The majority of box scheme consumers are assigned to this cluster with 54 % (Table 20-21)

Consumers in cluster 2 tend to be egoistic, whereas they are strongly motivated by the health and safety and convenience dimensions which present in this cluster with higher than average values, and moderately motivated by the product quality attributes. The presence of women is significantly high in this cluster and the oldest group of box scheme consumers are found in this cluster compared to cluster 1 and 3. 28.6% of the surveyed box schemes customers are found this cluster.

Box scheme consumer in cluster 3 tends to be motivated mainly by convenience attributes although slightly less than consumers in cluster 2. They are relatively the youngest in age, with low education attained and the lowest income levels. This cluster represents the lowest rate of box scheme consumers with 17% (Table 22-23)

Table 22. Cluster analysis findings

	Clusters		
	1	2	3
Social & economic dimension	.31553	-.53262	-.10571
Environmental dimension	.46734	-.70198	-.30022
Health dimension	.25777	.50798	-1.64512
Intrinsic quality dimension	-.17831	.26333	.12199
Convenience dimension	-.27573	.57858	.39460
Gender	-.41054	1.69789	-.41054
Age	-.31836	.59455	-.51691
Education	.44724	.09601	-.43322
Income	.25487	.01214	-.22761

Table 23. Number of cases in each group of clusters

Number of cases in each cluster			%
Cluster	1	225.000	54.09
	2	119.000	28.61
	3	72.000	17.31
Total		416.000	100

5.2.1.10 Regression analysis results

Table 24. Regression analysis results

Source	SS	df	MS		Number of obs = 416	
					F(11, 404) = 5.96	
Model	11728,8	11	1066,26		Prob > F = 0.0200	
Residual	72292,4	404	178,942		R-squared = 0.139	
Total	84021,2	415	202,461		Adj R-squared = 0.116	
					Root MSE = 13.377	
Dependent variable	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Social & economic dimension	**2,610**	0,711	3,67	**0,000**	1,213	4,008
Environmental dimension	**1,805**	0,672	1,94	**0,053**	-0,016	2,626
Health dimension	**1,513**	0,680	1,19	**0,034**	-0,527	2,148
Intrinsic quality dimension	-0,810	0,673	-2,25	0,225	-0,290	0,835
Convenience dimension	**0,852**	0,676	1,26	**0,008**	-0,477	2,180
Age	**-1,928**	0,589	-3,27	**0,001**	-3,086	-0,770
Gender	-0,475	1,907	-0,25	0,803	-4,225	3,275
Education	-1,315	0,811	-1,62	0,106	-2,909	0,279
Income	-0,300	0,621	-0,48	0,629	-1,521	0,920
Boycotting supermarkets activity	**3,667**	1,385	2,65	**0,008**	0,943	6,390
_cons	52,619	6,022	8,74	0,000	40,781	64,458

In this section, the results of the regression analysis in Table 24 is discussed. The model represents the impact of latent variables constructed from the PCA analysis was included which are a Socio-economic dimension, Environmental dimension, Health, Intrinsic quality, Convenience and Boycotting supermarket activity to investigate their impact on total family expenditure on local/organic vegetable box schemes. Furthermore, demographic factors (i.e. age, gender, education and income) are considered. The results indicate that all latent variables are found to be statistically significant at 5% except for environmental dimension is found to be significant at 10%. In terms of political motivation significance, boycotting supermarket activity and socio-economic dimension is found to have the largest and positive impact on total expenditure in box schemes. Health and convenience dimensions are found to have a relevant but minimal effect on total expenditure. Regarding demographic factors, Age was the only variable with a statistically significant impact indicating that with increased age, total expenditure on local/organic vegetable box schemes will increase.

The F-test result of the model indicates that the overall fit of the proposed model is statically significant. The R-squared indicate that 13.9% of the total variability in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

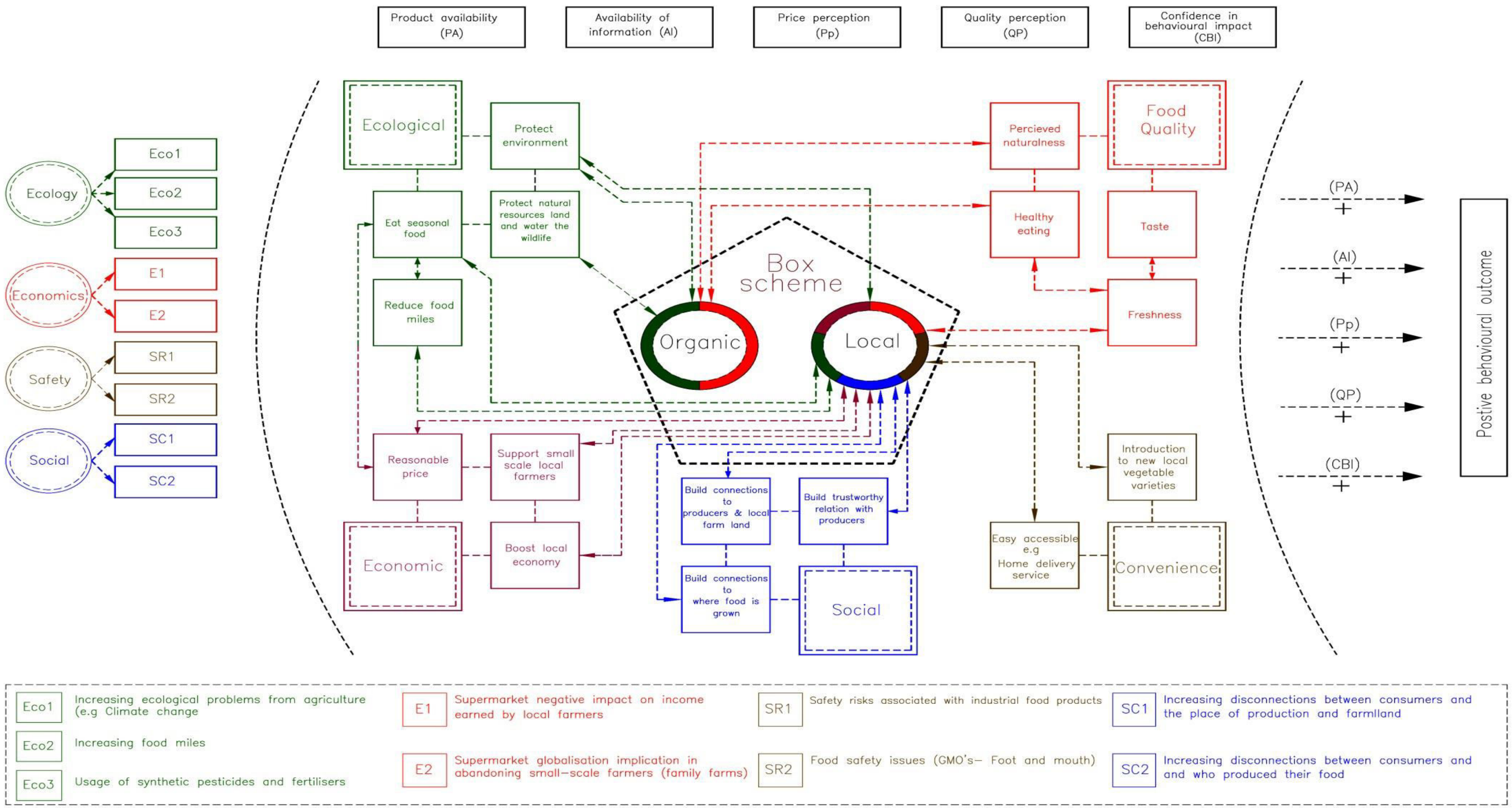


Figure 21. Source:Self design. Synthesized decision making model

Chapter six: Discussion and conclusion

6 Discussion

The research conducted here has examined box scheme consumer decision making holistically to identify where, within the process, an ethical related aspect of their current behaviour to participate in a local- organic box schemes may have relevance. The initial inductive research in this study was conducted in an indirect manner by informing box scheme participants that the research is interested in understanding their general motivations to participate in a box schemes without mentioning the relevant scope of the study. This ensured that responses were typical consumers 'thoughts and behaviours and not subjected to undue researcher influence. The factors that emerged were grounded in the consumers own vocabulary and informed the subsequent, randomly sampled online survey ensuring that the questions and items presented were most appropriately phrased to ensure the best possible comprehension. The research presented here provides a simple theoretical model of consumer's decision making to participate and purchase from a local- organic box schemes in the England-UK. The model presented in Figure 21 integrates the findings from the research employed methodological approaches (qualitative and quantitative). The following sections fully introduce the key findings of the study and discuss the key conceptual components of box scheme consumer's decision making.

This study has provided important insights into the consumer's motivation to participate in a box scheme. This research suggests that people apply certain values when they do shopping at a box scheme. Moreover, it shows that a multidimensional set of motivations which encompass wide environmental, economic, and social, safety and health, convenience attributes were present in consumer's decisions.

6.1 Ethically recognized problems

In the previous AFNs studies, most academics have positioned direct marketing/or local food initiatives such as farm shops, farmers' market and box schemes as representing a form of food provisioning that contrasts to the conventional food systems (Tregear, 2011). They have embraced local agro-food initiatives as a solution to the problems associated with these systems (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005; Lamine, 2005). It was further suggested that consumers participation in any of these alternative forms of consumption is related to a shift in consumer moral perceptions of food and farming, which might be mainly fuelled by the perception of a number of interrelated issues and concerns about some negative ecological, social, and economic impacts interlinked and associated to the current form of food production and provisioning systems (Seyfang, 2004; Seyfang, 2007; Miele and Evans, 2010).

