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EXPANDING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE DESIGN OF POLICY INFLUENCING CONSUMER CHOICE FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Annex

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In association with



Bio Intelligence Service - Scaling sustainable development
Industrial Ecology - Nutritional Health

Bio Intelligence Service S.A.S - bio@biois.com
20-22 Villa Deshayes - 75014 Paris - France
Tél. +33 (0)1 53 90 11 80 - Fax. +33 (0)1 56 53 99 90

Contact BIO Intelligence Service
Shailendra Mudgal – Jonathan Bain
☎ + 33 1 53 90 11 80
shailendra.mudgal@biois.com
jonathan.bain@biois.com

Project Team

BIO Intelligence Service

Mr. Shailendra Mudgal

Mr. Jonathan Bain

Ms. Mary Ann Kong

Mr. Kurt Muehmel

Policy Studies Institute (PSI)

Ms. Kate McGeevor

Mr. Robin Vanner

Ecologic Institute (Ecologic)

Mr. Max Gruenig

Mr. Benjamin Boteler

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1. ANNEX – DETAILED DEVELOPMENT OF TRIAL METHODOLOGY

1.1. CONTENT OF TRIAL WEBSITE

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

Consent form to be completed online by research trial participants; information available as a pdf for participants to download and print to take away.

Expanding the evidence base for the design of policy influencing consumer choice for products and services with environmental impacts

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by the Policy Studies Institute, which is part of the University of Westminster's School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL). The aim of the research is explore the way in which people make decisions when buying products.

The study will involve you completing a short online survey. This will ask you some questions about yourself and then ask you to imagine you are shopping for some products online. Note that the images that you will be presented with are images only and are not linked to an online store.

The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

As a thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey, you will also be asked if you would like to be entered into a prize draw for a camera. If you do, you will need to provide your name and email address. This information will be kept separately from your responses to the rest of the questionnaire. You will only be entered into the prize draw if you answer all of the questions in the survey.

- Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary.
- You have the right to withdraw from the research, by not completing the survey, at any time without giving a reason.
- You have the right to ask for your data to be withdrawn as long as this is practical, and for personal information to be destroyed.
- Your responses will be confidential. No individuals will be identifiable from any collated data, written report of the research, or any publications arising from it.
- All data will be kept on a secure server by the organisation administering the research website.
- You do not have to answer particular questions on the survey if you do not wish to. However, you will only be entered into the prize draw if you complete the entire survey.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research project, please email k.mcgeevor@psi.org.uk or call 020 7911 7545.

CONSENT FORM (to be completed online by participants)

Expanding the evidence base for the design of policy influencing consumer choice for products and services with environmental impacts

I have read the information above and I am willing to act as a participant in the above research study.

Name:

Date:

This consent information will be stored separately from any data you provide so that your responses remain anonymous.

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in the research experiment. We are undertaking research to better understand how consumers make purchasing decisions. The results will be used by governments to better understand how consumers behave.

What follows are a number of questions which should take no more than about 3xx minutes to complete. At the end, you will be offered the choice of which camera you would like to receive if you win the prize draw.

To start, please press NEXT below.

Cancel

Next

About yourself

We need some basic information about you before we start. The responses you provide here are confidential and will only be used to analyse the results.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your age?

18 – 21

22 – 25

26 – 29

Over 30

3. What is your living situation whilst you are studying at the University of Westminster?

Living in halls of residents

Living with parents or guardian

Living alone in private accommodation

Living in shared private accommodation

Other

4. Are you a resident of the UK?

Yes

No

Cancel

Back

Next

Which product would you buy?

5. We would like you to imagine that you shopping online for a laundry cleaning product.

You are presented with the following two products. Both provide enough washing powder to do 10 washes. However, the one on the bottom is manufactured in a way which is more environmentally-friendly.

Which of the two washing powers would you buy?

Product A

Persil Laundry Powder Bio



£3.01

Qty.

Add

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

Ecover Concentrated Bio Powder



£3.57

Qty.

Add

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

Two buttons to choose from: Product A and Product B

6. Now imagine you are shopping for some toilet cleaner. You are presented with the following two products. Which of the two cleaners would you buy?

