

Executive summary

Purpose of the research:

This research will be used by Co-operatives UK in their work to promote, develop and unite the co-operative economy in the UK. The insight provided will be distributed within the organisation and directly inform approaches to marketing and communications as well as member and stakeholder engagement. The research focus on Generation Z (GZ) (ages 18-34) values aligns with Co-operatives UK's strategic plan to nurture and empower young co-operators and entrepreneurs. The research paper will be added to the knowledge base of the co-operative movement, and findings may be used across the work of business development and the promotion of sustainable and ethical business models.

Key points:

- GZ have strong ethics and values.
- GZ want companies to be ethical and in particular, care for the environment.
- GZ have little awareness of co-operatives but once they are made aware of them, they feel that co-operatives are authentic and ethical, and they would choose to support them.
- Despite these strong personal ethical values GZ have, many would be put off working for a **worker** co-operative because of the flat pay structure and lack of hierarchy that some adopt, as this would be seen as an inability to progress in their careers and the hygiene factor of a high salary is the main motivation for going to work.

Recommendations:

- Co-operatives UK should publicise how co-operatives are participating in activist causes, showing the benefits they are bringing to their communities. Research has shown young people are more likely to engage with brands that participate in brand activism thus if more young people engage with co-operative businesses it may influence more young people to consider starting a co-operative business.
- Co-operatives UK should focus on making sure they are supporting environmentally friendly causes and publicising the work they are doing to combat climate change. Co-operatives UK have a social responsibility value, this can encompass co-operatives making sure they are protecting the environment. However, Co-operatives UK could add to their values to incorporate a more specific environmentally friendly value as the research found that GZ deem this extremely important.
- The research found that GZ find honesty, transparency (openness), caring for others, and equality extremely important values. Thus, Co-operative UK should focus their marketing and advertising efforts on highlighting these values.
- To stop the generation below GZ having the same issue of being unaware of co-operatives and how they operate, Co-operatives UK should look into teaching young people about ownership and governance, not just about the co-operative business model. Equipping young people with this important knowledge will allow younger generations to make decisions for themselves about what business model would suit them best.
- Co-operatives need to stop any unfair treatment of young people in order to grow and prosper in the future.



How Can Co-operatives UK Engage Generation Z (18-34) Through Leveraging Their Co-operative Values?

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Generation Z (GZ) are maturing, possess more purchasing power, and have greater expectations when it comes to brands participating in social justice and political movements (Deloitte, 2020; Spotify, 2020). The co-operative movement, which acts as an authoritative and campaigning voice, has values and principles that create a genuinely inclusive economy. However, these two radical groups are disconnected. This paper aims to explore how Co-operatives UK, the voice for the UK's thousands of independent co-operatives, can engage with GZ, encouraging them to set up worker-owned businesses so GZ's values and the co-operative values can work together to create lasting social change. This study will analyse the 18-34 age group (born between 2003 and 1987) using the moniker GZ.

Most people have heard of co-operatives but usually only link them to the popular high street convenience stores. These are the most well-known type of co-operative, but they are not the only type.

Typically, a business is owned by its founder and investors, but a co-operative is a business controlled and owned by its members. These members can be customers, employees, residents, or suppliers, all of whom have a say in how the business is run. Every co-operative shares the same principles, which are shown in figure 1.

There are seven co-operative principles that define how a co-op operates:

1. A co-op is **owned and controlled by its members**. It exists for the benefit of its members, who may be customers, workers, suppliers or the wider community.
2. A co-op is **democratic** – this means every member has an equal say in how it's run and how profits are used.
3. **Every member contributes financially** in some way – from buying products, working for the co-op, investing in it or deciding how to spend its profits.
4. A co-op is an **independent** business, owned and controlled by its members.
5. It offers **education and training** to everyone involved, so they can develop the co-op and promote the benefits of co-operation.
6. It **co-operates**, works with and supports other co-ops.
7. A co-op supports the **communities** it works with.

Figure 1: Co-operative principles (Source: Co-operatives UK, no date: online)

To first understand how the co-operative movement has evolved over time a historical overview is needed. In 1844 the Rochdale Pioneers believed in a different way of doing business, they decided to bring about change by forming a co-operative selling good quality staple goods. The principles they developed inspired a global co-operative movement (International Co-operative Alliance, 2018), which boomed throughout the first

part of the 20th century. The 1960s was a decade of revolution, an era of protests, change in politics, music, and society worldwide (Finlayson, 2008; Watson, no date). The UK was now living more peacefully, even though the country was saddened by the wartime financial debt (Watson, no date). The younger generation was keen to embrace new ideas to improve the country and establish a better way of life for Britain (Watson, no date).

The 1980s saw a rise of the individualist 'get rich quick' culture and the collapse of traditional communism (More Than A Shop, 2020; Shackleton, 1998). The Yuppie movement was born (Dekker and Ester, 1990), and Britain was thrown into violent social and political upheaval as a counter-revolution (Cowley, 2009). Due to the changes made by the conservative government, at that time the urge was no longer to change the world in the form of adolescent rebellion and student idealism but to simply prosper in it (Cowley, 2009; Leach, 1981). The idea of community and society broke down. Thus, the co-operative movement became somewhat lost.

Now, in today's marketplace, consumers want brands to share the same values as themselves and when brands match activist messaging, purpose, and values with positive, helpful and socially accepted corporate practices, they are engaging in authentic brand activism (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Thus, creating the most potential for social change and large gains in brand equity (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Brands are now expected to take a stand for sociocultural issues as campaigning for social change, such as the Black Lives Matter movement (Black Lives Matter, 2020), gay rights movement (BBC, 2021a), and more recently the Sarah Everard vigil (Kwai, 2021), are often met by political downplay. This reflects why the Rochdale Pioneers started the co-operative movement: real social change comes from society working together to create ethical businesses that support communities.

1.2 Research Rationale

It is important to discuss this issue now as the Covid-19 pandemic has had an immense social impact worldwide. History shows that after a time of hardship and struggle society comes together to push lasting social change and build back better. The aftermath of The Black Death in 1347 saw the breakdown of the feudal system (BBC, 2021b) and the Peasants' Revolt (BBC, 2021c). Some view the 9/11 attacks in America as the landmark which brought an end to the post-Cold War era (Kakihara, 2003) as well as a greater focus on home life, family, and increased expressions of patriotism (Carducci, 2009). Even during the Covid-19 pandemic we are seeing more meaningful social connections, we are forced to think locally, and, similarly to the 1960s where social movements were set up to deal with the consequences of epic historical events, the younger GZ audience are, once again, searching for ways to bring about positive social change (Deloitte, 2020; Spotify, 2020).

The annual Co-op Economy report revealed that the nation's 7,237 co-ops have a collective turnover of £39.7 billion (Co-operatives UK, 2021), showing the immense size and value co-operatives bring to the economy and why it is important to build awareness of the co-operative movement. At the end of 2020, nearly 100,000 corporations went out of business due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with expectations that figure would rise as

restrictions continue into 2021 (Sraders and Lambert, 2020). The co-operative model involves less risk for entrepreneurs starting businesses, with 76% of co-operatives surviving after 5 years (Co-operatives UK, 2020). The barrier to this is that the GZ audience, with the desire and time to build new businesses and the ability to re-invigorate the economy, have little awareness of the co-operative movement (YouGov, 2020). The Co-op high street stores could be victims of their own success as the stores have become household names but the concept behind them has been somewhat lost. The Covid-19 pandemic has given us more time and space to imagine radical new ways of working and, historically, co-operatives are formed in response to social crises (More Than A Shop, 2020). Now, more than ever, research into how to leverage the co-operative principles and values in the form of brand activism to engage GZ is important.

1.4 Project Aims and Objectives

Aim: Recommend how Co-operatives UK can engage GZ with the concept of setting up co-operatives and how they can use their co-operative values to resonate with this younger demographic.

Objectives:

1. To establish the theoretical basis for value-driven brands and the GZ target audience.
2. Evaluate co-operative values through researching existing co-operative businesses and identify what motivates GZ co-operative business owners who have already set up co-operative businesses.
3. Explore the values GZ deem most important, what brands they engage with, and what motivates them to engage with these brands.
4. Critically evaluate why awareness of co-operative businesses in GZ is low and determine the barriers to setting them up for this age group.
5. To make recommendations on how Co-operatives UK can leverage their co-operative values to engage the GZ audience.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Brand Activism

To first tackle these objectives, it is important to use the existing literature on brand activism to define the term and differentiate it from **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** and **corporate political activity (CPA)**. Analysing the somewhat sparse literature on brand activism the main difference from CSR is the extent to which the issue is widely favoured rather than partisan (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Korschun et al., 2019; Moorman, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016). Sakar and Kotler (2018) view brand activism as an evolution of CSR. Furthermore, Bhagwat et al., (2020) see CSR and brand activism, or what they call **corporate socio-political activism (CSA)**, as activities that lie on a continuum of partnership in which partnership describes high or low societal consensus (figure 2). CSR is usually carried out to improve relationships with stakeholders (Mishra and Modi, 2016), whereas CSA has an extremely varied response from stakeholders based on their personal socio-political values (Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2002). In addition, the risk varies (Bagwat et al., 2020; Mukherjee and Althuizen, 2020). Investors in a company may view CSR as a wasteful use of human and monetary resources, however, it has been found to reduce companies' unique risks (Luo and Battacharya, 2009). CSA, however, often involves less of an initial monetary investment but can increase the company's risk due to unpredictability coming from punitive actions (Bagwat et al., 2020).

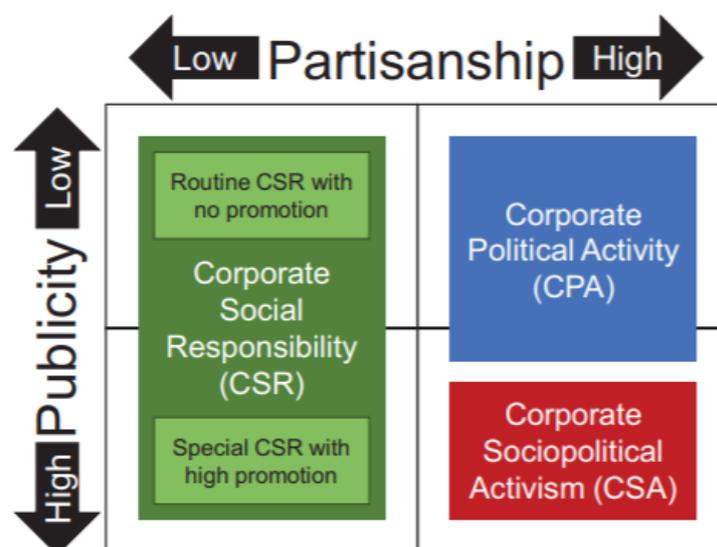


Figure 2: Conceptual distinctions among CSR, CPA, and CSA (Source: Bhagwat et al., 2020: 3)

CPA entails companies becoming involved in efforts to sway political processes in a favourable direction so they gain a competitive market advantage (Lux et al., 2011). CPA is carried out to further a goal that results in financial payoff rather than supporting a social cause (Hillman et al., 2004). As shown in figure 2, Bhagwat et al., (2020) suggest that CPA and CSA differ in the extent to which the activities are publicised, as CSA is advertised to promote the company's values (Kotler and Sarkar, 2017; Nalick et al., 2016), it can be

completely misaligned with regulators, and its effect on the company's value is unknown (Bhagwat et al., 2020). In contrast, CPA is carried out quietly (Lux et al., 2011), only usually made public accidentally (Werner, 2017), and aligns with the company's interests, which has a positive effect on their value (Lux et al., 2011; Werner, 2017).

Sobande (2019) argues that, due to the capitalist nature of modern society, when brands align themselves with social justice ideals they are navigating pressures to simply present themselves as being concerned with these issues, when in fact they are just in the pursuit of profit with no sustained commitment for addressing such injustices (woke-washing). Conversely, Sobande's (2019) research only analyses TV advertisements, not the brand's corporate practices, therefore, regardless of underlying motivations to participate in CSA, companies that carry out such activities to meet business objectives qualify as CSA because they still risk negative repercussions from stakeholders who possess the opposing view (Bahagwat et al., 2020).

Building on Bahagwat et al., (2020), Moorman (2020), and Vendenburg et al.'s, (2020) definitions of brand activism/CSA this research paper defines brand activism as a purpose and values-driven strategy in the form of a statement and/or action in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on a partisan socio-political issue carried out by, or on behalf of, a company or individual brand name to create social change and marketing success.

Nalick et al., (2016) state that brands involved in socio-political issues in the form of brand activism can be evaluated along three dimensions, **(1)** market motivations, in which it must be considered what is motivating the company to participate in socio-political issues. **(2)** corporate position, a company will take a stand for or against an issue. **(3)** Manner of involvement, the variety of ways brands can choose to get involved in socio-political issues to bring them to the attention of stakeholders as a way of solving contentious matters, or it could be more ad hoc for some organisations. Nalick et al., (2016) believe a brand's involvement can be measured by the frequency they carry out these socio-politically driven actions, the amount of resources invested, and by measuring the quality of the actions taken.

Furthermore, Nalick et al., (2016) argue that companies only engage in brand activism due to three reasons, **(1)** the company bets that future stakeholders will support their position, thus expecting their socio-political involvement to be a good investment as they believe the stakeholders that side with their actions are more valuable than other groups of stakeholders (Nalick et al., 2016). Bhagwat et al's., (2020) study supports this as they found that companies who engage in brand activism can reap financial rewards even when the activities do not align with all their current stakeholders' values, showing brands are becoming seemingly comfortable with alienating some stakeholders to participate in partisan socio-political issues (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Korschun et al., 2019; Moorman, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016; Smith and Korschun, 2018; Wettstein and Baur, 2016). **(2)** Stakeholders may pressure a company to carry out unwanted actions due to different stakeholder groups

coming together, often over social movements, which force companies into a troublesome position in which they must support or oppose a particular issue as continued neutrality on a topic may harm their reputation (Nalick et al., 2016). Conversely, a company that hastily supports a socio-political issue without proper evaluation may find it backfires and causes backlash (Nalick et al., 2016; Shetty et al., 2019). **(3)** Managers have enormous power in a company's decision making and are often influenced by their personal bias which can harmfully affect shareholders (Nalick et al., 2016). The conflict comes from managers using company resources, including themselves, to support socio-political issues which are not part of the company agenda (Nalick et al., 2016). These three motivations for socio-political involvement are subject to change based on institutional environments allowing such activities (Nalick et al., 2016).

Considering Nalick et al.'s (2016) views on how brand activism can be evaluated and why brands participate in brand activism from the perspective of co-operative businesses, their motivations are primarily to support their community or to make positive change in the world. Often co-operatives are started based on socio-political ideals and activist values important to all members and cannot be pressured into participating in socio-political causes by stakeholders or managers because co-operatives are democratic. Consumers may not believe brands are participating in authentic brand activism (Alhouthi et al., 2016; Du et al., 2010; Vredenburg et al., 2018), as 56% of consumers believe brands use societal issues as a marketing ruse to sell more products (Elderman, 2019). Simultaneously, consumers, especially young people, expect brands to take a stand on socio-political issues that make a real difference to society (Elderman, 2019; Spotify, 2020). Therefore, communicating authentic brand activism is critical for marketing success as well as social change. Vredenburg et al., (2020) determine authentic brand activism by the alignment between three characteristics: a brand's core purpose and values, the messaging type and its content, and their corporate practices. Acknowledging this, if co-operatives were to participate in brand activism it could be seen as authentic by society as they have a core purpose and values that wholeheartedly align with their corporate practices.