The current consumer view analysis and perceptions align with most of the AFNs literature which tended to theoretically represent AFNs as food provisioning that is in contrast to mainstream systems, whereby consumers tend to identify a number of concerns that are central to their decision-making to participate in a box scheme. At a more general level, the study revealed that the majority of the box scheme consumers have been able to build a direct distinction between box schemes as a direct local sale channel to the current mainstream structure of food provisioning. They seek to move to local organic food as they perceive it to be supposedly ‘‘authentic’’ and ethical organic food which comes from small-scale, while the ‘‘mainstream’’ was highlighted as less-than-ethical presumably based on industrial, corporate interests for profit making. In line with that, Box scheme consumer’s interest in local and organic food have genuinely originated from their perception and concern of some issues underlying the current food production and provision systems. In particular, the research identified a number of generic issues of concerns amongst the box scheme consumers which covers various ecological, political, social, and individualistic concerns. The issues include large scale production systems and its reliance on intensive production processes which undermines the environment and local resources conservation, usage of pesticides and chemical fertilizers and its impact on deteriorating the farmland, natural resources and environment and public health and safety, growing mistrust in standard food production methods, the retail sector power and the ethical and environmental concerns associated with it such as exploitation of local producers and issues related to increasing food miles and the negative consequence of that on environment due to the increasing global food trade which relies on fossil fuel for transportation. This perfectly aligns with the definition that described an ethical person as an individual who seeks to purchase or use goods and services that can demonstrate social and economic responsibility (Tallontire *et al.,* 2001; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, these findings do not suggest that box scheme shoppers were aware and motivated about all these wide ranges of issues prior their first order from box scheme, however, it is more likely that when they participated in box schemes and repeated their purchase they became aware of other issues and effectively included them in their decision making. This has been reflected by Shaw and Clarke (1999), as they highlighted that by taking actions on one issue, ethical consumers tend to become aware of other issues and include them their decision making.

Boycott of specific shops, brands and food items

A Recent market survey published by the cooperative bank in 2015 reported the overall value of the boycotted products by 27%. The reasons behind the high figures of products boycott activity were mainly related to the scandal of food fraud such as the horsemeat scandal issue which has affected the meat sales (The Co-operative Bank, 2014). The report shows that about 20% of the UK population boycott specific products or outlets as a result of ethical concerns.

The results from the current research suggests that box scheme consumers do not only purchase from local – organic box schemes as they perceive it to be more ethically preferable (positive ethical purchase behaviour) or 'buycott', but they also hold some negative stance (Negative ethical purchase behaviour or boycott) towards some food items, shops, and brands that are perceived/recognized to be associated with some certain ethical issues.

When surveyed box scheme participants about the reasons that would/had made them boycott/avoid specific food items and brands and boycott/avoid specific food outlets, many of them indicated that they did. Moreover, when asked to highlight the ethical issues that they are sensitive about which would or had provoked their boycott activity, a huge fraction of the box scheme consumers respondents scandalized and harshly criticized major food agribusiness corporations and mainstream retailers and others for their corporate behaviour by listing examples highlighting issues mostly related to market politics and ethics (Table 14). This ethical action is widely known in the ethical and political literature as negative ethical action that reflect consumer stance against the corporation and retail ethical misconduct in the food chain as a whole from the production till marketing.

Given the expressed interest in ethical boycotts and purchasing, it was interesting to find that when asked what is the most important influence on their boycott activity of specific food products and brands and food retail outlets, there was a hierarchy of ethical issues that would provoke a reaction against specific food items and specific food outlets, while other issues elicited little or no response. This reflects box scheme consumers value compatibility prioritization of some issues when taking an ethical action in the food market during purchase activity.

In regard to boycotting specific food items and brands, almost 57 % of box scheme participants considered the environmental issues such as increasing food miles from global food trade (57.14%) and out of season (42.85) as the most two important reasons that they are most sensitive about and had made them boycott and continue avoid food items that travelled for massive food miles it travels and unnecessarily out of season. These environmental reasons were followed by health and safety risks associated with the usage of pesticides and synthetic chemicals (49%) and processed food (27.5%) and GM food (23.4%) with all the ambiguity associated with its impacts that may put their health and the safety of their families at risk. These two reasons were among the most two main factors frequently highlighted by box scheme participants to boycott specific food items.

In regard to boycotting specific food shops, the overwhelming responses were related to one major political issue namely 'the unfair deals offered to local producers by supermarkets'(53%). This was identified by participants as a major issue that push them to boycott or stop buying at specific food outlets given its negative impact on small-scale local farmers economic viability, which may cause them to lose the small business that hey live from (Table13). Among the boycotted food outlets supermarket chain 'Tesco' were the highest boycotted supermarket (76%) for its lack of respect for local farmers by setting poor deals, followed by supermarket chain 'ASDA'(17%) and discount shop 'Lidl' (8%).

It is imperative to note that a considerable percentage of consumers (45%) responded to this questions by strictly stressing that the term boycott might be a little too strong or too harsh term, as it is somehow difficult to boycott supermarkets for the convenience it brings and the wide variety of products they offer. However, they also stressed that these issues made them reduce their reliance on big shops for food and had also made them more selective and careful about what they buy from whichever shop (Table14).

The supermarket chains "Tesco" and "Asda" were the most mentioned supermarket chains being avoided or boycotted by box scheme consumers more than others. The allegations provided by the increased media and ethical consumers groups attention regarding 'Tesco's' poor corporate strategies specifically in relation to poor and unfair deals with suppliers and most recently the increasing media allegations of seeking to avoid paying corporation taxes on profits (as cited by the Guardian, 31st May 2008), may have contributed to increase consumers education and awareness about the major supermarket poor ethical practices, which might have encouraged disproportionate scrutiny for their practices. As a consequence, it may have led to increasing boycotting activities among food consumer, given the increasing availability of many ethical alternatives such as AFN's and other major food chains that are known and perceived to have a more ethical responsibility in their operations such as 'Morrisons' and 'Marks and Spencer'.

These findings somehow links with the data of the organic market research report and the Soil Association market report published in 2016, that shows a decline in the total share of some supermarkets total sales of organic food and drink by almost -1% value in 2015, while reporting a rise in sales of organic food in more independent food retail sector such as direct selling (box schemes), independent food shops, and online shops (Soil Association 2016, Organic marker report, 2016). They further forecasted a further decline in supermarket chains total sales of organic food in the coming years due to the condensation of the organic products and the inadequate choices. The market report further give some evidence that suggest that the standards and corporate strategies maintained by 'Tesco' and 'Asda' are low compared to the importance of such social responsibility strategies of other supermarket chains such as Sainsbury's and Waitrose (Table 25). Furthermore, the multinational food corporation 'Nestle' which received a significant media attention for questionable practices, such as Baby Milk Action's in the 1990's, were also frequently brought up by box scheme consumers who took part in the online survey and the in-depth interviews as a brand boycott target, despite the company effort to improve their ethical and social responsibility since their poor practices and ethical conduct were originally exposed. These results suggest that major food retailers and multinational global brands should pay extra attention to improve their corporate strategies and image by acting more responsibly to the increasing consumer concerns regarding their discovered poor strategies. Nestle example somehow practically shows that the loss of trust among food consumers on the brand of food quality and companies ethical stance is hard to be redeemed regardless the amount of investment that would be pumped to claim back consumer trust and loyalty.

From these responses, it is becoming obvious that there is certain hierarchy of value compatibility of ethical issues that would provoke box scheme consumers backlash and they would consider the most important to them when considering an ethical purchase and/or ethical boycotting activity. This corresponds with previous work (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Carrigan *et al.,* 2004) that found ethical food consumers to be selectively ethical in relation to what mattered to them most.

Table 25. Majors retailers organic market share and Importance of corporate strategies

Retailer	Organic % (estimate)	Importance of corporate stratigies
Tesco	26	Medium
Asda	4.5	Low
Sainsbury's	28	High
Morrisons	4.5	Low
Waitrose	23	High
Lidl	1.0	Low
Aldi	0.5	Low
Ocado	7.0	High
Marks and spencer	2.0	Medium

Source: Kantar world panel and market estimates, in Organic market report 2016

The results from regression analysis supports this, where political dimensions extracted from PCA and boycotting supermarket activities variable were found to have the significant positive impact on total expenditure from local organic box schemes. However, this is not to suggest that box scheme consumers totally boycott supermarkets, but this reflect their preference to shop for food from local box schemes as an alternative food outlet over other conventional food channels (Supermarkets). Also it reveals their desire to resist shopping at supermarket chains through increasing their patronage from another local alternatives such as the box schemes.

6.2 Dimensions considered in consumer's decision making to participate in organic and local box scheme

Principal component analysis of the 40 attributes identified and surveyed in the primary research identified five clear dimensions and outlet attributes, namely social and economic dimension, and environmental dimension, which is predominantly of ethical relevance. Other Health, product quality and convenience dimensions emerged as key components and the findings from the primary research show that these aspects of choice and decision are considered at different points at the local organic box scheme purchase decision process beside the ethical attributes.

The key attributes researched were identified by real local and organic box scheme consumers during the subsequent qualitative in-depth interviews to ensure the most accurate responses related to their purchase and participation in organic and local schemes. The findings provide up to date insights into the considerations of box scheme customers in England – UK and can be interrogated to identify any difference in priorities between different purchase decisions from different food retail outlets, for example between different types of alternative retail outlets or between alternative food networks and major supermarket chains. Central to the aim of this research was the box scheme consumers motivation to participate in local – organic box schemes and to investigate the relative importance of ethical related attributes of choice. In line with the plethora of ethically relevant issues associated with the food trade, production, and industrial sector reported in the research work done on AFN's, the research found that the consumers have a plenty of ethical and private related attributes of choice that motivate them to participate and purchase regularly from local organic box schemes (Figure 21). In particular, the local and organic nature of the box schemes, were the two most important items sought by consumers when they decide to participate in a local box schemes, given the plethora of ethically relevant attributes attached to the meaning behind the local and organic and in direct conjunction with the perceived/recognized issues that could be questioned ethically in association with the major and globalized food market. While there is no clear understanding of what 'local ' means in terms of distance that food has travelled, box scheme consumers associate it with other characteristics including small scale, high product quality, in particular, freshness and availability of a wide range of locally produced vegetables, along with some environmentally related attributes such as reducing food miles, and eating in season. This is consistent with (FSA,2003) claims that consumers associate the local identity of the food product with other characteristics that include greenness, quality, and small scale (FSA, 2003; Brown *et al.,* 2009).