Control

Harpic Power Plus Liquid Citrus Toilet Cleaner 750ml



£1.74

Qty. [Add](#)

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

Ecover Ocean Waves Toilet Cleaner 750ml



£1.75

Qty. [Add](#)

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

Treatment:

Harpic Power Plus Liquid Citrus Toilet Cleaner 750ml



Customer Rating: ★★★★★

£1.74

Qty. [Add](#)

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

Ecover Ocean Waves Toilet Cleaner 750ml



Customer Rating: ★★★★★

£1.75

Qty. [Add](#)

[Show similar](#) | [Add to list](#) | [Add to favourites](#)

7. Now imagine that you are shopping online for a new kettle. You are presented with the following two products. Which of the two kettles would you buy?



Russell Hobbs 17869 Black Plastic Buxton 1.6 Litre Kettle with concealed 3KW Element
by [Russell Hobbs](#)

Price: **£19.99**

In stock.



Philips HD4669 3000W Kettle with 1.7L Capacity in Black Brushed Metal
by [Philips](#)

Price: **£19.99**

In stock.

8. Now imagine that you are presented with the following two kettles. They are similar in price but one is more energy efficient than the other. Which of the two kettles would you buy?

Control:



Russell Hobbs 13355 1.7 L Ceylon Stainless Steel Kettle Classic Style
by [Russell Hobbs](#)

★★★★☆

Price: **£19.99** & this item **Delivered FREE in the UK** with Super Saver Delivery. [See details and conditions](#)

In stock.



Philips HD4671/20 Energy Efficient Kettle Brushed Metal 3.0KW 1.7L

by [Philips](#)

★★★★☆

Price: **£23.49** & this item **Delivered FREE in the UK** with Super Saver Delivery. [See details and conditions](#)

In stock.

Treatment:



Russell Hobbs 13355 1.7 L Ceylon Stainless Steel Kettle Classic Style

by [Russell Hobbs](#)

★★★★☆

RRP: ~~£24.99~~

Price: **£19.99** & this item **Delivered FREE in the UK** with Super Saver Delivery. [See details and conditions](#)

You Save: **£5.00 (20%)**

In stock.



Philips HD4671/20 Energy Efficient Kettle Brushed Metal 3.0KW 1.7L

by [Philips](#)

★★★★☆

RRP: ~~£40.85~~

Price: **£23.49** & this item **Delivered FREE in the UK** with Super Saver Delivery. [See details and conditions](#)

You Save: **£17.36 (42%)**

In stock.

You and the environment

9. Which of these best describes how you feel about your current lifestyle and the environment?

I'm happy with what I do at the moment

I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment

I'd like to do a lot more to help to environment

Don't know

10. And which of these would you say best describes your current lifestyle?

- I don't really do anything that is environmentally-friendly
- I do one or two things that are environmentally-friendly
- I do quite a few things that are environmentally-friendly
- I'm environmentally-friendly in most things I do
- I'm environmentally-friendly in everything I do
- Don't know

11. Below is a list of things that people might do to help the environment. For each one, indicate which of the responses listed applies to you personally at the moment.

	I don't really want to do this	I haven't really thought about doing this	I've thought about doing this, but probably won't do it	I'm thinking about doing this	I'm already doing this, but I probably won't manage to keep it up	I'm already doing this and intend to keep it up	I've tried doing this, but I've given up	Don't know	Not applicable
Recycle more rather than throwing things away									

Eat food that is produced locally, when it is in season									
Buy fish from certified sustainable sources									
Compost your household's food and garden waste									
Reuse and repair instead of buying new items									
Using public transport instead of taking the car									

Cancel

Next

Thank you for taking part.

Thank you for taking part in the research.

If you would like to now be entered into the prize draw, please complete you details below and indicate which camera you would like to receive.

12. Which camera you would like to receive if you win?

Control:

Worth £123



Technical specifications

This camera has a 26 mm wide-angle lens which offers a greater field of view, which is ideal for group shots and when you don't have space to step back.

Worth £123



Technical specifications

This camera offers "Shake Reduction", even when using the optical and mechanical zoom. This provides blur-free images.

Treatment:

Worth £123



Was £172

Technical specifications

This camera has a 26 mm wide-angle lens which offers a greater field of view, which is ideal for group shots and when you don't have space to step back.

Worth £123



Technical specifications

This camera offers "Shake Reduction", even when using the optical and mechanical zoom. This provides blur-free images.