2.2 Stakeholder Theory

The term stakeholder can be defined as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (Freeman, 1984: 46). Stakeholder theorists often take either a broad or narrow view of stakeholder theory (Windsor, 1992). Freeman's (1984) definition is extremely broad as it defines stakeholders to include virtually anyone (Mitchell et al., 1997). Offering a similarly broad view of the types of stakeholder is Charkham (1992), who suggests that there are contractual (legal relationship) and community stakeholders (diffuse but real). In contrast, Clarkson (1994, cited in Mitchell et al., 1997) offers a much narrower view from a financially orientated perspective, in which stakeholders can be viewed as voluntary risk bearers, investing some form of capital, or involuntary risk bearers, as a result of an organisation's activities. Clarkson (1994, cited in Mitchell et al., 1997) states that an element of risk is necessary otherwise there is no stake. Mitchell et al., (1997) argue that Clarkson's (1994, cited in Mitchell et al., 1997) involvement of risk is a way of narrowing the stakeholder field to

encompass those who have a legitimate claim regardless of their power to influence the organisation or the legitimacy of the relationship to the organisation. This narrow view, therefore, does not allow for one to understand an organisation's stakeholder environment fully, thus, stakeholder theory, from Freeman (1984) and Charkham's (1992) view, says managers should take actions that benefit non-shareholder stakeholders.

According to Clarke (1997), the concept of stakeholders has three fundamental elements. **(1)** Philosophical level, in which everyone contributes and benefits, an element closely related to the **co-operative business model (CBM)**. **(2)** Participatory level, the participation of accountability, and **(3)** financial level, in which the stakeholder's participation is reinforced by the financial or material interest they have in the prosperity of the economy or the organisation. This somewhat agrees with Freeman (1984) and Wicks et al.'s (1994) view that the essence of stakeholder management is the ability to create, participate, and sustain moral relationships, and Donaldson and Preston (1995), Evan and Freeman (1988), and Langtry's (1994) belief that an organisation has a duty to stakeholders to share the benefits and harms of an organisation's actions. Thus, stakeholder theory implies that good relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders and society is necessary for success, in contrast to the view that organisations should participate in brand activism which encompasses isolating groups of stakeholders.

Bjerregaard and Luring (2013) state that businesses are embedded in the biological and social environment surrounding them, in which businesses are an important part of environmental, economic, and social systems. Thus, a business's structure, processes, and activities must be responsible for the impact they have on all stakeholders, including the biological and social environment that supports their existence (Goel and Ramanathan, 2014). CSR operates on the basis that businesses are duty-bound to meet their responsibilities to more of their stakeholders than their shareholders (Goel and Ramanathan, 2014). Therefore, CSR should be integrated into a business's governance, structure, and strategy (Goel and Ramanathan, 2014). CSR is part of ethical business practice and has been increasing due to growing demands for transparency and corporate citizenship (Goel and Ramanathan, 2014; Jamail and Mirshak 2007). However, one cannot assume businesses that participate in CSR are ethical, as violations of ethical practices are unlikely to be documented.

2.3 Ethical Branding

Everyone has ethical beliefs and values, but they tend to be culturally relative, therefore we need ethics to arrive at a social and professional consensus of moral principles to guide moral judgement (Michael, 2006; Soule, 2002; Soule et al., 2009). Ethical principles: virtue ethics, utilitarianism, ethical egoism, and duty ethics, are used to evaluate a person or organisation's practices and values. These perspectives provide a clearer view of what constitutes as ethical. All organisations have established codes of practice and standards that appeal to the power of moral principles as guides to decision making for internal stakeholders. In addition, the majority of businesses must adhere to ethical principles so the economy can function properly (Homann et al., 2007). Fan (2005) states that an ethical

brand should promote public good and should be evaluated on their moral principles and values, not just on financial and economic criteria. Considering the co-operative principles stated in the introduction to this paper, there are both moral and pragmatic arguments for establishing co-operative businesses. Firstly, considering all ethical perspectives, including others and working for the wider social good is the right thing to do, in contrast to Friedman's (1970) belief that the duty of a commercial business is solely to make a profit and a corporation's social responsibility is the responsibility of individuals, not the business. From a pragmatic standpoint, working with others allows greater tasks to be achieved, stakeholder theory suggests that good relationships with a range of external stakeholders are necessary for success, and investment of money, time, and skills from a group of people rather than just one is a way of spreading risk.

The ultimate aim of branding is to emotionally position oneself in the mind of consumers as a favourable brand over competitors (Ries and Trout, 1982), which can be named the emotional selling proposition (Aitchison, 1999). There is ruthless competition for market share, therefore a brand's moral practices are probably their last concern. The paradox is that the more successful a brand becomes the more likely its strategy involves ethically questionable practices (Fan, 2005). A brand can simultaneously have different images of itself in the mind of stakeholders, for example, intended versus perceived. Fan (2005) believes it is impossible for a brand to have one image which appeals to everyone as she feels it will alienate groups of consumers, however, this appears to be what brand activism is encouraging. One image of a brand consumers use to decide if its moral foundation aligns with their own (Mukherjee and Althuisen, 2020), if it does not, that group is alienated from the brand. Keller (1998) states that a socially responsible brand image involves the perception that a company is contributing to communities, supporting social activities, and improving the welfare of society. The goal of a responsible brand image matches the goal of brand activism, to create social change and marketing success. In light of these points, co-operatives could be considered the most ethical and socially responsible corporation as they promote public good, which creates social change, and has moral values that all co-operatives are based on and align with.

In today's marketplace, there are mounting pressures from shareholders for brands to improve their financial performance, but stakeholders also expect brands to behave in a socially responsible and ethical way (Elderman, 2019; Fan, 2005). There should be a clear vision about how brands will make the world a better place by having a justified set of core values (de Chernatony, 2010; de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003). Ethical brand positioning could benefit the brand as they would have a differential advantage over competition, and it could help overcome consumers' distrust towards branding communications. Recent YouGov (2020) data provided by Co-operatives UK found that the highest percentage (32%) of 18-24-year olds associated the word 'honest' with co-operative businesses and 'ethical' was the second most associated word for 25-34-year olds (37%). This shows co-operatives are thought of as ethical and honest by some of GZ but there are still a large percentage that do not agree. When asked what attributes would gain one's trust in a business, 'behaving fairly' (65% for 18-24-year olds and 71% for 25-34-year

olds) and 'being a good employer' (61% for 18-24-year olds and 73% for 25-34-year olds) were the most important attributes (YouGov, 2020). This drives home the fact that GZ expect brands to behave in ethical ways.

2.4 Values

Consumers judge situations and events by using their own values that reflect desirable goals as guiding principles, in which motivational goals that drive consumers are comprised of desirable mental representations (Schwartz, 2012; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). Values are a dominant force influencing consumer behaviour (de Chernatony et al., 2011). By identifying consumer values one can understand their brand choices and thus help brands develop (de Chernatony et al., 2011). Marketeers create brand values in order to personify the brand so consumers can rapidly recognise the values depicted by competing brands (de Chernatony et al., 2011). This creates a brand personality that acts as an influential metaphor to convey their brand values (de Chernatony et al., 2011). Sheth et al., (1991) argue that a consumer's choice is influenced by just five values: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional. By understanding which values a consumer is principally concerned by, marketers can give the brand a set of values that are the most appropriate to connect with consumers and influence their brand choices (de Chernatony et al., 2011).

Schwartz (2012) believes that there are basic values that people in all cultures recognise, however, individuals and groups prioritise these values differently. Schwartz's (2012) value theory uses 10 broad values which can be organised along two dimensions regarding the motivation that underlies each of them (figure 3). The first being personal growth motivational goals, that involve the need for exploration and progress, at the other end is self-protection motivational goals, that encompass the need for control and stability. The second dimension refers to self-focused and socially-focused motivational goals. Growth, self-protection, self-focused and social-focused labels have been added to the model to show these dimensions more clearly. The 10 values Schwartz (2012) uses form four higher-order value constructs: **(1) self-transcendence**, protecting the welfare of one's immediate group (benevolence) and protection for the welfare of all people and nature (universalism). **(2) Openness to change**, independent thought and creativity (self-direction), excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (stimulation) and pleasure and enjoyment for oneself (hedonism). **(3) Self enhancement**, achieving personal success (achievement) and acquiring social status and material wealth (power). **(4) Conservation**, the restraint of actions that harm others or violate social norms (conformity), respect or commitment to the ideas that one's culture provides (tradition), and safety and stability of society and oneself (security). The opposite values in the circle typically conflict with one another, whereas the values next to each other are compatible (Schwartz, 2012). This study will use an adaptation of Schwartz's (2012) theoretical model to map the co-operative and GZ values. Nikolinakou and Phua (2019) used Schwartz's (2012) model to test which millennial (their study used the age range, 18-34, with the millennial moniker) values drive more brand-related activities on social media. Nikolinakou and Phua (2019) found that conservation values positively influenced brand sharing and content creation activities on social media whereas self-

transcendence had a negative influence. Nikolinakou and Phua’s (2019) study was conducted in India, thus one cannot assume that the more influential and favourable values of our UK study will be the same.

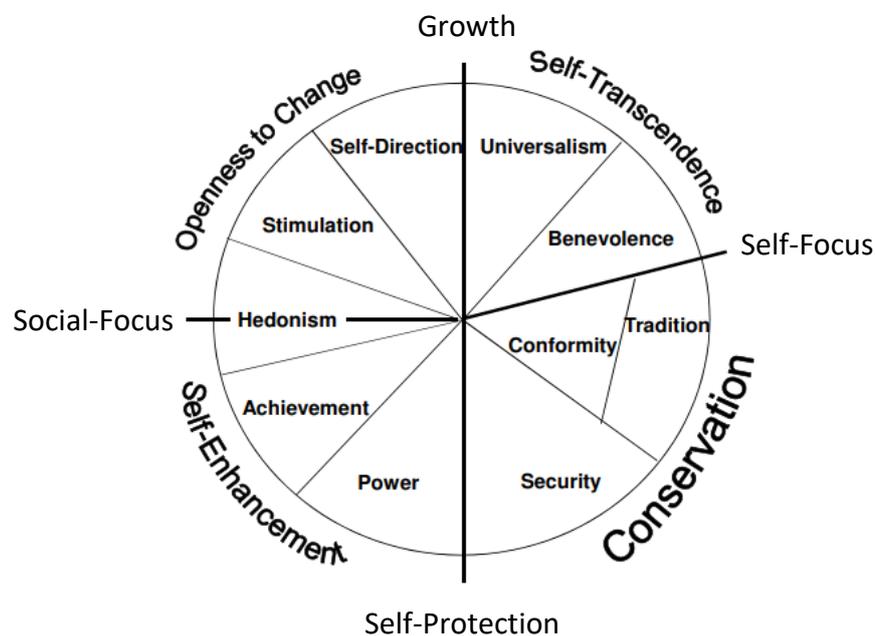


Figure 3: Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value (Source: Schwartz, 2012: 9)

Looking at de Chernatony’s (2010) systematic process of building and sustaining brands, organisations must define brands’ envisioned future, purpose, values, culture, and their brand objectives before auditing the brandsphere. For a brand to be successful it must work for everyone that is part of the corporation, which is why a brand audit must be performed. This will discover how distributors, in this case the individual co-operative organisation’s distributors, competitors, customers, and the environment (political, economic, social, technological, and environmental) feel about the brand, identifying how they can reach their vision and identify their biggest challenges in doing so (de Chernatony, 2010). A brand must investigate if their core values still match their customers’, analysing where they need to be in the marketplace, to stand out. Fill’s (2007) synthesis for brand auditing also identifies that aligning the values of consumers to the brand is important for success. This research paper will mirror the brand auditing step, finding out how co-operatives can align their values with GZ.

2.5 Generation Z

A generation share ‘the life experiences of their formative years’ (Smith and Clurman, 1998: 3), which include world events and disasters, economic changes, pop culture, and technology advances. As previously defined, this study will be analysing the 18-34 age group using the moniker GZ. Recent research by Deloitte (2020) and Spotify (2020) suggest that due to the pandemic, GZ have a greater desire than ever before to drive positive change in their communities and around the world. GZ are pushing for the government and businesses to mirror the same commitment to society, in which they put

people ahead of profits, prioritising inclusivity, sustainability, and equality (Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021). GZ are more actively supporting smaller businesses after the pandemic but will not hesitate to penalize businesses that publicise and practice values that conflict with their own (Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021). 60% of respondents to Deloitte's (2020) survey said they plan to buy more products and services from businesses that positively affected society and supported their employees throughout the pandemic. Nikolinaou and Phua's (2019) study somewhat contradicts this as they conclude that GZ are not driven to engage with brands using self-transcendence values. However, they go on to discuss how this may be due to GZ's scepticism towards brand activism efforts. The pandemic may have influenced a positive change in GZ's trust towards brand activism. On the other hand, Deloitte's (2020) report, conducted during the pandemic, stated that less than half of GZ believe businesses are having a positive impact on society, down from 76% three years prior, suggesting their scepticism may have increased.

Research shows climate change and protecting the environment are GZ's greatest concerns (Deloitte, 2020; Hanson-Rasmussen and Lauver, 2018; Winograd and Hais, 2014) and due to the pandemic, there has been a growing sense of individual responsibility (Deloitte, 2020). Critics of GZ, however, say that convenience and comfort are more important to them than climate change, and GZ do not feel it is their responsibility to change their purchases or behaviour to benefit the environment (Head, 2013). In addition, National Environmental Education Foundation (2015) researchers believe that GZ's energy conservation practices are much weaker than baby boomers. However, both these critics have studied American groups thus we cannot assume similar findings for the UK. The UK Spotify (2020) report, which interviewed 15-40-year olds, agreed with previous studies that climate action was a focus for young people. However, as the year progressed, due to the Black Lives Matter movement, racial justice became the defining issue (Spotify, 2020). Studies on what values GZ deem the most important are diverse, and due to the pandemic and recent socio-cultural movements, past studies are quickly becoming outdated.

Employers are seen by GZ to be doing more to align with their interests which is influencing them to stay with their employers for longer (Deloitte, 2020). This suggests that if brands do the same for consumers their brand loyalty and purchase intention may increase. Unfortunately, GZ's past view that businesses are socially responsible and ethical (Deloitte, 2016) is wavering as a company's conduct is regarded as ominous and untrustworthy (Deloitte, 2020). The pandemic has unsettled societies familiar structure, with lockdowns hitting GZ hardest (Deloitte, 2020). New uncertainties have arrived for businesses and society, which leaders must address. Conversely, this value shift can be seen as an opportunity to restart businesses using newly understood perspectives of their target audience.