This is in line with the many studies that indicate a growing interest in the ethical provenance of food, it was found here that for most box scheme consumers these factors play key primary role in consumers' considerations to participate and purchase from a local and organic schemes: Aspects related to contributing to minimise food miles, eating in season, support small local organic farmers, protect/conserve wildlife and natural resources, and build a trustworthy relation with food producers, beside some relevant private/hedonistic concerns related to health and safety, and food quality.

Notably, the local nature of the box scheme demonstrated a higher importance in many decision related to consumers participation in box schemes than organic. The organic was mainly positively important in regard to aspects related to health and safety and environmentally respectful production methods. The local on the other hand, have been associated with a plethora of ethical, private and convenience attributes such as supporting small-scale local organic producers who might be disadvantaged economically in the current highly competitive market situation. It was also linked to aspects related to consumers ability to build a clear connection or background about who produce their food and where it has come from, which has been identified in the inductive phase of the study to contribute to increase consumers trust in the product quality and authenticity, and producers credibility, which put their box schemes in a different place compared to the other identified placeless faceless food found in the supermarkets shelf (Goodman, 2009). The local identity was most appreciated considering that it does not have to travel so long or to be stored which could help reduce the negative environmental impact of global food trade by reducing the identified unnecessary distance food travels. Some other hedonistic motivations related to quality and convenience attributes were also linked to the local nature of the products, by box scheme consumers, for example, freshness resulted from the prompt delivery after harvesting which has been linked by some respondents to the good taste and extra nutritional value.

6.3 The perception of local box schemes and organic food and farming

Previous studies in the field of ethical consumption indicate that consumer's attitudes towards ethical consumption have become more positive, as they become more informed and educated, and aware of what is required of products as well as their rights and responsibilities. However, the current small size of the ethical food market (Organic-Fairtrade-alternative food sector) compared to the market share of the conventional food products suggested that the shift in consumer's consumption pattern toward more ethical consumption cannot be always taken for granted, as it might not be directly reflected in actual behaviour. This phenomenon is widely known in ethical consumerism literature as attitude-behaviour gap. This discrepancy in consumer behaviour was suggested to be owed to a number of reasons for example price, quality and brand may intervene in the choice situation, consumers uncertainty about which firms conduct ethical practices and which do not, consumer may not know which products are ethically produced and which are not, consumer confidence and control of the impact of their decision, and consumer acknowledged desire for commitment and sacrifice (Hurtado, 1998; Shaw *et al.,* 2000; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013).

As such consumers were seen as not being prepared to compromise some other important factors related to functional product characteristics such as price, quality, brand loyalty in order to purchase an ethical item (Hurtado, 1998; Shaw *et al.,* 2000). The qualitative data in this research revealed the relevance of these factors in consumers decisions to participate and purchase from local organic box schemes. Box scheme correspondents were found to hold positive views in relation to these factors when it comes to their current consumption activity from the local organic box schemes.

- **Price perception**

In many ethical consumption studies, Price has been reported to play a major role in people's ethical purchasing decision. (Shaw and Clarke, 1999) suggested that the price of ethical goods could outweigh consumer's ethical concerns. Also, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggested consumers tend to a trade-off between their ethical values and price. Further, in his exploratory study about the factors that impede ethical consumption behaviour, Bray *et al.,* (2011) showed how high price sensitivity among consumers may keep them away from choosing an ethical item. Nevertheless, box scheme consumers perception of price were mainly positive, with some consumers perceiving the price as cheap compared to supermarkets prices for the same products, given the quality and ethical values attached to the products. Some other box scheme consumers interestingly were more able to justify the box prices as reasonable, as they tend to question the various environmental, social, economic, externalities associated with the product offered at the supermarkets.

This concurs with previous research that has suggested that if consumers perceive a value in a product they are becoming less sensitive toward the price and simultaneously become willing to pay a higher price (Carrigan *et al.,* 2004). Our data also supported the work of (Szmigin and Carrigan, 2005) that found ethical consumers are often not deterred by high prices commodity but look for reassurance that the goods have the appropriate ethical attribute.

This is in contrast to another study that found the cost of ethical consumption prohibitive despite consumers motivation to participate more in ethical food consumption (Beagan *et al.,* 2010). The box schemes ability to maintain direct form of connection with their customers could have had an influence on this aspect, the fact that most box schemes have not had or have slightly changed the box prices in so many years, in addition to the direct communication tools through box schemes published newsletters which sometimes provide customers with price comparisons of the same products provided by other retail outlets, might have assured the customers that they are not paying above the odds of what they can possibly afford for their food. The data also revealed that some customers were happy to pay extra premium to the box scheme producers knowing that they are the ones who take a full benefit of the price paid, which was identified to help this small disadvantaged producers with adequate income necessary to help them stay on business, and away from the various economic and marketing struggles they face through being dependent on major food retailers to sell their produce. These results were further supported by the quantitative analysis in which almost all box scheme consumers surveyed hold a positive perception toward box scheme prices by perceiving it as being rather cheap and good value for money. This aligns perfectly with studies on different alternative food chains which claimed that consumers who participate in this type of chains may gain via more reasonably priced fresh and healthy food (La Trobe and Acott, 2000; Little *et al.,* 2010).

- **Knowledge and awareness**

Current research revealed high box scheme shoppers knowledge of the ethical and unethical behaviour conducted by food corporations ‘Supermarket chains and food brands’, and high awareness of ethical behaviour by box schemes; and it appears that this information remained at the forefront of their consciousness when they participate in the box schemes.

These findings concur with previous research that has stressed the importance of educating the consumers about the ethical issues related to the food market and modern trade and on communicating the transparent, authenticity and right information to encourage ethically purchase behaviour. Consumers seek credible, accessible and reliable information, and require convincing about the authenticity of claims on that subject (Carrigan *et al.,* 2004; Low and Davenport, 2007; Mate, 2013). Box schemes as a form of a direct sale channel is likely to be meeting these demands by consumers ; and this would reflect the high commitment and high sense of confidence on part of box scheme consumers on the outcome of their actions on benefiting local disadvantaged farmers economically and local shopping from box scheme benefits on reducing the environmental impact that results from global food trade and agriculture.

The study findings in this regard seem to conform with the broad line of research that holds smooth and transparent information accessibility as key to altering consumption patterns and to make more consumers interested to take actions through the day to day decisions (Clarke *et al.,* 2007).

Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that box scheme shoppers increased awareness is due to box scheme effort in providing them with up to date and reliable information only ; the fact that there has been a significant increase in the amount of regular news coverage of ethical consumption in the British news media such as the leading UK liberal daily paper, The Guardian, and the emergence of a number of organisations such as Fairtrade Foundation, and the Soil Association which are deemed as important and credible sources of news on stories on sustainability and related topics of 'ethical' consumption, contributed to increase the growth of news coverage on ethical consumption issues which led to increasing the overall consumer background about ethical issues and the ethical alternatives (Clarke *et al.,* 2007).

Developing direct connections between consumers and growers help boosting ethical and social aspects around these food alternative systems, engenders and encouraging trust building and cooperation within a community, and to educate consumers about where their food comes from, including the impact of food production method on the environmental and social conditions (Kirwan, 2006; Feagan, 2007; Seyfang, 2008; Smith, 2008; Milestad *et al.,* 2010). In line with that, through the first exploratory phase (inductive) of the study, consumers showed high knowledge and awareness of the key ethical issues related to food production and consumption. While they were holding only the basic knowledge about the organic and Fairtrade systems and its impact on consumers safety and health, prevent or reduce environmental degradation through minimizing and/or banning the usage of chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides, and the role of Fairtrade in boosting the economic viability of the small abandoned farmers in developing countries, they were deeply aware of the various economic, environmental, and safety issues that result from the globalised food trade, high competitive market situation, and the safety and environmental risks associated with the reliance and the usage of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Consumers understood the basic meaning behind the organic and understood how relevant the localness of production may hold many benefits for local farmers, ecology, and having access to high-quality fresh food.

In general terms, box scheme organisational business features could have facilitated consumers ethical decision making as it allows them to bypass the uncertainty and lack of information or even sometimes the information overload that might confuse them that is usually associated with products offered at the conventional mainstream market. The direct communication consumers have with their box schemes suppliers could have contributed in enriching their knowledge and awareness about these aspects. DeLind (1999) argued that the direct form of communication and relationships are unique and help to retain a wide-ranging knowledge in each and every person (DeLind, 1999). The fact that box schemes provide consumers with weekly and monthly newsletter to keep them updated about the production methods employed in the farm, farmers future plans, and the seasonal produce available may have helped to educate consumers about the production practices applied to the farm and the importance of organic production methods for conserving environment, natural resources, and protecting the wildlife. The strong knowledge gained by box scheme customers, given the long time they have been purchasing from local and organic box schemes undoubtedly helped box scheme consumers to make more informative decisions (moral judgment) and construct a clear distinct motivation toward many ethical relevant attributes in relevance to their purchasing activity from box schemes. It could have boosted their commitment to local and organic food from those small scale local suppliers.

- **Confidence on the outcome of action**

Box scheme consumers reflect their confidence on the impact of their behaviour on some of the issues that they have recognised as ethically not responsible. They were confident that participation in a local organic box schemes would help to make a difference for the organic small scale box scheme suppliers, whereas the absence of middlemen's and the other actors in the regular supply chains was perceived to have an economic advantage for box scheme producers by securing 100 % of income for themselves instead of being cut by other supply chains actors. They were almost certain that the box schemes without their support may end up failing and that small scale authentic farmers might face the vulnerability of going out or losing business due to their inability to enter the market either due to the several economic disadvantages associated with the major retail chains dominating the competition in the marketplace. For example farmers failure to meeting the supermarket quality and quantity specifications, sudden changes (last minutes order changes) in supermarket retail quantity demands which directly impact their economic returns, major retailers reliance on either cheap imported organic goods or by applying price squeeze strategies with their suppliers. All these aspects were deemed unfair and unethical by box scheme consumers for risking farmers going out of business and its impact on the British food sovereignty by risking food security in the UK by relying on imports.