Post-experiment page

Subjects to be redirected to the newsletter page from which the notice was posted

1.2. TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

There are a number of technical specifications which require exploring, in addition to the content.

- **Assignment** – There are two points where those entering the experiment need to be randomly assigned in to either the treatment group or the control group. These are at questions 6, 8 and 12. The two hypotheses are being tested independently from one another. Although not a significant potential bias, the rationale for not assigning all subjects into a treatment or control group from the outset is that being assigned to the treatment group for one question might possibly make the subject more aware of what is being tested. Randomly assigning within the experiment would overcome some of this. However, it is judged that the ideal would be to assign all subjects into two groups, one to be offered the treatment question for questions 6 & 8 and control for question 12, the other to be offered the control question for questions 6 & 8 and treatment question for 12.
- **The cancel button** – The purpose of the cancel button function is to provide a way for subjects to exit early in a way that it can be registered. It also attempts to reduce the number exiting by reminding subjects that they will not be entered in to win a camera. The following dialogue box is proposed: *‘Are you sure that you want to exit the experiment? If you press YES your input will be cancelled and you will not be able to win the camera.’* The options provided within the dialogue box are either ‘YES’ or ‘NO’. If the subject does press yes, their involvement should not be included in the tally of those entered into the prize draw.
- **Selection of products** – For the test questions, 6, 8 & 12, the subject is invited to select a product by pressing the picture which is hyperlinked to the next page.
- **Other responses** – Other than the selection of a product, all other questions are responded to by selecting a worded response (i.e. yes, no etc.), or in the case of question 11, a series of selection boxes of some kind where one of the x axes responses are required for each y axes questions. It is required that subjects can highlight only one response for each question in a way that they can see all of their responses, and then press next or cancel. Where the subject has failed to respond to all questions, the page needs to remain and the following dialogue needs to appear *‘You have not answered one or more of the questions on this page. If you do not answer all of the questions, you will not be eligible to enter the prize draw. Please review your responses selecting a*

response for all questions before pressing next.’ Ideally, the question with the missing response would be highlighted in red.

- **Recording of results** – The results need to be recorded for all those who respond to any questions. A record of whether they were presented with the treatment or control question is also required. Tabular or table coding will be most suitable for this.

1.3. RATIONALE FOR CONTENT

The purpose of this section is to provide commentary and rationale for why the experiment has been developed in the way that it has. This is done through web pages:

Questions 1 – 4: About yourself – These questions (gender, living situation and whether the subject is normally resident in the UK) are intended to record information about the respondents which will likely be useful in analysing the results. It is believed that these are the factors which are most important in explaining the level of experience and understanding that the respondents have in the consumer choice posed. It is possible, for example, that the results show significance when only UK resident students are analysed. This data is also important when reporting and extrapolating the findings.

- **Question 5. Which product would you buy?**

This is a dummy question to get students used to the format of the questions and to help them imagine they are making choices online. The two products are both comparable laundry powders. The results from this question will not be used to explore a particular hypothesis.

- **Question 6. Which product would you buy?** This question is intended to explore the hypothesis: *Providing consumers with positive recommendations from other consumers for environmentally-preferable goods will positively affect consumer purchasing..* The following factors and issues were considered:
 - The choice of product – toilet cleaners – needed to be familiar and relevant but not necessarily products that students will attach a strong brand value to (e.g. like clothes). Being confronted with the option to buy this particular environmentally friendly toilet cleaner will also be sufficiently familiar to most students that their recognition of the brand will lead to sufficient levels of trust in the product’s credentials, even for those who do not buy such products. The downside of this is that habit may lead to pre-determined decisions without considering the treatment statement.
 - The treatment in this instance will be the provision of a star rating for each product, with a higher product rating for the more environmentally-friendly product. The product ratings are actual ratings taken from the website on which the products were sold, which

reduces the ethical risks posed if we were to provide false consumer recommendations.

- Method – What is being measured within the control group will be their willingness to pay more for an environmentally less harmful product. Asking this question in such a hypothetical context is understood to be open to considerable bias as the subjects are not actually paying the extra money. However, what is actually being tested is the influence of the treatment rating informing subjects of other consumers' recommendations, compared to the control group. The hypothetical nature is therefore less important in terms of bias.
- Control – Attempts were also made to ensure that the non-environmental product chosen represented the kind of product likely to be a substitute if environmental impact is not valued sufficiently (i.e. a high quality, biological product).