2.6 Generation Z as Entrepreneurs

The Global BNP Paribas Entrepreneur report (2016) spotted an emergence of a new generation of entrepreneurs in 2016, the under 35s, who now own 38% of small business in the UK (Xero, 2019). The younger demographic within GZ have immense entrepreneurial

ambition, with four in five 18-24-year olds wanting to set up their own business one day, in contrast to just one in three baby boomers (Rosling, 2020). In addition, the Spotify (2020) study found that 69% of 15-25-year olds plan to be or already are, their own boss. Unfortunately, according to Rosling (2020), one in 10 motivated young business founders are discouraged due to Brexit, another change that may be influencing a shift in GZ's ambitions and values.

Why are the younger demographic of GZ so keen to start their own businesses? Spotify (2020) state that they do not want to work for someone else and Rosling (2020) found that GZ (18-24) are motivated to become entrepreneurs for financial gain. One could consider, due to the growing scepticism surrounding businesses that participate in brand activism, GZ may be looking for leadership positions to shape their own company values from the ground up, and participate in what they consider meaningful work. The BNP Paribas (2019) report noted that GZ entrepreneurs are very different in what they will and will not invest in, with 40% of under 35s in 2019 saying that their investments depend on challenges such as reducing carbon emissions, provision of healthcare and education, and workplace diversity (BNP Paribas, 2019). In fact, GZ defined their business success in terms of positive environmental and social impact (BNP Paribas, 2018). Furthermore, the 2020 BNP Paribas report noted that 75% of entrepreneurs under 35 are more interested in sustainability than at the start of 2018, showing this generation of entrepreneurs may be the most committed environmentally conscious generation.

The question still remains, if GZ are so interested in becoming their own boss, why are we not seeing more GZ entrepreneurs starting up co-operative businesses and what are the barriers stopping them? There is little research examining this question, thus, this research paper will explore this.

2.7 Co-operative Enterprises

Co-operative members decide how profits from the business are distributed. They have similar characteristics to non-profit organisations (Tak, 2017), and are present in a large variety of sectors (Dietl et al., 2013). Of the seven principles stated in the introduction to this paper, the second and third – **A co-op is democratic**, and **Every member contributes financially in some way** – make co-operatives different from other businesses (Tak, 2017). Research on co-operatives has focused primarily on their economic outcomes. Co-operatives are seen to have higher levels of productivity (Logue and Yates, 2006; Williams, 2007), business achievements (Williams, 2007), job satisfaction (Logue and Yates, 2006), better technical efficiency for agricultural co-operatives (Abate et al., 2014), and better quality day-care programmes in child-care co-operatives (Leviten-Reid, 2012). Furthermore, some studies have found the positive potential of co-operatives to generate values and attitudes that align with issues of public concern (Turnansky and Cwikel, 1996; Schoening, 2010). This shows there may be potential to align co-operative values with GZ's values to bring about positive social change. Co-operatives share 10 values that all co-operatives are defined by (figure 4).



Figure 4: The co-operative values (Source: Co-operatives UK, no date: online)

In addition to these values, the recent World Co-operative Monitor (2020) identified how many large co-operative organisations have helped employees, members, and communities with the repercussions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, co-operatives are serious about climate action and for their International Day of Co-operatives they adopted the theme 'Co-operatives for climate action' (World Co-operative Monitor, 2020: online). Interestingly, Sabatini et al. (2014) found that co-operatives, unlike any other enterprise, have the ability to foster the development of social trust, which could help GZ overcome their distrust towards business communications. These values, actions, initiatives, and findings about co-operatives seem to align with the values GZ deem most important (BNP Paribas, 2020; Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021; Hanson-Rasmussen and Lauver, 2018; Spotify, 2020; Winograd and Hais, 2014).

From analysing co-operative case studies (Co-operatives UK, 2021), the most dominant value that seems to be driving individual involvement is supporting communities. In addition, pooling of risk, being part of a meaningful company, influencing positive social change, and equality in the workplace also influence individual involvement. This shows that the values co-operatives state are practised throughout the individual organisations. Thus, considering the research on GZ, they should be more actively supporting co-operatives (Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021). This shows the importance of exploring why GZ's awareness of the co-operative movement is low, as research suggests it should be higher (Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021). Interestingly, figure 5 suggest that although older people are more likely to know what a co-operative business is, of those that are aware, younger people are more likely to be able to name 3 or more different co-operatives (YouGov, 2020), suggesting that when the younger demographic are aware of co-operative businesses they are more actively engaging with them than older generations. By exploring what motivates GZ individuals who have set up co-operative businesses, additional co-operative values that are not stated in the 10 values that all co-operatives are based on, may also have the potential to align with GZ.

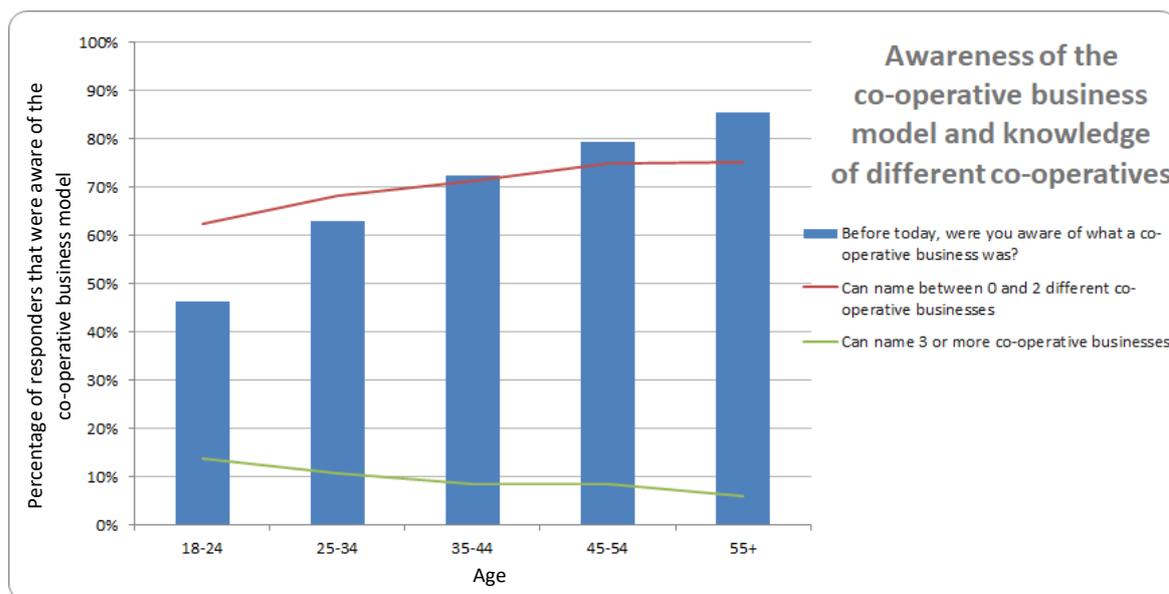


Figure 5: Graph showing the awareness of the CBM and knowledge of different cooperatives compared to age (Source: YouGov, 2020: Provided by Cooperatives UK)

2.8 Conclusion

Overall this literature review has determined a definition for brand activism; a purpose and values-driven strategy in the form of a statement and/or action in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on a partisan socio-political issue carried out by, or on behalf of, a company or individual brand name to create social change and marketing success. Brand activism can be evaluated by the company’s market motivations, corporate position, and manner of involvement (Nalick et al., 2016). For a brand to be seen as participating in authentic brand activism their marketing messages must align with their core purpose, values and practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Through the research on co-operatives, it has become apparent that co-operatives align their values and purpose with their practices and their motivations to participate in activist causes are transparent, thus co-operatives could be the most authentic activist brand when positioning themselves on a partisan socio-political issue. Stakeholder theory suggests that good relationships with all stakeholders is important for success, however, brand activism contradicts this as more businesses are becoming comfortable alienating certain groups of stakeholders (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Korschun et al., 2019; Moorman, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016; Smith and Korschun, 2018; Wettstein and Baur, 2016). Considering the four ethical principles, co-operatives could be considered the most ethical and socially responsible organisation as they are democratic, which brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people, their motives to start-up co-operative businesses are for the good of the community they work with or for the greater social good, and all co-operatives are based on and follow, a set of moral values and principles.

The research and literature around GZ’s values is diverse and due to recent social movements and the Covid-19 pandemic, many have become outdated. However, recent

reports taken during the Covid-19 pandemic have identified the rise in concerns for racial justice (Spotify, 2020), while equality, inclusivity (Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021), and protecting the environment continue to be issues GZ are troubled by (BNP Paribas, 2020; Deloitte, 2020; Dubina, 2021). What has also become apparent is that GZ are highly motivated to become entrepreneurs (Rosling, 2020; Spotify, 2020), showing the importance of understanding how Co-operatives UK can align their values with GZ and understanding the barriers stopping this age group from starting co-operative enterprises.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Using Schwartz's (2012) theoretical model the 10 co-operative values have been mapped onto the framework, figure 6. The mapping of most of the co-operative values are self-explanatory, however, self-help and self-responsibility were challenging to distinguish between self-focused or social-focused motivations that underlie them. These values were considered in regard to a group of people (co-operative business) in which all co-operatives self-help each other and the co-operative group of people are responsible for the choices they make and the direction they choose (self-responsibility). The exact positioning of all the values can be debated. However, it is clear that all co-operative values are populated in the self-transcendence and conservation value constructs, in which they are socially motivated. Figure 5 shows GZ's values, concluded from recent reports, mapped onto the framework. These are also similarly populated in the self-transcendence value construct with social-focused and social growth motivations. One can already see the similarities in placement of co-operative and GZ values.

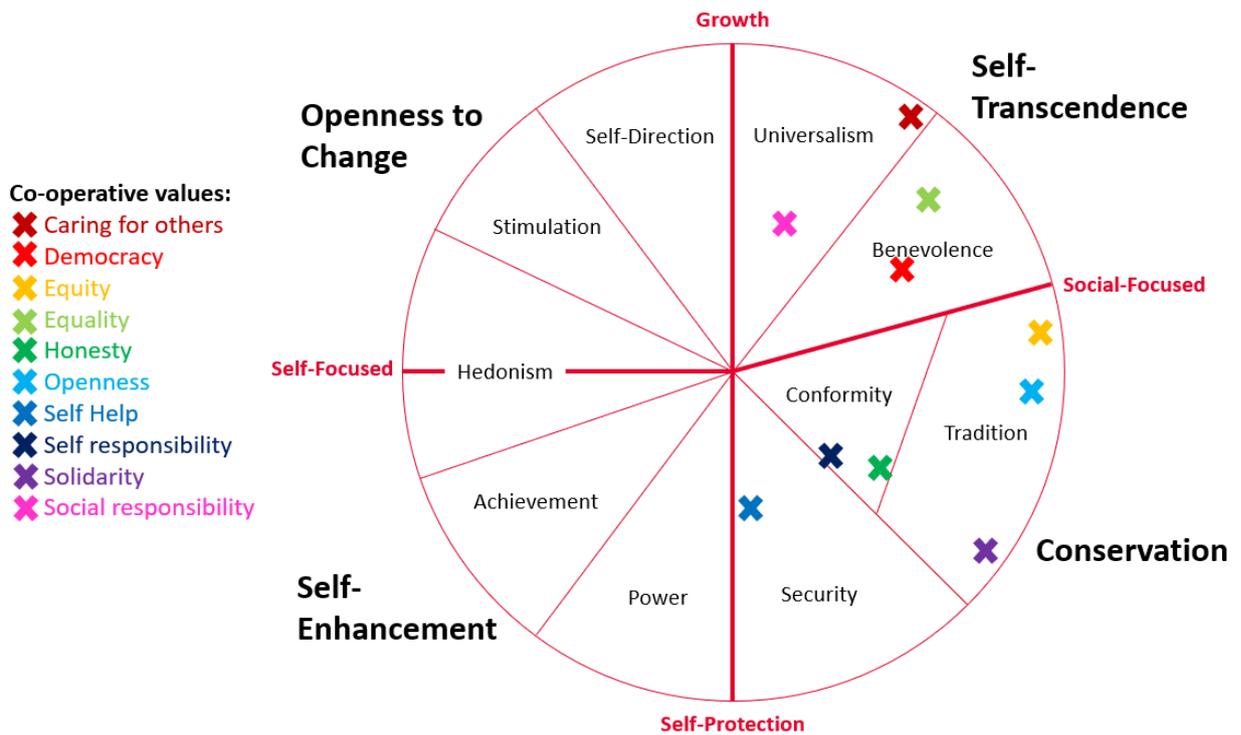


Figure 6: Conceptual framework adapted by author from Schwartz (2012) with co-operative values

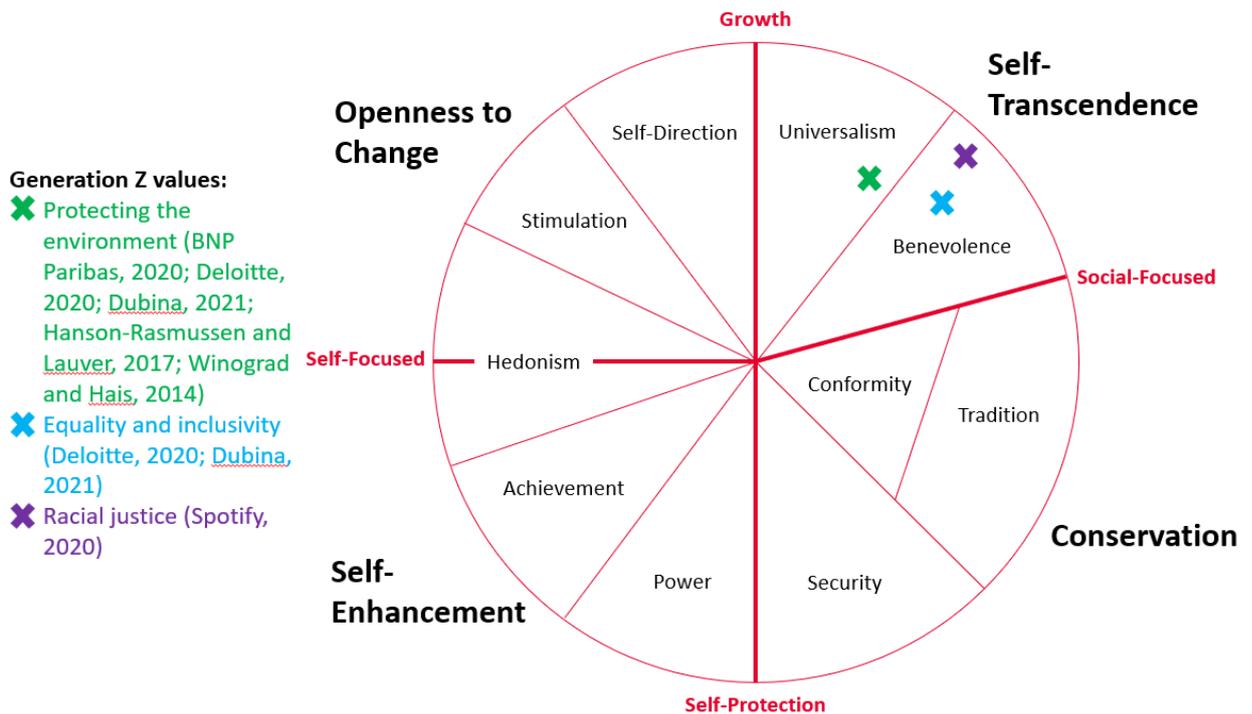


Figure 7: Conceptual framework adapted by author from Schwartz (2012) with GZ values

Figure 7 will be used to map the values of GZ found from the primary research, and any additional values that are uncovered from the research on what motivates current GZ co-operative business owners will also be added to figure 6. A comparison will then be made in relation to both frameworks.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research philosophy, research strategy and design, data analysis techniques, limitations, and ethics.