The importance of belief and confidence on consumer ethical decision making have been explained in a plethora of studies about ethical consumption behaviour. Consumers' confidence and beliefs on the impact of their actions towards their ethical dilemmas have been broadly related to various concepts such as the concept of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) present in the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1986; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006), the concept of moral maturity as suggested by McDevit et al. (2007), and lastly, Forte's concept of perceived locus of control (Forte, 2004). All these concepts suggest that consumer's beliefs and confidence of their actions can make a real difference in terms of solving ethical problems. The argument is that the more confident the consumer is about the impact of his or her behaviour the more likely he or she will translate their intention into actual behaviour in the market by engaging in ethically conscious behaviour by translating their ethical concerns into ethical behaviours(McDevitt *et al.,* 2007; Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013). While (Forte, 2004) suggested that individuals decision making is related to the nature of locus of control. In the sense that consumers with external locus of control tend to believe that ethical issues are beyond their control and largely under the control of luck, chance, or other individuals, whereas those with an internal 'locus of control' are more likely to make ethical decisions as they credit themselves with substantial control of events (Bray *et al.,* 2011; Atif *et al.,* 2013). In this case, box scheme consumers who participated in this study showed an internal locus of control through being confident on the impact of their behaviour in overcoming a number of dilemmas they have in regard to the global mainstream and large industrial systems practices. The box schemes organisational structure could have also contributed in boosting consumers' confidence about the impact of their behaviour, as they maintain regular contact either through newsletters, websites, organise farm visits, and face to face contact upon delivery. The transmission of information between box scheme farmers and their customers could have played a major role in educating the consumer about the production practices and its benefits which allow consumers to see the big picture through participating in local organic schemes.

- **Sense of responsibility**

The current research also revealed that box scheme consumers hold on a high level of responsibility of doing their bit by consuming more ethically and supporting alternative business channels that help reduce all the unnecessary ethically relevant issues resulted from the maximization and intensification strategies of the production units and the domination of food trade globalization which aims at capturing value by creating more profits for themselves overlooking the consequences of their strategies on local production and local scale producers, environment, and increasing the safety and health risks.

In particular, the box scheme respondents showed a high sense of responsibility toward securing the authentic small farmers living and reducing the environmental impact of agriculture and food trade were a function of their personal preference and sense of obligation and commitment to participate and shop from local organic box schemes.

It was apparent from this study that box scheme consumers were less cynical about the value and impact of their small contributions of buying from a local and organic box scheme, the majority see it as a duty or responsibility to ‘do their bit’. In particular there also has been a high sense of confidence demonstrated by box scheme consumers about the ability of their actions (participation and purchase from box schemes) to make a difference with regard to supporting small local farmers economically by generating more income and reducing environmental impact from agriculture and global trade through reducing food miles and relying as possible on seasonal produce from buying locally at box schemes.

Box scheme consumers were also aware of the relevance between the local and organic nature of the products and its contribution to reducing the many environmental impact associated with the increasing food miles by global food trade and usage of pesticides and chemical fertilisers by the industrial intensive production systems which has many implication on the environment and the surrounding ecology through corrupting the natural balance, killing the wildlife and contaminating the natural resources such as water and soil quality. This data was further supported by the quantitative analysis findings on consumer’s perception of local box schemes. Local box schemes were majorly perceived to contribute reducing food miles, generate more income for local producers. While organic was mainly perceived to be environmentally friendly production technique that main at producing high-quality food with respect to the environment and the surrounding ecology.

From this it is obvious that box scheme consumers realise their power and ability to make change through participating at the local food networks ‘box schemes’. The aim here, however, is not necessarily directed to reverse the negative outcome associated with the mainstream and large scale industrial sector itself, but through doing their bit toward the environment, local producers by supporting and direct their purchasing and consumption choice power towards what is perceived to be more ethically responsible alternative that does not in the same time require them to sacrifice much of their private (hedonistic) consumption preferences given he high quality produce delivered at their convenience to their door step.

- **Quality perception**

Finally, the primary data shows positive consumer perception of the product availability and quality of products provided by the box schemes. Through the quantitative and qualitative stages of the research, it emerged that consumers hold positive quality perception given the freshness of food products. They majorly also perceived box scheme to be the easy way of to get access to local products which are not available at the supermarket.

To summarise, Box scheme consumers appeared to be more informed, educated and aware of what is required of the products and about the issues that could be seen as ethically not right in the mainstream and industrial food sector counterpart. However, this awareness does not mean that they have stopped shopping at supermarkets, because they actually do, but they are more careful with their purchases as they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as consumers. They revealed that they mainly prefer to shop at co-ops and other organic shops beside the weekly farmer's markets.

Consumption in a box scheme can be constructed as consisting of multi-attribute choice preference of ethical and hedonistic (self-interest) personal attributes. Consumer’s participation in the box scheme, therefore, could be viewed as a moral action taken to overcome the issues associated with the global food markets (Supermarkets-industrial large scale food sector). It seems that English box scheme customers are motivated mainly by altruistic reasons, by a desire to contribute to a more sustainable food system (Brown *et al.,* 2009). They make their consumption decision on the basis of ethical values such as environmentally friendly products, support local authentic farmers, support small scale disadvantaged family farms, and build a trustworthy relationship with farmers, as well as some personal values such as access to more healthy and safe food, high-quality food. However, this study is not to suggest that all these values carry the same level of importance and priorities in consumer's decision to participate in a box scheme, but the fact the box scheme consumers who took part in the study were using box scheme for so many years suggest that there might be difference on what issues stimulated them to participate and purchase from box scheme when they started and why they continued nowadays. This could be related to Shaw and Clarke (1999) claims that have taken action on one issue, ethical consumers tend to become aware of other issues and include them in their decision making (Shaw and Clarke, 1999).

Apparently, box schemes helped to pave the way for more ethical consumption by creating a space of ethical consumption and making it easier. The particularity of box schemes as a direct local food initiative facilitate consumers perceived significance of 'quality and ethics' attached to these food attributes which enhance their decision making and commitment. The direct relationships consumers have with their food producers, either face to face or through communication tools (websites, newsletters) is proved to help forge bonds between consumers and local growers. This bond created between consumers and their food suppliers helps to educate consumers about their food production by providing authentic and credible information that keeps them connected to their food through information about the condition of production and their producer's conditions, which assures them of the quality and authenticity attached to the products delivered to them, and remove the anxieties and uncertainties of the ethical meaning and the impact of their purchase. This could have assisted consumers to make their informed consumption decisions. This aligns nicely on Lamine (2005) suggestions about the benefits of AFN's , wherein it was claimed to allow for the emergence of different forms of engagement between farmers and consumers based on a closer and more direct relationship, which may boost consumers commitment to buying from those producers they know to respect environment, animals (Lamine, 2005). Boyle (2003) called that as a desire for authenticity, claiming that there is a growing demand for what is authentic, local, and trustworthy(Boyle, 2003).

As Bateman and his colleagues claimed, local food networks like box schemes appears to legislate for change in consumption patterns through providing a legitimate source of information which has always been deemed decisive in both theory and practice for ethical consumption due to the role it plays as a medium through which ethical preference of consumers and the ethical records of businesses are signalled in the marketplace (Bateman *et al.,* 2002). Increasing consumer awareness allows consumers to recognise their consumption power and put it into practice by altering their consumption pattern to reflect their concerns, and develop a commitment to acknowledged behaviour. Box schemes as one type of AFN's offer an alternative for food provisioning and consumption away from the uncertainty and anxieties that are usually associated with the conventional mainstream counterpart. AFN's offers a sustainable choice for consumers which combine between education, quality and ethical attributes, and more importantly remove consumer's anxieties about the food they are eating (Seyfang, 2007).

These findings also provide some insights to the major mainstream food retailers in the UK. It demonstrates that the ethical reasoning and awareness is increasing among consumers. The supermarkets reliance on providing a wide range of organic products in the market might not be enough, as they may need to amend their strategies to source more of their production from the local or regional and more importantly to invent a smooth and credible tool for communicating these aspects to consumers as consumers becoming more discerning in regard to the origin of food products and associate it with number of environmental and economic implication which might undermine the environment, local economy, and local agriculture. The supermarket is also required to improve their deals with local producers and make it friendlier based on reciprocity instead of the captive mode of governance that does not give local or British organic farmers, in general, a space for creativity and profit making if possible.

6.4 Doing politics in box scheme consumption

Consumption has become a problematic realm in western societies. The excessive levels of materialism and luxury consumption embodied in modern consumption models encouraged by early capitalistic economies have been identified as the fundamental causes of various harms such as environmental degradation, personal illness and socio-economic in equality (Clarke, 2008). With many researchers and food advocates considering that the problem is not merely in the production processes in itself, but in consumers who does not account for the market ethical and political issues when they make consumption choices (Sassatelli, 2006). This is largely presented in the concepts of ethical (Shaw, 2007), political (Micheletti, 2003), critical (Sassatelli 2006) and green consumerism (Lockie *et al.,* 2000). The fundamental rational behind these interrelated concepts that account food consumers as the prime mover for ethical and political change in the food market through making consumption choices that respect ethics, environment and social equality to overcome issues associated with the modern forms of consumption that frames consumption as predicated by consumers utility of price, quality and convenience per se (Micheletti, 2003; Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Baudrillard, 2016; Young, 2006; Norris, 2007).

In distinction to early consumerist movement such as voluntary simplicity movement (Cherrier and Murray, 2002; Shaw and Newholm, 2002) and anti-consumption movement (Zavestoski 2002), ethical and political consumerism implies that people should recognise their obligation to do good in their consumption register by acting in a 'responsible way' (Clarke *et al.,* 2007). others stressed that for consumption choices to be ethical/political it should take a stance or make a point (Sassatelli, 2006; Beagan *et al.,* 2010).

In the widely available literature on political and ethical consumerism, political consumerism is defined as conscious or deliberate decision to buy or avoid products and services for ethical, environmental-political reasons (Stolle *et al.,* 2005). Political consumption could be expressed in two forms known as "boycott" and "boycott" (Micheletti, 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005; Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013). On one hand, Buycott knew as 'Positive ethical consumption' activity is recognised as a vehicle for individuals to communicate their civic, ethical, political values/preferences by selecting products that carry and holds that meaning (i.e. organic, fair-trade, local). On the other hand, Boycott knew as 'Negative ethical consumption' behaviour offers individuals the chance to challenge, protest and punish what they see as ethically irresponsible market behaviour in product/brand making (Micheletti, 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005, Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

In account to that, box scheme participant's decision to participate in local organic box schemes can be discerned as a form of political/ethical consumption activity. The results show that the discourses that driven their decision to participate and purchase in this alternative initiative were informed by a number of political /ethical repertoires motivations that are simultaneously individual, private and community and public (Atkinson 2012). In particular, the findings suggests that box scheme correspondents understood the relationship between ethics and their consumption practices from box schemes; discussing the conventional retail market and the large agribusinesses strategies with doubt and scepticism, in which they frequently identified to be self-interested organizations that only look for profit overlooking the implications of their strategies on environment, social security, food culture, local farmers economic viability, and consumers health and safety. They understood the ethical and political alternativeness of the box schemes in comparison to the mainstream channels and how this may help to overcome ethical and political issues in relation to their decision to patronise an alternative food shopping avenue such as the box schemes. In particular, they emphasized on the local to avoid and reduce myriad issues linked to global food trade and mainstream strategies such as: environmental degradation from increasing food miles and out of season produce, local farmers susceptibility of losing their businesses which might put the heritage English countryside at risk of extinction, re-education about food culture through eating in season food which have been lost due to reliance on year round out of season produce from supermarkets, beside their own private benefits from relying on a local and organic produce for their food consumption such as having access to high quality fresh produce and healthy and safe food at adequate price for the quality it holds. This aligns with Van Deth (2010), consumers to engage in ethically or politically relevant behaviour, they must understand the political and ethical shape and influence of their actions (Van Deth, 2010). This was seen also imperative as explained by various scholars on political and ethical consumption, as it has considerable influence on consumer choice, and about how and when consumption ethics and politics engage in consumers consumption choices (Jones and Gaventa, 2004; Thorson, 2012).

These findings reflect the deliberate cognitive decision taken by box scheme shoppers to participate and purchase from a local and organic scheme. Consumers concerns and anxieties about political and ethical issues helped them to justify their choices and decisions in the local and organic box schemes to counterweigh the mainstream market policies and trade practices that were found to be associated with many issues that not only threatens the individual consumers welfare of having access to food commodities that are safe and high in quality, but it was largely linked with many negative implications on the environment and natural resources, the socio-economic welfare of local producers, food culture by increasing disconnection between food and consumers from the point of production to consumption, and finally animals welfare. Box scheme correspondents concerns and anxieties about these political and ethical issues helped them to justify their choices and decisions in the local and organic box schemes.

These study findings are consistent with numerous studies that linked social, environmental, political values, and other attitudes to the purchase of local food (La Trobe and Acott, 2000; Loureiro and Hine, 2002; Zepeda and Reid, 2004; Seyfang, 2006; Smithers *et al.,* 2008). Further, this study found a major link between political and ethical attitude motivations and purchasing local and organic food from box schemes. This is in contrast to (Long and Murray, 2013) claims that local purchase is not associated with political attitudes. These study findings also concur with (Thompson and Coskuner, 2007) study findings where CSA consumers in their studies were found to resist corporate pilot-brand, and instead directed their consumption choices toward non-corporate, local alternatives. Also, it is consistent with (Adams and Raisborough, 2010) claims that consumers turn into local consumption in preference to the ethical and political dimensions attached to local food consumption. This is an indication of the coherent trends in consumer increasing preference of more 'ethical' 'responsible' forms of production, distribution, and provisioning that respect everyone from consumers to the environment, producers, animals (Adams and Raisborough, 2010).

In summary, box scheme consumption belongs to a long line of ethical/political consumers who are concerned in particular with the conditions faced by other external factors (public) that involve food production and trade besides their own material dimensions of food consumption.

6.5 Consumer empowerment

(Szmigin *et al.,* 2009) argued that consumer resistance movement has become a legitimate form of consumer empowerment. From this study, there is enough evidence to believe that consumers participation in a local and organic box schemes could be considered as a form of the resistance movement, wherein consumer strictly view these networks as alternatives from other conventional food outlets and other agriculture and industrial food businesses that were majorly perceived to be violating many ethical and political conduct in the food market which not only put the external (public) factors of their consumption at risk (e.g. environmental, economic, social) but considerably found to risk consumers health and safety.

Consumer consumption activity and participation in a local organic box scheme explicitly hold an ethical and political dimension which cut through the symbolic boundaries and sole materialistic motivation which have consolidated in the course of modernity that have come to define the 'consumer' as a specific economic identity who lives in a private world removed from production (Sassatelli, 2006). This reflect consumers increasing empowerment in the food market as reflected in many ethical and political consumerism literature, whereas consumers express their sovereignty as moral and political agents who realize the power of their pound and cognitively and consciously direct this power take full responsibility for the environmental, social and political effects of their choices not only by the satisfaction of hedonistic premises as predicated on the variables singled out by neoclassical economics and free-market ideologies alike (i.e. price and quantity). This aligns with (Clarke *et al.,* 2007) suggestions that political/ ethical consumption practices shall be reconstituted to reach beyond the realm of consumption per se (Clarke *et al.,* 2007).

Consumer affirmative participation and shopping from box schemes extends from organic to local purchasing. Their motivation to consume organic extends from protecting and ensuring the health and safety of themselves and their families by reducing the susceptibility to synthetic chemicals and pesticides residues to protecting the environment and natural resources. On the other hand, their motivation to consume locally originate primarily from their political desires to make a difference by directly support small-scale disadvantaged producers whom they believe to be abandoned by the highly competitive capitalistic market. Not only, but they also revealed the desire to reward those small committed producers for their efforts to produce high-quality products with environmentally friendly production methods.

Hence, consumers mobilisation in the local organic box schemes could be seen as a type of political engagement through consumption from a local direct sale channel. Whereas consumers are willing to make a difference through their participation in this direct sale channel, and to resist as much as they can the unethical conducts found in linkage with the conventional food market through making consumption decisions based on the collective and political motivations from local food channels such as box schemes (Bryant and Goodman, 2004). This has been viewed by many ethical and political scholars to represent a shift in power from the sphere of production to the sphere of consumption (Young, 2006; Norris, 2007; Baudrillard, 2016). This also has been reflected in the concept of late modernity presented by Beck (2010), in which he argues that argument that if modernity is a democracy-oriented to producers, late modernity is a democracy-oriented to consumers where the 'citizen consumer' is becoming a counterweight to big transnational corporations(Beck, 2010). This is achieved either through supporting and rewarding those with high ethical conduct in the market "Buycott activity" or withhold it to punish those responsible for unethical activity in the market "Boycott activity" (Micheletti, 2003; Stolle *et al.,* 2005; Micheletti and Stolle, 2007; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013).

The explicit desire of making a difference by "doing their bit" that is reflected in their "sense of responsibility and commitment" toward the small scale ethical farmers and their willingness to reward those small scale producers of their efforts to produce high quality food that respects environment and consumers own health and safety reveals their recognition of their power as consumers and the voting power of their pound embodied in their consumption choices to make a difference to the local disadvantaged ethical producers and environmental protection.

Nevertheless, it is worthy to note that this box scheme moralization does not dismiss the consumer individualistic and self-interested desires, but rather reframes it in terms of the collective responsibilities that people are implicated in by virtue of their status as consumers (Clarke e*t al.,* 2007). As (Shaw and Clarke, 1999) stresses, ethical consumption should not be viewed in isolation as ethical attributes will be measured along with other material attributes/factors relevant to consumer choice decisions (Shaw and Clarke, 1999).These findings connect perfectly with different consumerism concepts particularly ‘ethical’ and ‘political’ consumerism that emphasise the role of consumers as citizens who use their consumption power to enhance and promote a moral and political cause beside their own personal wellbeing (Sassatelli, 2006). It also defies the concepts of ‘private economic hedonist’ embodied in early capitalistic consumption economies which favour materialism and luxury consumption (Sassatelli, 2006). This is also consistent with (Soper, 2007) concept of ‘alternative hedonism’ which suggests that responsible consumers should seek a balance between benefiting themselves and others (Soper, 2007). This could help explain box scheme consumers preference and motivation of some private self-oriented attributes of consumption such as increased product freshness, health and safety, convenience in shopping at box schemes given the easiness of access the ethical product through home deliveries which help save time needed to search and find products that carry their ethical and quality preferences.

Thus, increasing box scheme consumers consciousness about the market policies and ethics, and their ability to bypass the unethical conducts inherited in the conventional marketplace through participating and shopping from alternative local food initiatives (e.g. box schemes) as an ethical alternative (Buycott activity) can be explicitly discerned with the emergent concept of ‘politics of choice’ which has been established as distinct from the concept of ‘politics of loyalty’ based on parties and elections. The emergent concept of politics of choice is based on two main repertoires that make up its distinctiveness as argued by (Norris, 2007). Interestingly, box scheme consumers consumption style appears to draw on the two themes that cut across the concept of ‘politics of choice’. Firstly, called cause-oriented’ repertoires, where consumer political expression should be done to support a cause either through buycott or boycott of products, petitioning, demonstrating. Secondly, the choice should be associated with agencies or institutions who depend on expertise and focus on production and dissemination of knowledge and information (Norris, 2007). It is obvious that consumers participation and consumption from local organic schemes fits with politics of choice repertoires as explained by Norris (2007). In the one hand, consumers participation and shopping from the local organic box schemes explicitly associated with a political expression through ‘buycott products’ (Micheletti, 2003) to reward and support those small-scale producers behind the box scheme for their ethical production conduct and by sharing the responsibility to protect the environment, support those small-scale producers who might be disadvantaged by unfair deals offered by supermarkets. While their purchasing power is directed toward particular initiatives as the local organic box schemes which serve as mediators of consumers engagement and participation in ethical/political consumption. Box schemes fit with the issue-based organisation as explained by Norris (2007), as it is operated by expert producers on organic farming who focus on production and distribution of knowledge and information.