3.1 Research Philosophy

It is important to discuss the philosophical underpinning of this research paper as it helps clarify the research design (Blumberg et al., 2014), reveals the assumptions that will be made by the researcher, and informs any subsequent decisions that occur when collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data (Saunders et al., 2019). Various research philosophies exist, but the most distinguished forms are positivism and interpretivism (Blumberg et al., 2014). The most suitable approach for this research is interpretivism due to the researcher attempting to understand subjective realities and interpreting them (Blumberg et al., 2014). To do this natural science principles, used in positivist research, cannot be applied to understand the social world (Bell et al., 2019; Blumberg et al., 2014). In addition, the rich insight into humanity will be lost if a positivist approach is used (Saunders et al., 2019). An interpretivist researcher is subjectivist, in which one assumes that social reality is made up of perceptions and actions of social actors (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, since this study is aimed at uncovering values it will take an interpretivist axiological exploratory approach.

A distinction between whether the research is inductive, deductive, abductive, or retroductive should be made. An inductive design is concerned with developing a new theory that emerges from data (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). A deductive approach is when researchers wish to test or use an existing theory (Bell et al., 2019; Blumberg et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). Abduction and retroduction also require researchers to move between theory and data (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013). However, the data that is not in keeping with the theoretical framework becomes a significant part of the findings (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013). Abduction and retroduction are analytical tools used in critical realism (Danermark et al., 1997). Thus, due to this study taking an interpretivist approach and using an adapted version of Schwartz's (2012) theoretical model to map the co-operative and GZ values, a deductive approach is the most appropriate.

3.2 Research Design, Strategy, and Rationale

The research design guides the execution of the research method and subsequently the analysis of data (Bell et al., 2019). This study will use a cross-sectional research design as data on more than one case will be the collection at a single point in time in order to collect a quantifiable body of data which will be examined to detect a pattern (Bell et al., 2019).

There are two main types of research strategy, quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative research employs measurements to study relationships between social phenomena (Bell et al., 2019), whereas qualitative research studies participants' meanings and relationships with an emphasis on words rather than numbers (Saunders et al., 2019). Since a YouGov (2020) survey has already been carried out by Co-operatives UK to understand GZ's perceptions of the CBM, it is more appropriate to now carry out qualitative

research as this can develop the richness of the study (Greenfield and Greener, 2016), explore the topic in more detail (Bell et al., 2019), and investigate the ‘why?’ questions (Bell et al., 2019). Thus, a multi-method qualitative research strategy will be used for this study in the form of one-on-one semi-structured interviews with **GZ co-operative business owners (GZCBO)**, then additional one-on-one semi-structured interviews with GZ individuals not involved in co-operatives. The interviews with GZCBO will be conducted first so any additional co-operative values, other than the 10 stated in section 2.7, can be identified. This enables the researcher to spot a link more easily and discuss the values further if they are also mentioned during the GZ interviews. A focus group will then be conducted with participants from the GZ sample. This will gather rich insight to address objectives (2), (3) and (4).

3.3 One-on-one Semi-structured Interviews

One-on-one interviews are best suited for this research project as the study is looking to understand what respondents consider relevant (values and motivations) and how they are interpreting a specific situation (awareness of the CBM) (Blumberg et al., 2014). For semi-structured interviews, the interviewer uses a guide that has a list of questions to ensure all topic areas are covered and the questions are asked in a similar way for every interview, the researcher is, however, free to change the order of the questions or ask additional questions (Blumberg et al., 2014). Structured interviews can stifle communication (Blumberg et al., 2014) and the direction can vary considerably for unstructured interviews (Saunders et al., 2019), which is why semi-structured interviews were chosen.

3.4 Focus Groups

A focus group is a type of group interview in which the topic explored is pre-determined and the researcher’s role is to facilitate the discussion among participants rather than lead the discussion (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Focus groups help detect different views on topics (Blumberg et al., 2014), which is important when it comes to exploring objectives (3) and (4). In addition, focus groups offer insights that may have remained hidden in one-on-one interviews (Blumberg et al., 2014; Tracy, 2019), which is why the focus group will be conducted after the interviews. To effectively facilitate a focus group the researcher must be skilled in social communication to stimulate discussion, close an issue if participants are repeating themselves, encourage participants to speak that are reluctant to, and curb individuals who dominate the group (Blumberg et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). A focus group can help participants make sense of a phenomenon and attribute meanings to it, as coming to terms with a particular social phenomenon may not be undertaken by participants in isolation from one another (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to conduct a focus group for this study so participants can construct shared meanings about values, why they interact with certain brands, and why awareness of the co-operative movement is low.

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study will be conducted before the actual research study, in which two GZ individuals will be interviewed ‘to detect any weaknesses in design and instrumentation’

(Blumberg et al., 2014: 58). This will allow the researcher to identify any changes that may need making to the questions (Blumberg et al., 2014). A pilot study will not be carried out for the interviews with GZCBO because it runs the risk of exhausting the supply of respondents (Blumberg et al., 2014).

3.6 Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study is GZ in the UK (including GZCBO) thus, it is impractical to sample the whole population (Saunders et al., 2019). Sampling techniques reduce the amount of data you need to collect by considering data from only one subgroup rather than every case (Saunders et al., 2019). With probability sampling, the chance of each case being selected is known and it is usually associated with experimental research and surveys, whereas non-probability sampling is when the selection probability is not known and one is unable to generalise about the population on statistical grounds (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus, this research will use non-probability sampling in which participants volunteer to be part of the research.

For the interviews with GZCBO, self-selection sampling will be carried out. Co-operatives UK will post a call-out across their social media channels and email newsletter to ask for volunteers (appendix 1). To generate a sample for GZ, a snowball sampling technique will be used, this means contact will be made with two appropriate individuals (one aged 18-24 and one aged 25-34), who will then be asked to identify further individuals of the population, who then identify further members (and so on). A snowball method was chosen so participants would not view the researcher as a stranger and may be more likely to agree to an interview. The sampling techniques were discussed and confirmed with Co-operative UK. Due to time constraints, the sample size for GZ co-operatives business owners will be between 5-10 participants, and for GZ 8-10 18-24-year olds and 8-10 25-34-year olds to get a representative sample across the age range. A good size for a focus group is between 6-10 people (Blumberg et al., 2014; Quinlan et al., 2019), therefore, 6 participants from the GZ sample will be randomly selected to participate in the focus group.

Once participants agree to take part, they will be given a Participant Information Sheet (appendix 2) which outlines the study and what is expected. A Consent Form (appendix 3) will also be given to participants which will be signed before the interviews or focus group commences. There will be two interview guides, one for the interviews with GZCBO and one for the GZ interviews. The initial guides have been drafted (appendix 4) but may be amended after the pilot study. A focus group guide will be designed based on the findings from the interviews.

Due to continued Covid-19 restrictions and the uncertainty of when these restrictions will lift, the interviews and focus group will take place over Microsoft Teams at suitable times for participants. The full interview/focus group will be recorded, all participants will be informed, and their permission obtained prior to the interview/focus group, so a transcript can be typed up.

3.7 Thematic Data Analysis

To analyse the interviews and focus group, thematic analysis will be carried out. Thematic analysis is a systematic yet flexible approach for analysing qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2019). The purpose of this approach is to look for themes or patterns that occur across the data set (Quinlan et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Positivists argue that thematic analysis is too flexible, cannot be replicated, and resists formulaic description of data (Lapadat et al., 2010). However, a thematic approach was chosen because it can help to comprehend large amounts of qualitative data, integrate related data from other transcripts, identify key themes for further exploration, and develop explanations based on apparent patterns (Saunders et al., 2019). A framework for thematic analysis has been created based on Saunders et al. (2019), Tracy (2019) and Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) process for thematic analysis (figure 8).

1	Transcribe, organise, and familiarise oneself with the data (read the transcripts twice).
2	Primary-cycle coding – generate initial codes assigning words and phrases to data that relates to the research objectives, look for repetitions, similarities, and differences (do this twice to uncover any less obvious codes/themes).
3	Secondary-cycle coding – examine initial codes organise, synthesise, and categorise them into interpretive concepts (themes).
4	Make notes and observe current findings/relationships, how they relate to previous research, and what is missing/not mentioned (analytic memos).
5	Review, refine, and define themes and how they relate to each other (additional data sets) and the research objectives.
6	Decide which themes are the most relevant to the study and write up findings.

Figure 8: Visualisation of thematic analysis framework (Source: Saunders et al., 2019: 652-660; Tracy, 2019: 209-233; Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 85-102)

After the thematic analysis has been completed the values that have been found for both GZCBO and GZ will be mapped onto the conceptual frameworks (figure 6 and 7) and a comparison will be made.

3.8 Reliability, Validity, and Quality

External reliability is difficult to achieve for qualitative research as one cannot replicate a social setting under the same circumstances as the initial study (LeCompte and

Goetz, 1982). Conversely, LeCompte and Goetz (1984) suggest, to achieve external reliability the researcher replicating the study should adopt a similar social role to the initial researcher so whatever they see and hear will be similar to the original study. This is encouraged if one wishes to replicate this study to prove its reliability. Internal reliability will be achieved as there is one researcher who does not have to agree with other members of the research team. This study also has strong internal validity as the researcher is observing the social constructs of a group, which allows the researcher to develop congruence between theory and observations (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). On the other hand, due to time constraints and budget, internal validity is low because only a small sample is being analysed, thus one is unable to make concrete generalisations about GZ (Bell et al., 2019; Greenfield and Greener, 2016; LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest the quality of qualitative research should be assessed by addressing its trustworthiness and authenticity. To ensure the study is trustworthy the research will carry out principles of good practice, participants can identify that they would like to receive a copy of the study, thus respondent validation will confirm/disprove the researcher has understood the social world (Bryman, 2016), and complete records will be kept of all phases of the research process. The study is mostly authentic as it will help members to understand their social environment and may empower members to simply change their circumstances or take action to start-up co-operative businesses. However, due to the small sample size and use of snowball sampling the research may not be representative of different viewpoints among GZ.

3.9 Limitations and Potential Problems

While this research method is justified, there are limitations that must be addressed. The researcher may be biased when interpreting the findings (Ryan and Bernard, 2003), as completely bias-free research is impossible (Tracy, 2019). In addition, the researcher may be unable to build rapport with participants (Saunders et al., 2019), thus data gathered may not be rich and descriptive. Moreover, participants may suppress parts of their authentic selves (Saunders et al., 2019), however, attempts will be made to ensure participants are comfortable to engage with the research honestly and openly. Furthermore, participants may not wish to be recorded, meaning transcribing cannot take place, thus note-making will have to be performed which impacts the communication flow in the interviews/focus group (Blumberg et al., 2014). Recording may make participants uncomfortable which could influence their responses in which they may be less controversial (Blumberg et al., 2014). Participants could also leave mid-way through the interview or focus group. As snowball sampling will be used in the data collection process, it could be argued that respondents are likely to identify other participants that are similar to themselves, resulting in a homogeneous sample (Lee, 2000), since two individuals within two different age ranges have been chosen for initial contact this should limit bias.

3.10 Ethics

Ethical guidelines used by Manchester Metropolitan University will be upheld throughout the process of collecting data, and ethical approval has been received for this project by the University and the researcher's supervisor. In keeping with the Manchester

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Metropolitan ethical guidelines, all personal information from participants will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

There have been minimal adjustments made to the methodology when conducting the primary research. All adjustments that were made had the intention of allowing for the most data to be collected as possible. It was proposed that GZCBO would be interviewed. However, it became apparent that there would not be enough GZCBO willing to be interviewed, therefore, the sample was opened up to GZ co-operative business workers as well. The abbreviation used for this sample of **GZ co-operative business owners and workers** will be **GZCBOW**.

4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The interview guides for the GZCBOW consisted of three main questions, with multiple prompts for each question to enable an in-depth discussion (appendix 4). The interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes.

The interview guide for the GZ interviews consisted of five main questions, similarly with prompts to enable a more thorough discussion (appendix 5), which lasted between 15-30 minutes.

4.1.1 Data gathered

To gather the sample of GZCBOW, Co-operatives UK did a 'call out' across their social media channels and on their monthly newsletter. Those interviewed for the GZCBOW worked in various industries, from creative to wholefood sales. All interviewees worked at different levels within the co-operative businesses, as shown in the table below. The table outlines the GZCBOW's profiles and coding system to refer to each interviewee.

Participant (P)	Gender	Age	Job title
1	Female	32	Board Director
2	Female	23	Video Editor
3	Male	24	Pioneer Member
4	Male	34	Co-Founder Member
5	Male	31	Business Secretary

I used snowball sampling to gather my sample of GZ individuals. Below is a table that outlines the GZ respondent profiles and coding system to refer to each interviewee.

Participant (P)	Gender	Age (18-24)
A	Female	23
B	Female	21
C	Female	24
D	Female	21
E	Male	23
F	Male	18
G	Male	20
H	Female	18
		Age (25-34)
I	Female	31

J	Female	25
K	Male	28
L	Male	26
M	Female	27
N	Male	26
O	Female	30
P	Female	34

4.1.2 Data analysis

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions I conducted both sets of interviews over Microsoft Teams. I recorded all the interviews, transcribed them, and then performed thematic analysis on the data, which uncovered several themes. The following sections will analyse the various responses that relate to the emerging themes.

4.1.3 GZCBOW interview findings

4.1.3.1 What drew participant to working in co-operatives?

The feeling garnered from all participants in the interviews when asked what drew participants to work in a co-operative, was the belief that they would be able to make a difference to their community. P5 felt through academia he could create or influence change that would better, at minimum, his community. P3 wanted to help minority groups in his community, P4 believed he was helping young people in his city, P1 was driven to help young people across all co-operatives, and P2 liked to think that the projects she was involved in helped more than just her community but also society.

4.1.3.2 Positives of co-operatives

P4 had a strong connection to the co-operative values and P1 felt the values and principles were the strongest positive for working at a co-operative. *“I think it's not necessarily about the co-operative structure, as much, but more about the values of the company... living the values, not just having a corporate social responsibility policy...”*. It was a common feeling that the co-operative values were more authentic and real than other businesses that had stated values. P3 discusses the co-operative values by saying, *“...it's not like a hand-out, it's there to help communities grow and help people grow in time.”*. P3 also felt that the greatest positive of co-operatives was their involvement in activist causes, *“...we don't just... do it [participate in activism] because it looks good in the newspaper. It looks good because, it's fantastic for the community, and... it's part of our principles and values.”*. Showing that P3 believes that co-operatives truly practice their stated values and principles.

P2 and P5 discussed how the less hierarchical structure of worker co-operatives created a much better business structure. P2 works in the TV and Film industry, which traditionally is extremely hierarchical. The co-operative structure enabled P2 to start at the same level as other workers in the company, sharing an equal amount of responsibility, *“... [it] is really helpful for the creative juices to flow.”*. P5 agrees, saying *“[the equal structure] ...builds engagement, it builds ownership. It builds stewardship.”*. Both participants indicated

that in a co-operative business, workers are motivated to work harder due to the less hierarchical nature, but only as long as they are given the support they need.