Further, this form of participation can be classified and fall under the description of what Pattie *et al.,* (2003) call ‘individualistic activism’ and/or what (Micheletti, 2003) calls ‘individualised collective action. As (Pattie *et al.,* 2003) explains, ‘individualistic activism’ is distinct from both contact activism(e.g. contact people in authority) and collective activism(e.g. participating alongside other people), where it involves relatively anonymous individual acts. While Micheletti’s (2003) concept of ‘individualised collective action’ is relative to consumers or citizens getting involved in actions let us say consumption practices to take matters that themselves deem important. ‘‘the practice of responsibility-taking for common well-being through the creation of concrete, everyday arenas on the part of citizens alone or together to deal with problems that they believe are affecting what they identify as the good life.’’ (Micheletti, 2003). This individual actions when aggregated have the potential to form political movements that challenge the market political and economic powers through consumption choices, argues (Klein *et al.,* 2004).

This also connects neatly with the evolving theories of citizenship that support the idea of consumption as a form of politics. In that, box scheme consumers can be considered as citizens who consider the social responsibilities alongside their private materialistic side of their consumption and purchase activity. Different theories of citizenship such as: Ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2006, 2007; Jagers, 2009), sustainable citizenship (Micheletti *et al.,* 2012), and communal citizenship (Conover *et al.,* 1991; Jones and Gaventa, 2004) hold the same characteristics of non-reciprocity and represent citizens who take actions around ideals of sustainability, social justice and fairness. These concepts of citizenship take up the issue of obligation and responsibilities as a major component of citizenship. It assumes individuals are motivated to act because they feel an obligation and responsibility to others, not only because they might benefit personally from it. This responsibility might also be expressed to span far-reaching terms beyond the individual own state boundaries to include animals and plants (Jagers and Matti, 2010). Also, these forms of citizenship norms expand beyond the public sphere to make room for private, personal issues to become both catalysts of political action and the means of engagement. This is made explicit in the forms of consumption in box schemes and the expectation that individuals should seek to be responsible consumers by engaging in conscientious, ethical consumption of goods. Hence, it can be said that box scheme consumers are citizens who consider the social responsibilities alongside with their private materialistic side of their consumption and purchase activity from the box schemes.

6.6 Box scheme role in providing an ethical space for consumers ethical and political engagement

Given box scheme consumers high motivation toward the so-called ethical/political consumption when participating in the local organic box schemes, it is important to recognise that consumers ethical and political motivation through participating in local organic box schemes did not occur in a vacuum. In fact local food chains has an ethical/ political dimension of the phenomenon, so one must not do the mistake of missing out the role played by the box schemes itself in mobilizing individual consumers and bringing their concerns to the marketplace, and providing the practical narrative pathways that allow people to craft their ethical or political narratives including health and safety, environment, political, and social concerns. This has been highlighted in numerous studies encompassing the wider term of consumerism ’Ethical’ ‘Political ‘and ‘Sustainable. For example, (Micheletti, 2003) stressed the importance various intermediary actors such as non-governmental organisations, advocacy groups, social movement organisations in order to facilitate innovative forms of civic and political activates. While (Clarke *et al.,* 2007) noted that mobilising the ‘ethical consumer’ must involve organisations making practical and narrative resources available to people to enable them to act as ‘responsible’ subjects not only in relation to their own circumscribed criteria of utility but also in relation to broader social and environmental ‘responsibilities’. Similarly, (Clarke, 2008) explained that scope and intensity of consumer ethical or political activism depend on strategies by other actors or mediators capable of stabilising attention and problem definitions on relevant questions through developing markets and regulating political responsibilities to frame consumers, their options, attention, expectations, and self-definitions. Finally (Beagan *et al.,* 2010) approved that the ready availability of avenues for ethical consumption certainly facilitates ethical food choices (Beagan *et al.,* 2010).

In fact, box schemes activities and discourses encompass many ethical fields that help to open a space for alternative consumption that favours ethical and political consumption practices. Firstly, alternative initiatives such as box schemes through printed media (e.g. regular dissemination of monthly newsletters, leaflets, or websites and social media pages) or sometimes face to face either during farm visits or upon delivery may facilitate and influence knowledge transfer about production processes of food products including the location of food production, farmers social conditions and the advantages of purchasing locally of organic products from box schemes compared to purchasing from major retail channels. Such easy access to comparative information is important to the needs of ethical consumers, as it will enable them to make deep informed decisions about their consumption choices which further boost their ethical consumption behaviour. This has been established in ethical and political literature, as communication has been identified as an important aspect of a paradigm dominated by ethical and political consumption.to have clear connection to ethical consumption (Atkinson 2015), where providing radical and easily accessible and transparent information to consumers were found to be critical for the ethical consumer in their decision making process and is particularly relevant for boycotting and buycotting behaviours. (Shah *et al.,* 2007; Baek, 2010; Bennie *et al.,* 2010). The argument here is that ethical spaces such as local organic box schemes make this level of connection more likely than do mainstream channels. It is true that ethical products (i.e. organic- fair-trade) sold at the supermarkets are largely attached with value-laden information through labelling and certification which is used to allow ethical consumers to infer and identify the positive ethical features behind this products, but the information carried by this labels is limited and only covers one or two ethical issues (Mate, 2013). Box schemes on the other side provide a smooth way for learning about the background of the production processes as noted above. This presumably helps consumers to align their ethics and knowledge smoothly in a positive buying behaviour from a box scheme instead of the confusion that may result from the limited information presented by certification labels which leave food consumers sometimes with incomplete information may deter the ethical purchasing behaviour instead of facilitating it.

Having had the opportunity through the box schemes to experience the quality and learn about local organic scheme ethos, and the unique marketing profile generated from the schemes effort to generate services to gain consumer convenience such as home deliveries, online and phone orders, together with the added value of social connectedness and transparency in communication, all these factors could have contributed to increase box scheme consumers positive perception of their participation and shopping experience which further boosted their commitment to box scheme participation, given the unique space it offers for practicing ethical and political consumption.

This may explain supermarket continuous declining market share from 71.4% in 2011 to 69% in 2016 (Soil Association, 2012; 2017) and the local and organic box schemes a dramatic increase/growth in recent years. Box schemes in the UK topped 167 million pound in 2011 and continued to record a year on year increase till it reached over 260 million in 2016, which allows it to hold a proportion of 12% of the overall organic food market in the UK according to the organic market report published by the soil association (Soil Association, 2017). The astonishing growth of box schemes (success craving a unique position for itself in the overall British organic market) in the UK could be related to Kearney's (2010) claims that commitments to ethics and sustainability, in addition to social and environmental benefits and positive public relations, actually help the economic bottom line (Kearney, 2010). Given the high ethical market and consumption space the box scheme offers, this astonishing increase in market share is an indicative of consumer preference of localized food consumption that help overcome several concerns overlooked by the mainstream/ conventional market sector due to their sole focus on increasing product range and homogenization and reduce the premium price of ethical products (i.e. organic and fair-trade) to make it more affordable to consumers.

Nevertheless, in terms of market share local and organic are still to be considered niche products, taking up small fractions among the overall food market value in the UK; however, their market is soaring in relation to the overall market value of organic sales, scoring growth rate of about 10.1 % in 2016 compared to 9.1% in 2015 and over 35.7% growth since 2011. What is more, their symbolic impact should not be underestimated, as the ethical and political consumption orientation of even a tiny fraction of consumption routines may enable the cultivation of utopias that are unrealizable in consumption from the conventional retail channels that dominate the food market, given the convenience characteristics of price, quality, and the availability of a wide range of product qualities that characterize shopping and consumption of food in these major retail networks which make the spread and commitment to symbolic form of consumption from these chains difficult. Thus shopping and consumption from box scheme may come to represent bridges suspended toward others and towards ideals that usually escape consumers when participating in conventional retail channels: even if a style of consumption that is entirely ethical might presently be difficult, through buying and using some ethical products consumers can gain proof of the importance, feel as if they have the capacity to contribute to change and claim a new kind of identity for themselves.

By bringing consumers’ concerns to the marketplace, consumers might be seeing the local organic box schemes as their smooth route to a diverse form of ethical consumption activities, in a direct alternative to the many ethical dilemmas associated with the mainstream food channels counterpart. While box schemes could be able to increase its alternativeness through shortening the distance between producers and consumers through education and awareness to challenge the conventional market and attract consumer choice and satisfaction.

This concurs to a long line of research that suggests that direct/local food networks (i.e. box schemes, farmers market, farm shops) may be a reflexive route through what is called the ethical maze of consumption choices, by fostering the ethical consumers to get involved in collective and political choices related to economic rules and their environmental consequences (Dubuisson and Lamine, 2008). This is achieved through coordinating the individual will of making a difference with a collective and political act, empowering the actors through education and advocacy to help them get away from the role of victim of the market to assume the role of citizens. For example, Low and Davenport (2007), noted that the recreation of explicitly politicised ethical consumption through ethical spaces that are based on re-integration of education and advocacy with consumption offer ways of both increased sales of ethical products and spreading awareness of ethical issues. They referred to ‘Alternative high street’ to create forms of social connections that challenge mainstream values and interests, and reassure ethical consumers that they are not 'bowling alone' (Low and Davenport 2005; 2007).

6.7 Individual factors:

- **Gender**

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the current research found females to be the majority who participate in a box scheme. These findings support earlier research, two early studies of Australian consumers conducted by (Lea and Worsley, 2005) and (Lockie *et al.,* 2004) found that women are more likely to purchase organic food. Our data also supported the work of (Smithers *et al.,* 2008) that females are more likely to purchase local food. Also, this align with the prediction of who get involved in ethical consumption in various studies, where Females and more educated consumers were more likely to participate in ethically relevant shopping behaviour either through 'Boycott' or 'Buycott'(Frank, 2003; Cohen, 2004, Micheletti and Stolle, 2004; Littler, 2011; Long and Murray, 2013). Nevertheless, no significant relationship was found between Gender and level of expenditure from box schemes.

- **Age**

The cluster analysis has found a relationship to be present between age and ethical motivations, with ethical considerations being of relatively high importance for middle to older aged consumer groups.

Our data shows that box scheme consumers are older and are prepared to purchase affirmatively local and organic product from box schemes for a bunch of ethical preferences as presented and even to boycott. Long published Mintel report claimed that the ethical consumer is most likely to be aged over 35 (Cowe and Williams, 2000 in Carrigan *et al.,* 2004).

These findings are supported by earlier research that tends to show the lack of young people who buy ethically labelled food (i.e. organic food and eco-labelled household), and suggest that older age consumers with high disposal income are willing to spend, and indeed not as sensitive to price of ethical products as younger consumers (Moschis, 2000 in Carrigan *et al.,* 2004). This has been related to young people financial restrictions in choosing products that can be more expensive and because very young people do not shop for food supplies and household goods as frequently as the older generations (Micheletti and Stolle, 2007). Further, these findings concur with (Szmigin and Carrigan, 2005) suggestions that the additional finance involved in certain aspects of ethical purchasing might be more acceptable to older consumers, as they have greater disposable income and financial stability that the younger counterparts. Age was also found to be positively related to the level of expenditure from box schemes. This is in disparity with (Long and Murray, 2013) study that found age not significantly related to the tendency to ethical purchase.

- **Education**

The current study found that the majority of box scheme customers in this study had a high education attainment (first university degree and above).

Education was found not to be significantly related to the level of expenditure from box schemes. The non-significance of education variable could be due to lack of variability of box scheme consumers in regard to their attained education level, where all box scheme shoppers who participated in this study attained a high level of education of (university undergraduate degree and postgraduate degree).

In regard to education and the consumer's ethical motivation, the current research, perhaps unsurprisingly, has found a direct relationship between a relatively high level of education and the ethical motivation. Box scheme consumers with high education attainment were among most motivated by the ethical dimensions in relation to their decision to participate and purchase from local organic box schemes. While those consumers with lower education level were mainly motivated by more convenience related attributes.

- **Income level**

The findings regarding income level were consistent with the study conducted by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) and brown study on box scheme customers demographic profile in South England and South France, both studies suggested that box scheme customer is being rather affluent. The findings of the current study align with that, box scheme consumers of relatively high income were most interested / motivated by ethically related attributes such as social and economic, and environmental related attributes. This contradicts earlier research in the UK of box scheme clients, which did not find participants had a high household income (Seyfang, 2004). However, the majority of customers from the same study (Seyfang, 2004) were young to middle-aged (25–44 years); similar to the findings of the current study which found that the majority of box scheme consumers to be young and middle-aged as well (21-49).

6.8 Conclusion

With the increasing popularity of the local- organic box schemes in the UK and the recent constant market growth, this study critically evaluates the role that ethical aspects play within consumers participation and purchase decision making.

This research provides an understanding of the importance that consumers place on such criteria and how their decision to take part in box schemes are influenced by the recognition of these ethical issues related to the food market and industrial food sector generally. From this research, clear conclusions can be reached.

As previously highlighted very few studies were limited in the area of studying the consumer’s motivation and preferences to participate in box schemes. The study contributes to the existing literature on AFN’s by providing useful information pertaining consumer decision making to participate in a box scheme as alternative forms of sale channel which embody various ethical features consumers are interested in and concerned about.

The study of box scheme consumers motivation describes a phenomenon that corresponds to the literature on AFN’s as for why consumers and producers are interested in this new forms of direct sell food provisioning systems. Consumers motivation to buying from a box scheme are often related to the scale and nature of farming practices that furnish the food products, in this case, the small-scale organic and local production systems. The majority of consumers participate for a variety of reasons that include a wide range of Ecological, Economic, Social and personal motivations. The analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data of this study evoke the conclusion that the locality and the organic nature of production was the main foundational value system, a means by which to ensure high quality produce, accessing a wider variety of nutritious food, support small-scale local organic producers who are committed to adopt production systems that help protect and conserve environment and natural resources, avoid unnecessary miles that their food travel which contribute to the increasing environmental degradation due to the reliance and use of oil/fossil fuel in transportation, and build a trust on the production systems and who produces food.

This research explored the relationship between the perception of issues linked to food production and consumption and consumers decision to participate in box schemes. When investigating reasons and motivation of participation, we found that it reflects the perception of many issues on the part of consumers. Box scheme consumers were aware and concerned with broader global trade and environmental issues. The recognition and perception of these issues were the primary discursive reason for consumers to participate in a box scheme as they tended to justify their choices based on them. In seeking local and organic small scale production systems, consumers were explicitly addressing their desire to bypass some anxieties they perceived to be largely associated with the complex capitalistic mainstream forces that have been accused of being only interested in value capturing by creating more profit at the expense of environment, safety, health, and the conditions of the small local organic producers.

This unveils that consumers have sought deliberately about reconnection with the local through participating in a direct sale channel as a different way to consumption to avoid to deal with the issues they perceived to violate their ethical values through putting many constrain at risk from the local economy to the environment and consumer's safety and health. This suggests that consumers were completely aware and interested in knowing the chain through which their food has passed, and was cognitively willing to commit and continue support it because it provides them with sufficient evidence that the product has come from a wholesome and authentic source which help overcome the limitations associated with the conventional mainstream. Accordingly, participation in a box scheme could be seen as a reactionary response which gives consumers a sense of relief as being disengaged from having to think about such issues when they shop at supermarkets.

From this research, it became clear that box scheme consumers have a strong sense of moral responsibility that is reflected in the participation and shopping from local-organic box schemes in England. They appeared to be an educated consumers, with informed opinions that characterise their views on the ethical issues that surrounds the agriculture and food sector such as unethical business practices unfair deals offered to local farmers, usage of pesticides and chemicals impact on environment and deterioration of natural resources (water, soil) and on their own health and safety and environmental impact of increasing food miles of food and reliance on out of season food. Their knowledge has translated to a certain extent into their desire to purchase local and organic food. This is apparent in their support of box schemes; not only do they understand the box scheme ethical conduct of producing high-quality products with respect to the environment and their personal health but also their understanding forms a high level of commitment and responsibility to support these box schemes which reflect their deliberate ethical purchase decisions.

Despite the consensus found in many studies traditional motivations of quality, price, brand and convenience and value for money overrides ethical concerns and considerations, even when consumers are aware of the ethical issues in the production, use and disposal of products (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Shaw *et al.,* 2004; Low and Davenport, 2007)). These study findings suggest otherwise, box scheme shoppers were less sensitive toward price and their overall perception of product quality from the box scheme was positive which has been linked mainly to the freshness of products delivered. Box scheme consumers had a stronger desire for rewarding box scheme producers for their efforts to produce high-quality products with a high commitment to environmental sustainability and which does not put consumers health and safety at risk.

6.8.1 Contributions to theory

Only very limited research has been conducted into the role that ethical aspects can play in the consumer decisions (Bray *et al.,* 2011). This research provides a significant contribution to knowledge regarding consumer decision making to participate and purchase from local – organic box schemes.

Firstly, through examining ethical attributes within the holistic process of purchase and consumption of vegetables from local organic box schemes, this study provides an assessment of the importance of ethical aspects in the decision making of typical sort of food consumers. It is of an extreme importance to note that this study contribute to research on consumers attitude and behaviour by collecting data from a typical sort of consumers who happened to have been regularly purchasing from organic –local box schemes for the last 5-15 years, which reflect the extremity of the sample given by means of the so many years they have been taking part in box schemes, with all the accumulated experience and knowledge it could have helped the box scheme consumers to be aware of.

Findings here show that for most box scheme users, ethical considerations are one, if not the main key attributes of consumers motivation to participate and purchase from a local- organic box scheme on a regular basis.

Secondly, this research has identified and probed the specific ways in which ethical issues can impact on consumers ethical judgment and consequently motivation to participate in local-organic box schemes. Ethical and political issues have been thought to influence consumers motivations to consume ethically by choosing more responsibly products like organic and local alongside other attributes of food quality and convenience. Thirdly, the research presented here identified the fundamental role ethical aspects play within consumer behavioural shift to participate and purchase from local organic box schemes, instead of or even in parallel to their shopping at different retail outlets. The model presented in figure 15 depicts the process by which these ethical considerations account for a key role in the box scheme consumers decision-making.

Fourthly, and last, this study expanded the horizon by examining some features that were reported to stand between consumer’s ethical concerns (attitudes) and actual behaviour such as, price perception, quality perception, consumer’s knowledge and awareness, and consumer’s confidence and belief on the impact of an action.

Knowledge and awareness, box scheme consumers were more discerning and knowledgeable about the farming practices and the agro-environmental and industrial issues. There was some early evidence that suggests that participation in what is often seen as more ‘ethical’ food supply chains leads to a process of awareness raising amongst consumers, related to other spheres of consumption as well as to the food sourced from conventional supply systems (Seyfang, 2006; Seyfang, 2007). Consumers viewed box schemes as a robust solution to the uncertainty and issues mainly associated with the agro-industrial and retail systems. They mainly perceive going back to small scales natural farming systems such as ‘Organic’ and the locality of production as a good means through focussing on producing high-quality food that respects environment and consumers, and the construction of more equitable and environmentally just socio-economic relations of food consumption.

Price was generally considered as important, as it has to be affordable for consumers to buy. But it was perceived to be reasonable for the quality attached to it, even when compared with supermarket prices for fruit and vegetables for the same quality offered.