4.1.3.3 Negatives of co-operatives

P1, P2, and P5 discussed some sort of drawbacks for working in a co-operative.

Participant (P)	Negative of co-operatives
1	<p><i>"[Co-operatives are] ...very slow-moving... [due to] ...the idea of co-operating and trying to find a balanced view... it can result in a solution that actually isn't ideal for anyone because you're trying to balance so many different opposing views in the name of working together..."</i></p> <p><i>"from my experience of the older people in co-ops... they treat young people like kids... they don't treat them like adults... part of it is making this... big deal about young people like they're completely different..., but actually if you come down to the core of it, I think we all want the same..., but I think it's just a case of listening to us and respecting us and not just shutting down..."</i></p> <p><i>"...to co-operate [work at a co-operative] you... have to take a lower salary... you earn less for working for a good organisation than you would elsewhere..."</i></p>
2	<p><i>"[The less hierarchical structure is a] ...double-edged sword because not having a boss means that you just have much more responsibility... but that's one of the reasons that my mental health took a bit of a tumble... I suddenly had all this responsibility at work and I didn't quite feel experienced enough to deal with it..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I still get weird looks when I'm telling my friends about it because it's not something that's accepted in film and TV at all..."</i></p>
5	<p><i>"...you've got there very, very well-paid warehouse workers, but [in order to scale the business] there's an issue when it comes to, how do you get top-notch graphic designers and marketers and salespeople, who would be able to be paid a heck of a lot more money elsewhere?"</i></p>

Interestingly P5 links co-operatives being unable to scale their business to the reason why young people may not be become involved with co-operatives, and P1 also believes this may be one of the reasons younger people are not setting up co-operative businesses or choosing to work for co-operatives.

Moreover, all participants felt that the reason young people are not involved in co-operatives or do not know about the CBM is due to a lack of education about it. However, P4 felt that we should not be encouraging *"a boring lesson in co-ops"*, he believes that society should,

“educate people... around the governance of their school, college, or university. Likewise, we ought to be educating workers about the governance of their workplace, especially in the public sector. People are much more likely to engage in something that means something to them, and people should know what model of governance and ownership they are part of.”

4.1.3.4 What is missing from the co-operative values

P1, P2, and P4 felt that nothing was missing from the co-operative values, in fact, P4 said they were “universal” and “timeless” adding that he “can't see why they'd need updating because they are broad enough to have relevance.” However, two participants did feel that the values needed updating to reflect modern issues and concerns of society. P3 specifically spoke about the need for the values to address hate crimes, racial justice/support, food poverty, and even issues such as mental health and cyberbullying. In addition, P5 felt that the values should include the idea that co-operatives have the responsibility to question the structures and cultures around them to enable greater democracy and growth in the business. Interestingly, P5 discussed how he is unsure about co-operatives climate mission, alluding that he would want to see more from co-operatives about how they plan to combat climate change. Due to three participants stating that the values do not need updating and only two participants agreeing that they did, one cannot say for certain if the values should be updated to reflect modern issues or not. This would warrant further research.

4.1.3.5 GZCBOW personal values

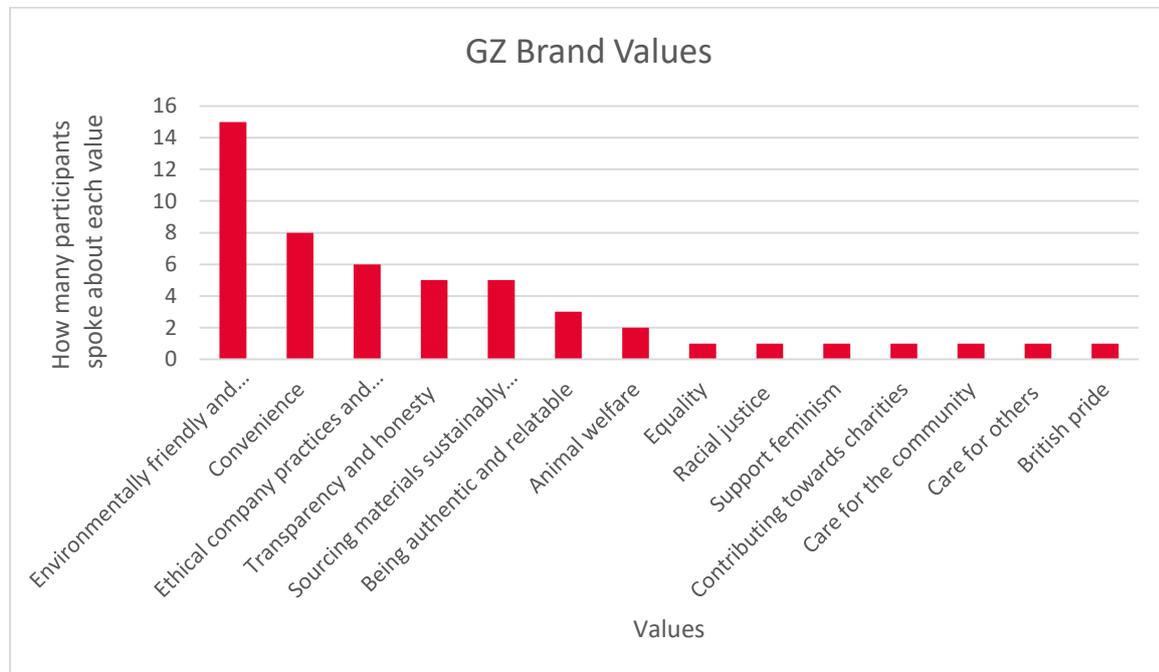
Although each participant had quite different personal values from one another the common theme was that every participant wanted to make a positive change to the world they lived in as shown in the table below. Each participant was confident when discussing their own values.

Participant (P)	GZCBOW personal values
1	<i>“I certainly... want to make the world a better place.”</i>
2	<i>“...knowing that no matter what tiny thing or however boring my job feels sometimes, it's actually making a proper change to people's lives...”</i> <i>“...knowing that I am [sic] making a difference to someone else's life.”</i>
3	<i>“...helping the community... helping people make better lives than our generations...”</i>
4	<i>“I'm a Bradford kid and I want to do it for the other Bradford kids”</i> <i>“I'm a believer that small change creates big change.”</i>
5	<i>“...it's just feeling like you're doing something that's potentially making a difference.”</i>

4.1.4 GZ interview findings

4.1.4.1 Brand values

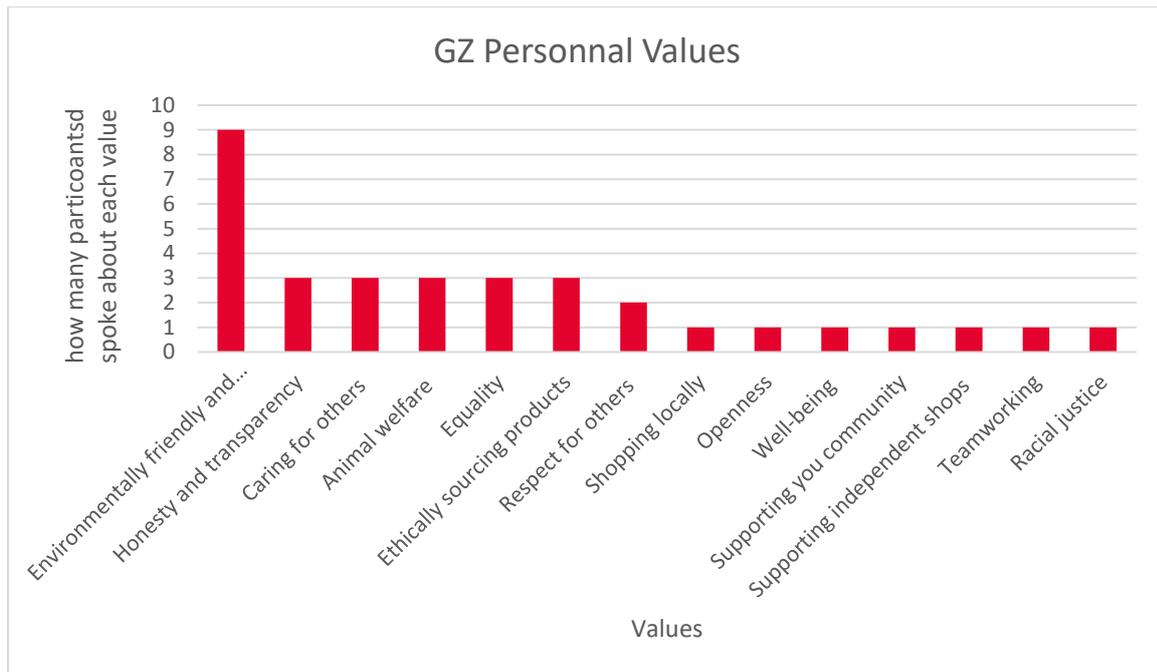
The graph below provides a visual representation of how many times participants mentioned each value when I asked about what values they believe are important for brands to state and practice.



The most common value that participants felt brands should have was **environmentally friendly and sustainable practices**. Every participant interviewed, apart from PL, spoke about how they were more motivated to purchase products from brands that showed a concern for the environment. Eight participants mentioned **Convenience**, which some may not consider as a brand value. Participants may have brought this up because they were trying to relate values to the reasons why they shop with the brands they do. All participants found it relatively easy to name values they thought were important for brands to embody.

4.1.4.2 Personal values

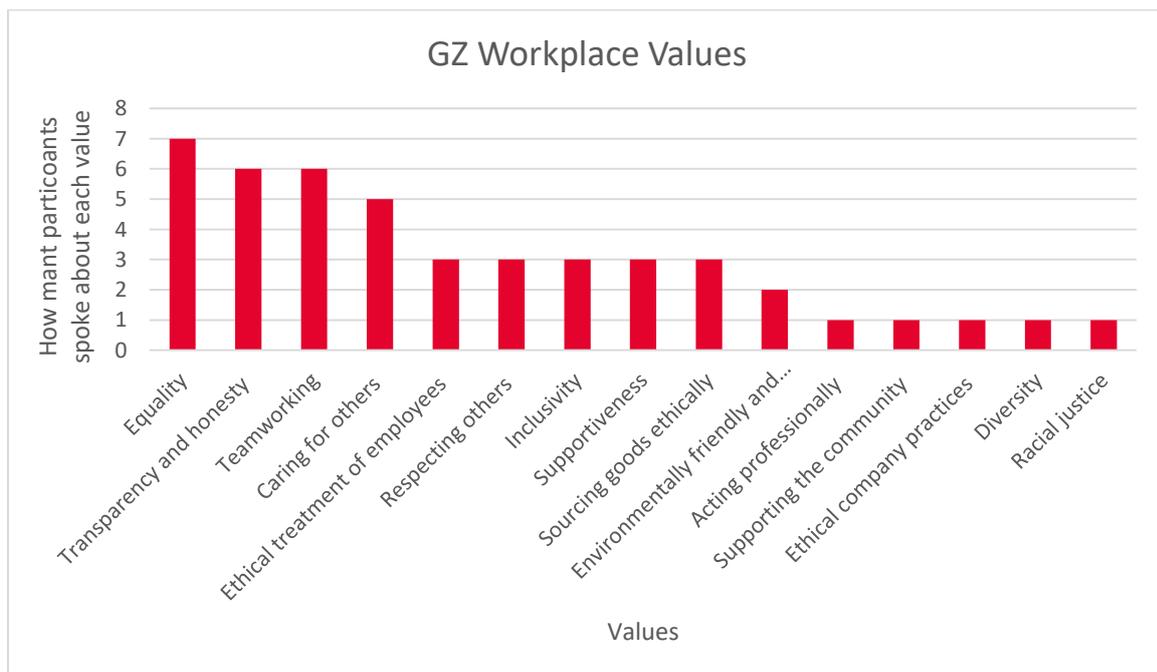
The graph below provides a visual representation of how many times participants mentioned each value when I asked about their personal values.



Environmentally friendly and sustainable practices was the most common value discussed, which is the same value participants felt was important for brands. Participants found it much more challenging to talk about their own values as opposed to the values they deem important for brands.

4.1.4.2 Workplace values

The graph below provides a visual representation of how many times participants mentioned each value when I asked what values they look for and find important in the workplace.



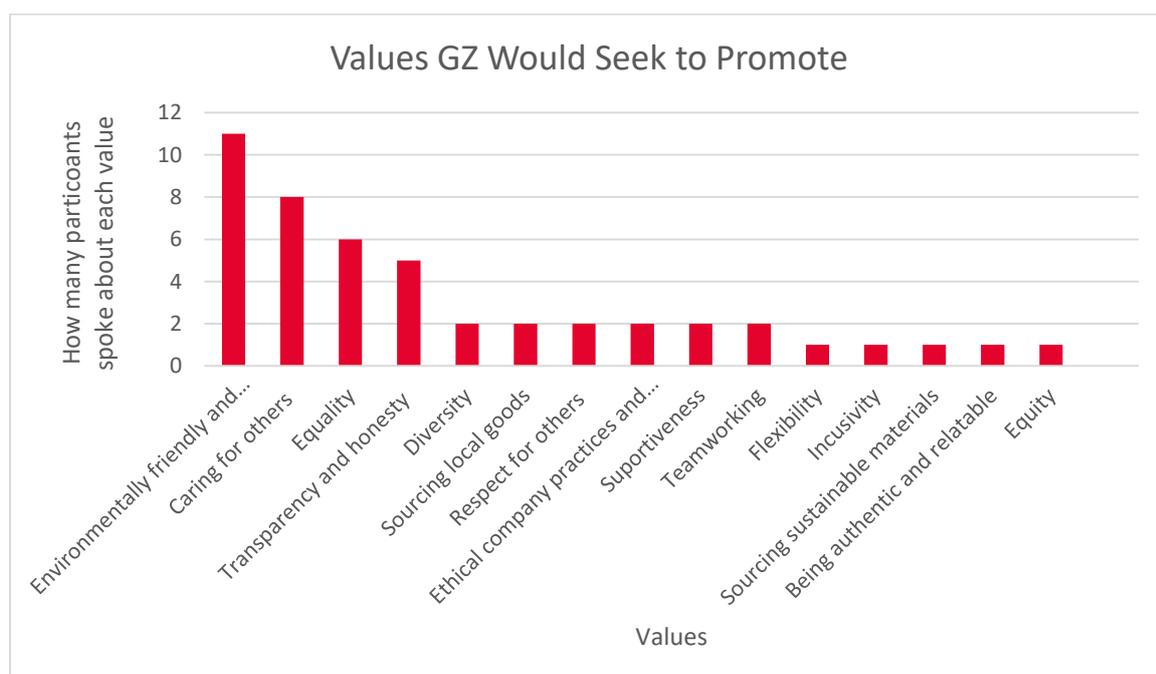
In sharp contrast, **equality** was the most common value discussed. Participants only mentioned **environmentally friendly and sustainable practices** twice. Participants, similar to personal values, found speaking about their workplace values more difficult than discussing brand values.

4.1.4.3 Knowledge of the CBM

Only PC had a detailed and confident understanding of the CBM. This was due to the participant looking to pursue a career working for a co-operative. PJ and PK had a basic understanding of the CBM due to studying it at school in GCSE Business Studies or A-Level Politics, and PE gathered a very basic understanding from conversations with friends. All other participants knew very little about the CBM, with all participants stating they had never seen any marketing or advertising for co-operative businesses on social media that would have influenced them to learn more about co-operatives. All participants, apart from PJ and PK, felt their lack of knowledge was also due to a lack of education on the CBM and all other business models at school. These participants had not heard of the CBM before and were not aware of seeing any other co-operative businesses other than the well-known brick and mortar Co-op supermarkets.

4.1.4.4 Participants own business values

I explained to all participants that were unfamiliar with the CBM what the model was. The explanation included a summary of the co-operative principles (appendix 6), and I listed all the co-operative values (appendix 7). After this explanation, I asked participants what values they would seek to promote if they were to start their own business. The graph below provides a visual representation of how many times participants mentioned each value.



The most common value that participants would want their hypothetical business to promote was **environmentally friendly and sustainable practices**. **Caring for others** also ranked highly.

4.1.4.5 Barriers for setting up and working for co-operatives

Eight out of 16 participants felt that not having the traditional hierarchical business structure would cause problems for a co-operative business. These problems may be that the business takes longer to make decisions and therefore becomes less efficient, thus, the business would not be able to compete with other businesses who have the traditional business structure. Participant K said:

“I would be fearful if I was to be in one [a co-operative business], because I do think that mankind leans towards a hierarchical nature full-stop. I think even in social situations you end up with hierarchies...”

Six participants felt that they would not want to start a co-operative business solely because they did not feel it was well-known enough. Two participants expanded on this further by stating that the CBM *“feels unrealistic”*. Furthermore, PK and PN believed that the CBM would simply not work in their industry. It is worth noting that participant C, who had good knowledge of the co-operative business model felt that it is society’s individualistic culture that is the barrier stopping young people from setting up and working for co-operatives.

“...[I] think it's [the] individualistic society that we're part of, and I don't agree with it but at the same time I'd be scared to try and do something else [start a business that doesn't conform with a traditional business structure] ...”

4.2 Focus group

After completing all the interviews, I conducted a focus group to gather greater insight into the emerging themes discovered from the thematic analysis of the GZ interview sample. The focus group interview guide consisted of five main questions, with multiple prompts for each question (appendix 8).

4.2.1 Data gathered

I chose a date and time for the focus group and picked respondents based on their ease of joining the call at the allocated time. Six respondents from the GZ interview sample participated in the focus group and it lasted roughly an hour long. Below is a table that outlines the GZ focus group respondents’ profiles and coding system to refer to each participant.

Participant (P)	Gender	Age	Job Title
i	Female	27	Junior Doctor
ii	Male	28	Architect
iii	Male	23	Business Development Consultant
iv	Male	26	Housing Solutions Officer
v	Male	26	Financial Advisor

vi	Female	21	Brand Designer
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2.2.2 Data analysis

I conducted the focus group over Microsoft Teams due to Covid-19 restrictions. The focus group was transcribed, and then I carried out thematic analysis to uncover any new or similar themes to the GZ interviews. The following findings will analyse the various responses from the focus group that relate to the research themes. Each heading is a primary theme taken from the thematic analysis which links to the questions discussed in the focus group.

4.2.3 Focus group findings

4.2.3.1 Brand activism

The first point of discussion was whether participants felt more inclined to engage with companies that are involved in activist causes. There was a resounding response that the participants would engage more with brands who are involved in activist causes that they support, furthermore, if mainstream media uncovered that brands were being dishonest about their practices or causing some sort of socio-political or environmental issue, they would cease any engagement with them. Moreover, the issue of authentic brand activism arose, Pii stated that he *“would never expect any business or brand to actually have any sincerity about any [activist] cause.”*, with Piv and Pv agreeing.

4.2.3.2 Values

The focus group solidified the fact that **environmentally friendly and sustainable practices** were the most important value for all participants, even though Piv had not previously mentioned this value when speaking about brand values in the one-on-one interview. Pii stated that *“[Climate change is the] biggest threat to society”*, and all participants agreed with this statement. The next most important values for the participants were **ethical practices and treatment of employees** and **equality**. Participants linked **ethical practices and treatment of employees** to **transparency and honesty**, as participants felt that any business or workplace would not be transparent and honest about their internal practices if they were not ethical.

4.2.3.3 Consumer/personal and workplace values

The discussion moved on to whether participants felt that their own personal values as a customer were different to the values they looked for in the workplace. Every participant agreed that they would not be able to separate themselves from their own moral value in the workplace. However, since all participants agreed that **environmentally friendly and sustainable practices** were the most important value to each of them participants discussed how that singular factor would not influence all the participants to work or not work for a company. Piv said,

“When you are the consumer and you look at environmental sustainability, you are seeing that impact at a general international level... whereas when you are working for any company, it's a bit more insular, so you are looking at what is affecting the staff specifically and it doesn't usually really marry up...”

In addition, Pi, a Junior Doctor, agreed that her profession was not environmentally friendly, thus, her own moral value somewhat mismatched her workplace values, “...the NHS is quite wasteful, it's not very sustainable, there's a lot of plastic use and... throwaway plastics...”. The discussion came to an agreement that, in a perfect world, everyone's personal values would match up with their workplace value but unfortunately that is not always possible, individuals have to take a balanced view. Due to this, participants discussed that values such as **equality** would hold higher importance in the workplace.

4.2.3.4 Barrier for young people setting up/working in co-operatives

The findings for the barriers for setting up co-operatives were very similar to what I discovered in the interviews. It appears that the less hierarchical structure is a major concern for participants. In addition, Pi struggled to see how she and others would be able to stay motivated without a workplace hierarchy as there would be no ladder to climb in the business. “if... there's less of a hierarchy, you don't feel like you are gaining or improving or kind of working up a ladder. People might not work as hard or try and climb that ladder.”

A discussion about our society's individualistic culture arose, whereas during the interviews only PC disused culture. This resulted in Piii stating that “...in these times you are going to go for a higher wage as much as you can.” This comment was met with an agreement from the group, connoting that the participants felt it was more important to look for and have a higher wage than somewhat sacrificing that to work for a more ethical and equal company. Interestingly, Pii felt that the only way to encourage young people to start co-operatives was to incentivise it. In his opinion, he believes that co-operatives do not provide enough benefit in comparison to Limited Liability Companies.

The discussion about what would draw the participant towards starting or working for a co-operative was fairly limited. Many of the positives discussed by participants quickly changed to negatives, as other participants pointed out the drawbacks. During the focus group, I stated that 76% of co-operatives survive after 5 years compared to 42% for traditional businesses (Co-operatives UK, 2020). This resulted in the participants agreeing that the unarguable positive of starting a co-operative business was that it was much safer.

The focus group ended on a point made by Pv, he discussed how being part of co-operatives “...appeals emotionally...” but for him, and the other focus group participants, emotional appeal is not enough of a benefit for starting or being part of a co-operative business over a traditional business structure.

4.3 Key findings

At the heart of this research is creating a greater understanding about what values GZ deem the most important, in addition, an understanding was gleaned into why GZ are not setting up co-operatives. Through conducting the above primary research, I gathered a vast amount of data about GZ's values and their thoughts on co-operatives. A topic that arose repeatedly in both the interviews and the focus group was GZ's concern for the environment.

A list of the key findings are shown below:

Key Findings	
1	GZ are more motivated to engage with brands that participate in activist causes.
2	GZCBOW are motivated to set up and work for co-operatives because they want to make a positive change to their community or society.
3	GZ deem environmentally friendly and sustainable practices as the most important value that they hold personally and that brands should state and practice in order for GZ to feel motivated to engage with them.
4	Values that GZ also find important, both in the workplace and for brands to practice, are ethical practices and treatment of employees and transparency and honesty .
5	In the workplace, GZ deem equality the most important value.
6	Awareness of co-operative businesses in GZ is low because GZ are simply not aware of the CBM, the co-operative values, or principles. GZCBOW and GZ participants believe this could be due to a lack of education at schools and universities on the CBM. GZ believe they have low awareness because they have also not seen any marketing or advertising for co-operative businesses.
7	GZ believe that the barrier to setting up and working for co-operatives is their idea of a less hierarchical structure being less efficient due to decisions taking longer.
8	The older generation working at the top of co-operatives (such as board members) may be treating young people unequally. This could be influencing fewer young people to join co-operative boards, which could be causing fewer young people to join and start co-operatives.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will discuss and analyse the key findings of the primary research undertaken in this research project. Moreover, a discussion about the data's significance in relation to the literature review will be undertaken with the intent of achieving the research aims and objectives.

5.1 Co-operatives and brand activism

This chapter will firstly discuss co-operatives involvement in brand activism. In the literature review brand activism was described as a purpose and values-driven strategy in the form of a statement and/or action in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on a partisan socio-political issue carried out by, or on behalf of, a company or individual brand name to create social change and marketing success. Nalick et al., (2016) discussed how brand activism can be evaluated by the company's market motivations, corporate position, and manner of involvement. The research found that co-operatives market motivations are for the good of their community and the wider society. None of the interviews influenced the researcher to believe that co-operatives involvement in activist causes was primarily to drive profits. Every participant showed strong positioning on modern issues that aligned with their company's ethos, and each co-operative had a range of ways they were involved in these issues, which were primarily hands-on approaches. Looking at Nalick et al., (2016) approach for evaluating brand activism, the interviews have influenced a stronger belief that co-operatives could be the most authentic activist brand when positioning themselves on partisan socio-political issues.

Furthermore, for a brand to be seen as participating in authentic brand activism their marketing messages must align with their core purpose, values, and practices (Vredenburg et al., 2020). The interviews with GZCBOW made it extremely clear that the work co-operatives do aligns with their core purpose, values, and practices, as they positively benefit their community and/or the wider society. Showing they have sustained commitment for addressing injustices, therefore indicating that co-operatives are not 'woke-washing'. The workers and owners at co-operatives see their contribution to communities and society as extremely authentic as it is not just a corporate social responsibility stunt aimed at driving profit. Every GZCBOW interviewed had the same belief that their contribution in the workplace was creating real social change. However, those GZers who are not involved in co-operatives (i.e. the vast majority) are not aware of these efforts to change society for the better. This may be because co-operatives are not marketing themselves in such a way that sheds light on these fantastic activist causes that co-operatives are involved in. After all, not a single GZ participant said they had seen any form of marketing or advertising that had influenced them to find out more about co-operatives in their area. The research found that GZ are more inclined to engage with brands that participate in activist causes, therefore co-operatives should look at showcasing all the fantastic causes they have been a part of in order to inform more young people about the benefits co-operatives are having on their community and society. Doing this may encourage more young people to engage with co-

operatives, influencing them to learn about the CBM, which may influence a higher number of young people starting their own co-operative businesses.

The reason co-operatives are not already pushing to show the influence they are having on communities may be because they are concerned about maintaining good relationships with all stakeholders (or more specifically their members), as stakeholder theory suggests that good relationships with all stakeholders is important for business success (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Evan and Freeman, 1988; Freeman, 1984; Langtry, 1994; Wicks et al., 1994). Nonetheless, further research is required to ascertain why this is the case. Furthermore, as discussed in the literature review, businesses are becoming comfortable alienating certain groups of stakeholders (Dodd and Supa, 2014; Korschun et al., 2019; Moorman, 2020; Nalick et al., 2016; Smith and Korschun, 2018; Wettstein and Baur, 2016) and co-operatives need to also learn to become comfortable doing this. Co-operatives UK need to start making social media noise about their activist stances and support for socio-political issues in order to attract younger people.

5.2 GZCBOW motivations for setting up and working in co-operatives

From the analysis of co-operative case studies in the literature review, one of the values identified that drove individual involvement was influencing positive social change, and the most dominant value appeared to be supporting communities (Co-operatives UK, 2021). The primary research identified both these values as being the main drive for participants to become involved with co-operatives. Each participant discussed their drive to make a difference to their community/society and every participant's personal value was to make a positive change to the world they lived in.

5.3 GZ values

When GZ were discussing values, it became apparent that the participants had more difficulty stating their own values as opposed to values they believe brands should practice. Whereas, when the GZCBOW spoke about their own values they were very quick and confident when naming what they felt was important to themselves. This may be due to GZCBOW involvement in co-operatives, that practice and state values, which influence workers and owners to think about their own values more often, thus giving them a greater understanding of the term 'value' in relation to themselves. Moreover, it could also be that co-operatives tend to attract individuals to work for them who already have a clear sense of their own values. It was interesting to see such a difference in values between the two groups. GZCBOW were more optimistic about humanity whereas the GZ participants seemed cynical about society. This could be due to GZCBOW learning to trust in others more because of their involvement in co-operatives or due to them seeing first-hand how people can work together to benefit communities and create real lasting social change. Something that may seem unrealistic to GZ individuals not involved with co-operatives.

The research found that all participants would cease engagement with brands that went against their moral values, which agrees with Deloitte (2020) and Dubina (2021) who found that GZ will not hesitate to penalize businesses that publicise and practice values that conflict with their own. This shows the importance of understanding how GZ values and the

co-operative values can link and work together to encourage younger people to work for and start co-operative businesses.

The primary finding from this research is that GZ's main concern is for the environment, which agrees with research found in the literature review (Deloitte, 2020; Hanson-Rasmussen and Lauver, 2018; Winograd and Hais, 2014; Spotify, 2020). However, critics of GZ said that convenience and comfort are more important to them than climate change and GZ do not feel it is their responsibility to change their purchases or behaviour to benefit the environment (Head, 2013). When participants discussed brand values, convenience ranked as the second most mentioned value, indicating that there could be some veracity to Head's (2013) findings. However, most participants discussed how they are more motivated to purchase products that are sustainable or sourced their materials sustainably and responsibly, which connotes that GZ feel it is their responsibility to change their purchase behaviours to benefit the environment, thus contradicting Head (2013).

When it came to discussing GZ's other values, participants discussed caring for others, equality, and respect for others more in relation to their personal values as opposed to what participants believe brands should be concerned with. It is interesting to note that these three qualities are more insular and directly impact participants rather than a value such as environmentally friendly practices that GZ will not necessarily see specifically impacting themselves.

Research by Deloitte (2020) and Spotify (2020) suggested that due to the pandemic, GZ have a greater desire than ever before to drive positive change in their communities and around the world, the research somewhat confirmed this as all participants believed that society should be driving positive change for the environment. However, participants did not mention any other changes for society. GZCROW appeared to align with this statement more as every participant spoke about their desire to make a positive change for their community or society. Friedman's (1970) belief that the duty of a commercial business is solely to make a profit and a corporation's social responsibility is the responsibility of individuals, not the business, appears completely outdated. All GZ participants felt businesses have a responsibility to protect the environment and the GZCROW believed their work was helping the wider community not just generating a profit.