Quality was generally considered high in terms of freshness which has been mainly linked to good taste and nutritional value.

Finally, the particular nature of the box scheme as a form of direct selling was perceived as a practical mean to valorise successfully a quality farm product that explicitly includes elements of environmentally protection in the system of production, fairness to producers as part of the quality package offered. Further, they understand and believe in their role as supporting the small scale marginalised producers by contributing to improve the farm economy and make farmers more economically independent to avoid absorption into more intensive systems , and to keep them in the business of doing what they see as more authentic and ethical responsibility toward the environment and society. In addition to more social farming style, the open dialogue between consumers and producers/farmers where they have access to information about production systems employed and farmers conditions might have helped to create confidence in the authenticity of the farming and production system as it helps consumers to build a connection with their food. This enhanced the sense of responsibility consumer might have come with active participation and heightened awareness. This is consistent with Barnett *et al.,* (2005) claims that providing information to consumers regarding the conditions of production and distribution of commodities is central to changing consumer behaviour (Barnett *et al.,* 2005).

It could be said then that box scheme consumers hold on a set of moral values that increase their commitment to the locality and a strong belief in the basic integrity of the structure of the box scheme, which is built around growing authentically towards all aspects of sustainability. Clarke *et al.,* (2008)argued that People will not govern their own consuming behaviours and identities with the norms and values in consumption regulated for it unless there is a connecting opportunity which creates a pathway to participation that brings together the interests concerned (Clarke *et al.,* 2008). In this study, local organic box schemes apparently represent a significant 'device' for connecting these opportunities for the encouragement of ethical consumption by facilitating, enable and make a possible ethical action. Although not necessarily telling people to behave ethically or to follow right principles or to calculate good consequences, the importance of that device is that it is a practical bridge between the governing of consumption and the governing of the consuming self (Barnett *et al.,* 2005).

Box scheme offers consumers a graspable device with which to engage with ethics attached to their food, which could have developed as a practice of a larger scale form of collective action by facilitating consumer’s commitment. Thus, as Clarke *et al.,* (2008) suggested environmental, economic, social responsibility may often constitute the acceptance of a small scale and a limited ethical device such as that of engaging with a box scheme enables a practical engagement with a wider ethics thorough everyday practices and materialities of consumption.

This study may help to expand the literature on AFN's. It showed how the structure of the box scheme and its characteristics could have helped consumers to understand the value system they are involved in and how it helped them to overcome their anxieties associated with the mainstream global market by encouraging reconnection with food.

It further have contributed to the growing work on ethical consumerism, specifically showing how ethics are talked by consumers. The steps of consumer’s decision-making and how consumers perceiving ethical problem play a major role in their decision making and choice of alternatives. This could be seen as an approve of usefulness of the existing decision making models which claim that ethical decision making starts with consumers perceiving an ethical problem or recognising the issue and based on the moral judgement of that issue they would seek to take an action. However future research needs to take this finding more in depth to check for reliability and validate these findings. It would also be useful to compare between motivation of box scheme consumers and motivations of other consumers who participate in different food outlets (e.g. organic consumers at supermarkets, consumers who participate in other forms of AFN’s such as farmers market, Community supported agriculture and farm shops. In addition, testing how psychological and culture factors affects consumer motivation to participate in box schemes would also be useful.

This study tested that the various factors that have been described by other studies on ethical consumerism to hold a great potential to compromise ethical consumer behaviour, was found to play a positive role in consumers decisions.

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Annex 1. Box scheme news letter

March 2016

Purton House Organics

The Fresh Foodie

All the latest news & views from the farm

Organics In The News

The last few weeks have seen our lovely chickens hit the headlines: well, their yummy eggs anyway! *The Guardian* featured our organic free range eggs in a piece about what to do for Valentine's Day: the suggestion was that a lovely breakfast in bed using some ingredients bought through FarmDrop would go down well, especially if it included our legendary eggs! Have a look at the feature online: www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/feb/05/valentines-day-gifts-for-the-romantic-and-those-who-are-sick-of-it-already

Plus there has been yet another review of the many studies into the benefits of organic food, which again concludes that organic food is nutritionally different than conventional food. The study looked at organic meat and milk, and suggested that at least part of the reason for the better nutrition was that organic animals are fed on a natural diet rich in grass and clover; rather than processed feeds from corn and other cheap ingredients. Check out more information at http://nyti.ms/1Lr8eqz

PRODUCED ON OUR ORGANIC FARM THIS MONTH

Fruit & veg: January King cabbage, Savoy cabbage, red cabbage, celeriac, kale, leeks, purple sprouting broccoli (PSB), salad bags, swede

Organic beef & pork *Organic free range eggs*

Animal Food

We love this picture, sent in by veg box customer Andie Bright: a bright green duck hiding in a sweet red pepper! You do sometimes find some interesting (and occasionally rude!) natural growths in fruit and veg: but this has to be one of the cutest and fully formed we've seen! Share any fruit or veggie pictures you have on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Duck stir-fry, anyone?!

Floating Coffee Shop!

We're a quirky lot at Purton House and our coffee area certainly reflects that, with our rustic pallet furniture and a new hammock ceiling, set off with a real hanging gondola! We think it's South American in origin – probably not watertight anymore, but it looks great as a feature. We're all getting refresher training to make the best ever barista coffee, so pop in and have a coffee on us next time you visit with this voucher!

Purton Farm Shop

Bring this voucher with you for a free tea or coffee when you spend £5 in the shop.
Offer ends March 13th 2016;
offer limited to 1 voucher per person.

Veg Box Research Project

Shadi Hashem is a PhD student at Palermo University, Italy, and is conducting a short online survey of marketing research with the Organic Research Centre. They are asking for as many box scheme customers to take a few minutes to fill it in the survey as possible. Your views matter, and can add to valuable research into box schemes and how we can all do better!
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/boxscheme-PhD-research

Annex 2. Box schemes invitation cover letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

Shadi Hashem currently works at the Organic Research Centre, Elm Farm as a placement student as part of his PhD studies in Italy. He is conducting a study focusing on vegetable and fruit box schemes, and the quality and ethically related attributes that are important when purchasing from these box schemes (e.g. socio-economic, social, and ecological) and in which way these attributes may affect consumer choice, motivation, and perception.

Shadi is seeking assistance with his research and is looking for schemes that fit the research needs for more grass roots producer orientated box schemes and the sort of customers you are likely to attract. He would also be grateful if you could include your customers in the study, which would prove a huge support. If possible, please could you include a web link to his survey questionnaire in your weekly newsletters, on your website, and also on your Facebook and Twitter accounts, inviting your customers to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire?

The work will support a better understanding of the motivations of box scheme customers. Shadi will share his results, once analysis has been completed.

The questionnaire can accessed via the web link below:
https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/boxscheme-PhD-research

If you wish to participate in the study or require further information, please contact Shadi via email at shadi.h@organicresearchcentre.com or by phone (0) 775 107 1118

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Annex 3. Box scheme consumers invitation cover letter

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Shadi Hashem I am a PhD student at Palermo University-Italy. For my final project I am conducting a marketing research study in collaboration with the Organic Research Centre (Elm Farm) UK. The study examines the consumer's perception of quality attributes that are important when purchasing and consuming fruit and vegetables from box schemes and in which way these attributes affect consumer choice. Because you are a customer and user of various grocery services from the box scheme, I believe that you have insightful information to share.

The knowledge gained from understanding your perception of the quality of products purchased from the box scheme will contribute to the development of the box schemes production and retail formats that meet the needs of all segments of consumers.

You are kindly invited to participate in this research study by attending a face to face interview at a place and time convenient to you. I would be grateful if you could spare some of your valuable time to assist me in my educational endeavour.

If you accept to participate in the survey or if you should require any additional information or have any questions, please contact me via email at shadi.h@organicresearchcentre.com or by phone 0775 107 1118.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Shadi Hashem

Annex 4. Qualitative questionnaire guideline

Study interviews CONSENT FORM

Shadi Hashem, Phd student, Department of Agriculture, forestry and Environmental, (sector) Economics and policy- Palermo University-Italy.
shadi.h@organicresearchcentre.com – Phone No: (0) 775 107 1118

I hereby agree to participate in research moderated by Shadi Hashem for the purpose of his study into box scheme customer purchasing behaviour.

Project outline:
This in depth interviews research form part of a larger study into the role of specific attributes in Box scheme participate and purchase decision making.

For the purpose of the research
1. I grant Shadi Hashem permission to document the discussion - through audio recording and transcription.
2. The information I agree to share is to be used solely for the purposes of the research study.
3. The information contained in the contributions will not be given to any non-research stuff
4. Confidentiality and anonymity in analysis are assured. The content of the interview may be read, quoted, or cited from and disseminated for educational and scholarly purposes only.

Signature participant:
……………………………………………………………………………..
Name of participant:
……………………………………………………………………………
Date:
…………………………………………………………………………………………

Semi-structured questionnaire

Part one:

Thinking about your purchase from the box scheme:

1.1- What are the factors that you consider when shopping at the box scheme?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1.2- Could you explain the considerations that you have?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1.3- Are there any other factors that we have not discussed?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1.4- You have not mentioned ……..(use attributes from the literature if it's not used by the interviewee) is this factors not important to you

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Part 2

2.1- What do you perceive to be ethical issues in the agricultural sector in general and specifically in the food market?

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……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Discussion around the relative importance of such factors

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.2- Do you consider any of these ethical issues when buying from box scheme?

If "yes" what issues in specific? And how you think buying from box scheme would contribute to fix the problem

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.3- Are there any items of food that you would not consider buying (boycott) for any of the above mentioned ethical reasons?

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

2.4- Are there any shops that you would not consider shopping at for any of the above ethical reasons?

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

2.5- How would you find out about the box scheme /suppliers ethical stance?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.6- In addition to your shopping at the box scheme, where else do you shop at for food?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.7- What are the key quality criteria you seek?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..