Ethical practices and treatment of employees was a value that GZ participants felt was extremely important both in the workplace and for brands to practice. This agrees with the recent YouGov (2020) survey which found that GZ expect brands to behave in ethical ways. This also supports Eldeman (2019) and Fan's (2005) view that stakeholders expect brands to behave in socially responsible and ethical ways. Since GZ find this value important, and one could consider that co-operatives are the most ethical and socially responsible organisation, co-operatives have the ability to position themselves over the competition, as they have ethical principles and practices that would attract the younger audience. In addition, showing their ethical positioning may help GZ overcome their distrust towards brand activism. The research found that GZ were very sceptical over brands' efforts to participate in activist causes, which agrees with Nikolinaou and Phua (2019), Alhouthi et al. (2016), Du et al. (2010), and Vendenburg et al. (2018), who discussed how consumers may

not believe brands are participating in authentic brand activism and Elderman (2019) who found that consumers believe brands use societal issues as a marketing ruse to sell more products. Keller (1998) states that a socially responsible brand involves a company contributing to communities, supporting social activities, and improving the welfare of society. Co-operatives are already doing this, therefore, if they can identify and share their socially responsible and ethical practices with young people this may encourage more GZ's to become involved in co-operatives.

One interesting finding that (to the author's knowledge) has yet to be acknowledged in the wider GZ values literature, is that GZ found transparency and honesty extremely important values. This links well with the co-operative's values **5. Honesty**, and **6. Openness**. Furthermore, when discussing values GZ would seek to promote if they ran their own business, other than the top value, environmentally friendly practices, the next most important values to them were the same/similar as some of the co-operative values, **1. Caring for others**, **4. Equality**, **5. Honesty**, and **6. Openness** (links to transparency). This shows that there is a link between the values GZ deem important and the co-operative values. In addition, the focus group revealed that participants link honesty and transparency with brands having ethical practices. Therefore, by leveraging the co-operative values 5 and 6, GZ may already view co-operatives as having ethical practices without Co-operatives UK having to change their stated values.

Deloitte (2020) and Dubina (2021) found that GZ are pushing for businesses to put people ahead of profits, prioritising inclusivity and equality. GZ participants felt equality was an extremely important value that they looked for in the workplace. Participants did not mention inclusivity as prominently. However, one could argue that equality and inclusivity are somewhat similar. The UK Spotify (2020) report found that due to the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, racial justice became the defining issue for GZ (Spotify, 2020). Only one participant in this study mentioned racial justice, which was surprising as during the time the interviews took place the Euros 2021 football final occurred. England narrowly missed winning against Italy when Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho, and Bukayo Saka missed their penalties, sparking an aftermath of intolerable racism and violence which society plastered across social media and all UK news outlets reported on. Therefore, it was surprising that this was not something that came up in all the interviews. Even when prompted about racial justice, participants did not identify racial justice as its own value of concern. One must consider, however, that when participants spoke about equality, they primarily discussed it as equal opportunities for all, racial equality, and gender equality. Therefore, one could say that GZ are concerned for all forms of equality not just racial justice.

5.4 Mapping GZ and co-operative values

Due to the mixed responses from the GZCBOW on whether the co-operatives values should be updated to reflect more modern issues, the co-operative conceptual framework will not have any additional values added to the framework other than the original 10 values.

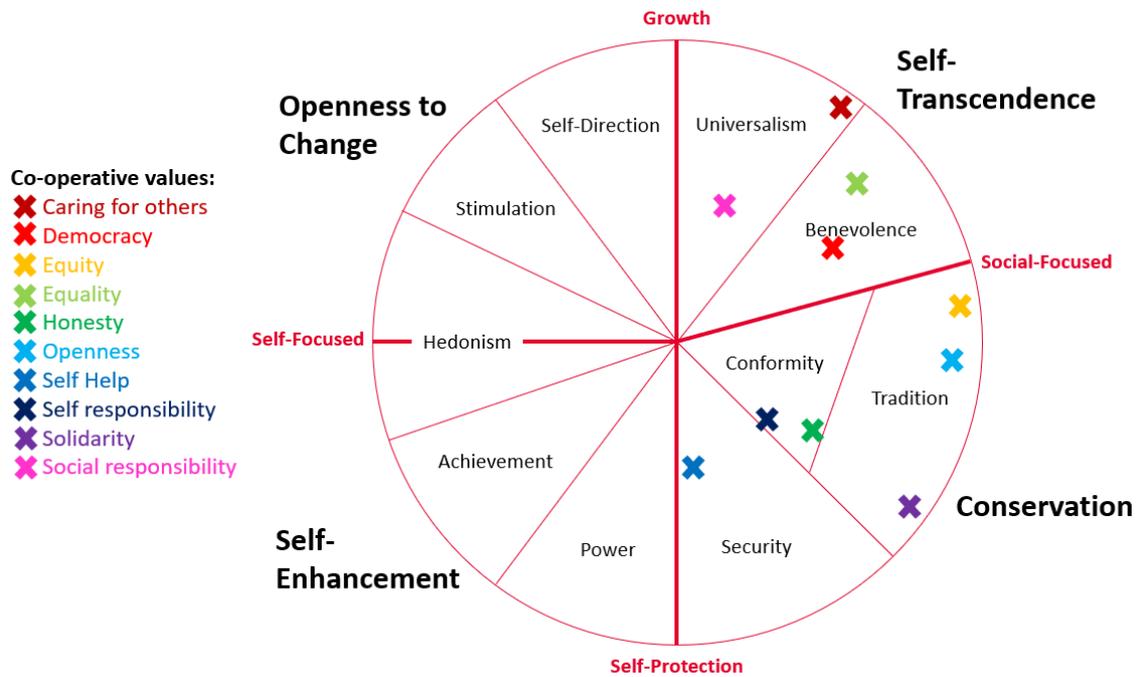


Figure 9: Conceptual framework adapted by author from Schwartz (2012) with co-operative values

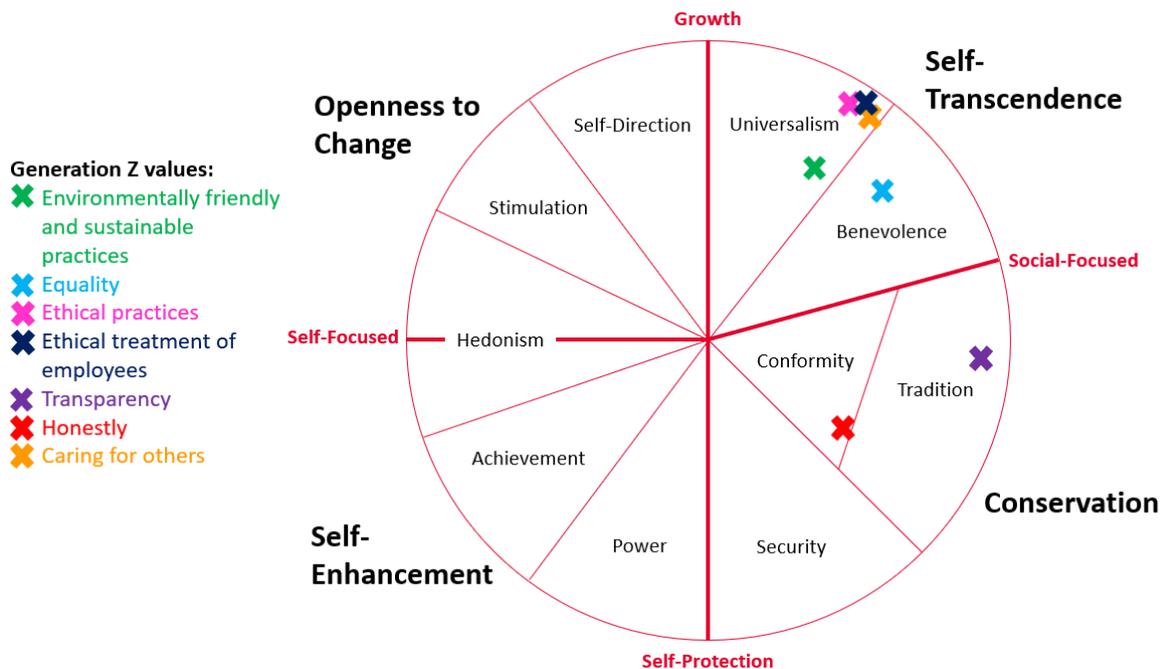


Figure 10: Conceptual framework adapted by author from Schwartz (2012) with GZ values found from the primary research

The conceptual framework shows that GZ values are populated mainly in the self-transcendence section, which disagrees with Nikolinakou and Phua’s (2019) finding that GZ are not motivated to engage with brands that show self-transcendence values. Equality, caring for others, and honesty are three values that GZ deem important that are shared in the co-operative stated values. In addition, social responsibility can be linked to environmentally friendly and sustainable practices and transparency can be liked to

openness. This shows that the co-operatives values have a lot in common with the values GZ deem important.

5.5 Barrier for GZ setting up or working for co-operatives

One must discuss that all but one of the GZ participants had only a very basic understanding of the CBM, thus their view of co-operatives may be a little misunderstood when further discussing the topic in the interviews. On the other hand, listening to what these participants thought was off-putting about the CBM, even with their very basic knowledge, may be more realistic and representative of the concerns for the rest of the GZ population.

As discussed in the key findings, GZ believe that the barrier to setting up and working for co-operatives is their idea of how a less hierarchical structure would work. The GZ participant felt the flat structure would be less efficient which agreed with one of the GZCBOW participants who stated that co-operatives are slow-moving due to having to find a balanced view. Thus, co-operatives need to show young people how they overcome these issues in order to pacify these worries. This less hierarchical structure seemed somewhat alien to GZ participants, with some stating that it seemed unrealistic and complicated. This is likely to be due to the GZ participant not having any experience working in a business with a flat structure. These worries, however, are not puerile as a GZCBOW struggled with her mental health due to the sudden responsibilities she encountered due to the flat business structure. It could be that young people do not want to work for a co-operative at a young age due to the extra responsibilities they would have. This could be resulting in fewer young people becoming involved in co-operatives, which therefore causes fewer young people to learn about co-operatives, thus causing fewer young people to start their own co-operative. However, none of the other GZCBOW participants mentioned the less hierarchical structure in a negative sense.

The Spotify (2020) report found that GZ do not want to work for someone else. However, all participants, apart from one, had no desire to start their own business in order to stop working for someone else, which contradicts Spotify's (2020) finding. Rosling (2020) found that GZ are motivated to become entrepreneurs for financial gain, this was mentioned by two GZ participants who indicated that the reason why young people may not be setting up co-operative businesses is due to our individualist get rich quick culture. Moreover, two GZCBOW participants said one of the reasons they think young people are not setting up and working for co-operatives is because usually, one has to accept less money for a job that would pay more elsewhere. These findings thus agree with Rosling (2020). This issue of having to accept lower payment could be why young people are not driven to set up co-operative businesses, furthermore, participants agreed that just emotional appeal would not be enough for them to consider starting a co-operative business over a traditional business structure. One of the participants suggested that setting up co-operative businesses should be incentivised. This is a fairly far-fetched idea as the government is unlikely to pump money into co-operatives while the country is in the midst of a global pandemic, however incentives often follow economic impacts. Therefore, if/when the economy falls into a recession due to the pandemic, the government will want

to encourage savers to start spending or investing their money and incentivising co-operatives could be the way to do this. However, it is worth considering that if young people feel like there will not be a great monetary benefit for them to start a co-operative, then another rational incentive must be publicised to them other than just the emotional appeal. The statistic that 76% of co-operatives survive after 5 years compared to 42% for traditional businesses (Co-operatives UK, 2020), was discussed by participants in the focus group. This influenced the whole group to agree that starting a co-operative business could be safer than starting a traditional business. Therefore, this could be the rational persuasive element that GZ need to sway them into starting co-operative businesses.

Awareness of the co-operative business model was extremely low, but this came as no surprise due to the recent YouGov (2020) survey, which identified low awareness of the CBM in under 35s. GZ participants felt that young people were not setting up co-operative businesses simply because they had no knowledge of the CBM. Moreover, participants had no knowledge of any other business structure other than the traditional hierarchical structure. It was therefore enlightening when one of the GZCBOW discussed how he believed to make real change for young people they must be taught about ownership and governance at school, university, and the workplace, rather than sending co-operative workers into universities to teach them solely about co-operatives. This could encourage greater advocacy for more democratic and inclusive business models. Hopefully resulting in the younger generation becoming more knowledgeable about governance and ownership. This would give young people all the knowledge they need to make their own decision about what type of business model would work best for them. This aforementioned idea could also limit this negative association of co-operatives in specific industries.

Furthermore, Co-operatives UK want to encourage younger people to start more co-operative businesses. However, the research uncovered that a GZ co-operative board director felt like she was not being treated as an adult or listened to due to her age. This could therefore be impacting the number of young people that are working at the top of co-operative businesses, which may be impacting co-operatives to work in ways that young people are not encouraged by or interested in. This sequentially could be impacting fewer young people starting their own co-operative businesses.

Chapter 6: Conclusion/Recommendations

The aim of this research is to recommend how Co-operatives UK can engage GZ with the concept of setting up co-operatives and how they can use their co-operative values to resonate with the younger demographic, the table below shows the recommendations based on the data from the literature review and the primary research.

Recommendations	
1	Co-operatives UK should publicise how co-operatives are participating in activist causes, showing the benefits they are bringing to their communities. Research has shown young people are more likely to engage with brands that participate in brand activism thus if more young people engage with co-operative businesses it may influence more young people to consider starting a co-operative business.
2	Co-operatives UK should focus on making sure they are supporting environmentally friendly causes and publicising the work they are doing to combat climate change. Co-operatives UK have a social responsibility value, this can encompass co-operatives making sure they are protecting the environment. However, Co-operatives UK could add to their values to incorporate a more specific environmentally friendly value as the research found that GZ deem this extremely important.
3	The research found that GZ find honesty, transparency (openness), caring for others, and equality extremely important values. Thus, Co-operative UK should focus their marketing and advertising efforts on highlighting these values.
4	To stop the generation below GZ having the same issue of being unaware of co-operatives and how they operate, Co-operatives UK should look into teaching young people about ownership and governance, not just about the CBM. Equipping young people with this important knowledge will allow younger generations to make decisions for themselves about what business model would suit them best.
5	All these recommendations are to encourage more young people to become involved with co-operatives or start a co-operative business. However, if co-operatives have a problem with the older generation at the top of businesses treating young people unfairly all these changes could be for nothing. Therefore, co-operatives need to stop any unfair treatment of young people in order to grow and prosper in the future.

The aim of this research was to recommend how Co-operatives UK can engage GZ with the concept of setting up co-operatives and how they can use their co-operative values to resonate with the younger demographic. This was achieved through the literature review in the ARP and the primary research.

This research will be used by Co-operatives UK in their work to promote, develop and unite the co-operative economy in the UK. The insight provided will be distributed within the organisation and directly inform approaches to marketing and communications as well as member and stakeholder engagement. The research focus on GZ values aligns with Co-operatives UK's strategic plan to nurture and empower young co-operators and entrepreneurs. The research paper will be added to the knowledge base of the co-operative movement, and findings may be used across the work of business development and the promotion of sustainable and ethical business models.

6.1 Fulfilment of objectives

The following section will summarise and compare the findings from the above primary data against the objectives set at the outset of this research:

No.	Objective
1	To establish the theoretical basis for value-driven brands and the GZ target audience.
2	Evaluate co-operative values through researching existing co-operative businesses and identify what motivates GZ co-operative business owners who have already set up co-operative businesses.
3	Explore the values GZ deem most important, what brands they engage with, and what motivates them to engage with these brands.
4	Critically evaluate why awareness of co-operative businesses in GZ is low and determine the barriers to setting them up for this age group.
5	To make recommendations on how Co-operatives UK can leverage their co-operative values to engage the GZ audience.

6.1.1 Objective 1

Through conducting a review and extensive analysis of the literature on brand activism, stakeholder theory, ethical branding, values, and GZ, I achieved objective 1. The literature review had the intention of understanding why brands state and practice values, why brands participate in brand activism, how this can be evaluated, how they are seen as being authentic in these activism efforts, and the impact on the GZ audience. Such research provides brands with a theoretical understanding of the impact values can have on the GZ audience and can generate a better understanding of how to market brands to the younger audience.

6.1.2 Objective 2

An analysis of the Co-operative UK case studies identified the motivations co-operative business owners had. However, in order to fully achieve this objective, building upon the data gathered in the literature review, I conducted primary research to identify

the specific motivations of GZ business owners. Due to the limited number of GZ co-operative business owners I had to expand the sample to GZ co-operative workers as well. The data gathered highlighted the drive for young co-operative owners and workers to make a difference to their community. I had to establish such an understanding in order to identify any commonalities between GZCBOW and the GZ individuals not involved with co-operatives.

6.1.3 Objective 3

Building on the information gathered in the literature review I achieved this objective after conducting the primary research. The research identified the values GZ deem the most important and it discovered an understanding of what motivates GZ to engage with brands. Such research can provide brands with a better understanding of what activist causes brands should be participating in to motivate GZ to engage with them. It also provides brands with the knowledge of what values they should be practicing and stating in order to engage the GZ audience.

6.1.4 Objective 4

The primary research uncovered several reasons why GZ have low awareness of co-operative businesses thus achieving objective 4. In addition, the research revealed many barriers to setting up co-operative businesses. This provides Co-operatives UK with the information they need to address these barriers and rectify these worries the younger generation have.

6.1.5 Objective 5

Through the successful achievement of the above objectives, recommendations on how co-operatives UK can leverage their co-operative values to engage the GZ audience have been stated in the recommendations table.

6.2 Limitations

This research features a number of weaknesses, one of which was the sample size of both the GZ interviews (16) and the GZCBOW interviews (5). The small sample sizes were primarily due to the short project timeframe, hence, I suggest that a larger scale study should be completed. I do not believe a larger sample of GZ and GZCBOW interviewees would significantly change the results. However, I recognised that it would make them more robust and further enrich the study. In addition, this study only interviewed individuals that lived in the UK, therefore this research could be expanded to other countries as co-operatives are international. At the outset of this research the intention was to research GZ co-operative business owners however, this was not possible due to the limited time frame, and the low number of young people who have set up co-operative businesses who were willing to participate in the interview. I made the decision to interview GZ individuals who were not just owners of a co-operative but also worked at a co-operative.

I also acknowledge that subjectivity can, unavoidably, contribute as a research limitation. Therefore, I recognise that the analysis of the interview data was an interpretive and subjective process, which was unavoidable. Although I doubt that others would have

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come to entirely different conclusions given the same data, I recognise that there is a possibility that they might.

Despite these issues, the data gathered from the interviews and focus group was of a high calibre and provided invaluable information that led to the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives and overall research aim.

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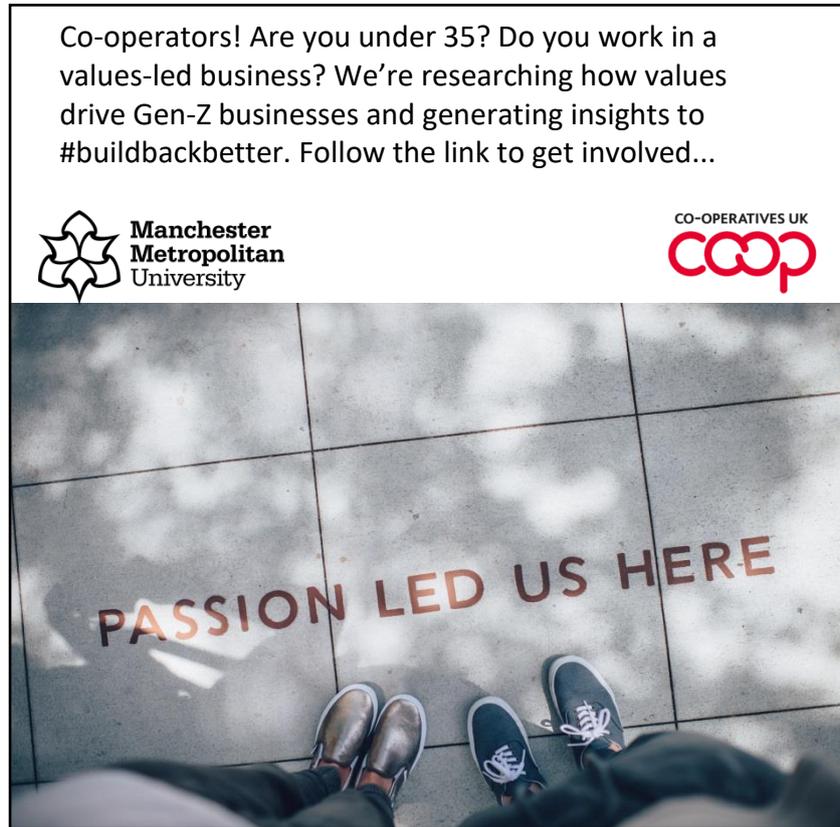
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Call out

Mock-up of what will be shown in the Co-operatives UK email newsletter and on their social media platforms (made by Co-operatives UK):



Appendix 2

Participant information sheet for GZCBO interviews



Participant Information Sheet

Applied Research Proposal

1. Invitation to research

I would like to invite you to take part in my research project. I, Rachael Radford, am a postgraduate Creative Advertising Strategies student at Manchester Metropolitan University. As part of the Applied Research Project unit, I will be recommending how Co-operatives UK can leverage their co-operative values to engage the Generation Z (18-34) audience with the concept of setting up co-operatives and how they can use their co-operative values to resonate with the younger age group, I will use the research results to support my decision-making.

2. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because you are between the 18-34 age range, living in the UK, and are part of a co-operative business. I want to identify any further values or motivations young co-operative business owners have, in addition to the co-operative values and principles that all co-operative are based on.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which I will give to you. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview to discuss your motivations for starting a cooperative business. I estimate this will take 30-45 minutes to complete over Microsoft Teams. The interview will be recorded (audio and video recording) so that answers to the questions can be further analysed. The recording will only be kept for the purposes and length of the project and will be deleted following the project submission. The recordings will not be used without your consent.

5. Are there any risks if I participate?

Participation in the research is optional, low-risk, and will be administered remotely at a time that suits you. All reasonable steps will be taken to anonymise and secure any personal data. More specific details may be found in section 7.

6. Are there any advantages if I participate?



As a Masters student I am unable to provide remuneration for participants. However, your experience and ideas will enhance the research profile of co-operatives and inform how Co-operatives UK and others can empower, engage, and elevate Generation-Z co-operators.

7. What will happen with the data I provide?

When you agree to participate in this research, I will collect from you personally-identifiable information.

The Manchester Metropolitan University ('the University') is the Data Controller in respect of this research and any personal data that you provide as a research participant.

The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's Data Protection Policy.

I collect personal data as part of this research (such as name, telephone numbers or age). As a public authority acting in the public interest I rely upon the 'public task' lawful basis. When I collect special category data (such as medical information or ethnicity) I rely upon the research and archiving purposes in the public interest lawful basis.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as I need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, I will keep the information about you that I have already obtained.

I will not share your personal data collected in this form with any third parties.

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I will only retain your personal data for as long as is necessary to achieve the research purpose. All the information I collect about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. I will anonymise your personal data as early in the activity as possible and information will be kept securely through the use of password protected files and encryption when sending information over the internet. This is so only myself, the investigator, and authorised staff, may access it. Direct quotes may be used in the report but will always be anonymised. After the project is submitted any personal data will be deleted.

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What will happen to the results of the research study?



The results of the research study will be published in the form of a report and sent to Cooperatives UK. You will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to be given a copy the report resulting from the research, please ask me to put you on the circulation list.

Who has reviewed this research project?

The research project has been reviewed by my supervisor, Adam Marshall, ethically reviewed by the university's ethics review procedure, and Michelle Parkin-Kelly the Co-operatives UK research officer I am working with on this project.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

Researcher:

Rachael Radford: rachael.radford@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Supervisor:

Adam Marshall, Supervisor, Manchester Metropolitan University, Email: a.marshall@mmu.ac.uk, M15 6BH.

Faculty ethics, Business and Law, Manchester Metropolitan University, Email: FOBLEthicsEnquiries@mmu.ac.uk, M15 6BH.

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THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT |



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2. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because you are between the 18-34 age range living in the UK. I am studying this particular population because a 2020 YouGov survey found that a large proportion of 18-34-year olds are unaware of the co-operative business model, even though it has been reported that 18-34 year olds have immense entrepreneurial ambition.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which I will give to you. I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview to discuss your values, what brands you are engaging with, what motivates this engagement, and your awareness of the co-operative business model. I estimate this will take 30-45 minutes to complete over Microsoft Teams. The interview will be recorded (audio and video recording) so that answers to the questions can be further analysed. The recording will only be kept for the purposes and length of the project and will be deleted following the project submission. The recordings will not be used without your consent.

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2. Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because you are between the 18-34 age range living in the UK. I am studying this particular population because a 2020 YouGov survey found that a large proportion of 18-34-year olds are unaware of the co-operative business model, even though it has been reported that 18-34-year olds have immense entrepreneurial ambition.

3. Do I have to take part?

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4. What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a focus group with 5 other participants to discuss your values, what brands you are engaging with, what motivates this engagement, and your awareness of the cooperative business model. I estimate this will take 60-90 minutes to complete over Microsoft Teams. The focus group will be recorded (audio and video recording) so that answers to the questions can be further analysed. The recording will only be kept for the purposes and length of the project and will be deleted following the project submission. The recordings will not be used without your consent.

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THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT |

Appendix 3
Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Applied Research Proposal

Participant Identification Number:



		Please tick your chosen answer	
		YES	NO
1.	I confirm that I have read the participant information sheet, date 23 rd June 2021 for the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I agree to participate in the project to the extent of the activities described to me in the above participant information sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I agree to my participation being audio recorded for analysis. No audio clips will be published without my express consent (additional media release form).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I agree to my participation being video recorded for analysis. No video clips will be published without my express consent (additional media release form).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I understand and agree that data collected during the project will be shared with Co-operative UK.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand and agree that my words may be quoted anonymously in research outputs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I wish to be informed of the outcomes of this research. I can be contacted at:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Name of participant Date Signature

Name of person Date Signature
taking consent

When completed: 1 for researcher, 1 for participant to keep with the PIS
EthOS ID number, Version: 1.0 Date: 23/08/2021

Appendix 4

Generation Z Co-operative business owners interview guide

Starter questions (to make participants feel comfortable):

1. Which co-op are you part of?
2. How long have you been there?
3. What region are you based in?
4. Did you know it was a co-op when you joined the business?

Main questions:

1. How did you become involved with <your business>?

Prompts:

- i. Were you a founder member?
- ii. Did you actively choose to work for a co-op or was it simply a job/opportunity that you saw?
- iii. Can you recall what drew you to <this business> in particular?
- iv. Did you know what a co-op was before you joined?
- v. How did you become aware of the co-operative business model?
- vi. What were the reasons to choose a co-op and not a company structure?

2. What are the *stated* values and principles of your co-op?

Prompts:

- i. Are you familiar with the Co-operative values and principles?
- ii. What are your views on the co-op principles?
- iii. Do you feel connected to the history of the co-op movement and the origin of these principles?
- iv. What do you think is *missing* from these?

3. Aside from the principles that drive your co-op, what are *your* values?

Prompts:

- i. What drives you/gets you up in the morning?

Appendix 5

Generation Z interview guide

Starter questions (to make participants feel comfortable):

1. What is your current occupation?
2. What region do you live in at the moment?

Main questions:

1. Tell me about the kind of brands you like to engage with the most at the moment.

Prompts:

- a. What motivates you to engage with these brands?
- b. Is there anything the brands are doing that encourages you to shop with them?

2. Tell me about what values you consider to be important

- a. For brands you engage with and shop with
- b. Personally
- c. In the workplace

3. Are you aware of the co-operative business model?

- **If YES** - how did you learn about it? What do you think it is about?
- **If NO** – What do you think the co-operative business model is about? (explain what the model is after the answer)
- **If NO** – Why do you think you do not know about the co-operative business model?

4. If you were to start up your own business, what kind of business would it be, and what values would it seek to promote?

5. Do you think you would consider starting a co-operative business?

- **If YES** – Why would you start a co-operative business over a non-co-operative business?

If NO – Why not? What do you think the barriers are?

Appendix 6

The Co-operative Principles

There are seven co-operative principles that define how a co-op operates:

1. A co-op is **owned and controlled by its members**. It exists for the benefit of its members, who may be customers, workers, suppliers or the wider community.
2. A co-op is **democratic** – this means every member has an equal say in how it's run and how profits are used.
3. **Every member contributes financially** in some way – from buying products, working for the co-op, investing in it or deciding how to spend its profits.
4. A co-op is an **independent** business, owned and controlled by its members.
5. It offers **education and training** to everyone involved, so they can develop the co-op and promote the benefits of co-operation.
6. It **co-operates**, works with and supports other co-ops.
7. A co-op supports the **communities** it works with.

Appendix 7

The Co-operative Values

The co-operative values

There are 10 values that all co-ops are based on

1. Caring for others
2. Democracy
3. Equity
4. Equality
5. Honesty
6. Openness
7. Self help
8. Self responsibility
9. Solidarity
10. Social responsibility

Appendix 8

Focus group questions

1. What are the main reasons you engage and shop with the brands you do?
Prompt the group to talk about:
 - a. Brands participating in activism
 - b. Brands that are convenient and how that influences engagement

2. What do you think are the most important activist causes or values brands should be engaging in or stating at the moment?
Prompt the group to talk about:
 - a. Environmental causes
 - b. Ethical practices and treatment of employees
 - c. Sourcing materials responsibly
 - d. Honest and transparent
 - e. Being authentic and real
 - f. Animal cruelty free
 - g. Equality
 - h. Racial justice

3. What values do you deem the most important for yourselves?
Prompt the group to talk about these values:
 - a. Environmentally friendly and sustainable practices
 - b. Transparency and honesty
 - c. Caring for others
 - d. Animal welfare
 - e. Equality
 - f. Ethically sourced products/materials
 - g. Ethical company practices and treatment of employees
 - h. Respect for others

4. Would you say that the values you look for as a customer are different to the values you look for in the workplace?
Prompt:
 - a. What would you say are the most important values to look for in the workplace?

5. Why do you think young people aren't setting up co-operative businesses?
Prompt:
 - a. What are the main barriers?
 - b. What are the positives about the co-operative business model?