Question 7. Which product would you buy? This is a dummy question. The two products are both comparable electrical products. The results from this question will not be used to explore a particular hypothesis.

Question 8. Which product would you buy? This question is intended to explore the impact of other consumers on the test the hypothesis: *A product with a sale price much lower than a stated Recommended Retail Price (RRP) will be more attractive to consumers than a product of the same sale price with no stated RRP.* The following factors and issues were considered:

- The choice of product – kettles – needed to be familiar and relevant but not necessarily products that students will attach a strong brand value to (e.g. like clothes).
- The treatment in this instance will be the provision of a recommended retail price indicated a saving, with a more substantial saving showing for the more energy efficient kettle. The RRP's are actual prices quoted on the website which the products we sold, which reduces the ethical risks posed if we were to provide false information.
- Method – What is being measured within the control group will be their willingness to pay more for a more energy efficient kettle. Asking this question in such a hypothetical context is understood to be open to considerable bias as the subjects are not actually paying the extra money. However, what is actually being tested is the influence of the treatment rating informing subjects of the products' RRP's. The hypothetical nature is therefore less important in terms of bias.
- Control – Attempts were also made to ensure that the non-environmental product chosen represented the kind of product likely to be a substitute if environmental impact is not valued sufficiently.

- **You and the environment** – This page is intended to gain an understanding of the subjects attitudes and behaviours associated with the environment. This should provide a useful cross-check against any habitual selection bias in the choice of products. The questions are taken from Defra’s Environmental Tracker Survey, which is used to measure environmental attitudes and behaviours across the UK. This will allow analysis to compare the attitudes of the student respondents with those of the UK population more widely.
- **Which camera would you prefer to own?** – This question is intended to test the hypothesis: *‘A product with a sale price much lower than a stated Recommended Retail Price (RRP) will be more attractive to consumers than a product of the same sale price with no stated RRP.’* It was decided that the offer needed to be based on actual products offered on the market (at Amazon.co.uk). This means that, in theory, they are both worth the same¹ within the market context but one of them highlights a reduction in price for the treatment group. The reduction in price is used instead of RRP in this instance as this is how it was presented on Amazon’s website.
 - Control – Attempts were made to ensure that the two cameras on offer are as similar as possible, except for the reduction in price highlighted to the treatment group. The cameras were chosen as they were offered at a very similar price; they are of similar design and colour and brand value. The only major difference which could not be controlled for was the different functions: one offers a wide angle lens, and the other offers shake reduction. These might be said to offer broadly equivalent level of service depending of the individual requirements and has been highlighted to distract attention away from what is actually being tested. As this difference is held constant between the control and the treatment group, this difference does not represent a notable source of bias. Other than this, detailed specifications have not been provided in order to maintain control.

1.4. SELECTING A PRIZE WINNER

The following steps were undertaken for a prize winner to be selected.

1. Removal of all duplicate entries, leaving every respondent represented in the list once.

¹ Note, there was a slight difference in prices of less than £1 but this was rounded up in order to control for this.

2. Used Excel's random number generator function to generate a random number between 1 and 419 (Formula: =randbetween(1,419))
3. Generated a number which corresponded to a particular student (not provided for congeniality reasons).
4. Participant informed and sent the Pentax camera which he selected when completing the survey.
5. Winner emailed and notified that he would receive an email when the camera had arrived.

1.5. THE PRODUCTS PRESENTED WITHIN THE TRIAL

The details of the products being used within the trial are provided below.

The cleaning and laundry products were taken from the Ocado website on the 20th January 2011:

- Persil Laundry Powder:
 - http://www.ocado.com/webshop/product/Persil-Laundry-Powder-Bio/47944011?from=search&tags=|20000¶m=persil&parentContainer=SEARCHpersil_SHELFVIEW
- Ecover Concentrated Bio Powder:
 - http://www.ocado.com/webshop/product/Ecover-Concentrated-Non-Bio-Laundry-Powder-10-Washes/58655011?from=search&tags=|20000¶m=ecover+laundry&parentContainer=SEARCHecover+laundry_SHELFVIEW
- Harpic Power Plus Toilet Cleaner:
 - http://www.ocado.com/webshop/product/Harpic-Power-Plus-Liquid-Citrus-Toilet-Cleaner/41235011?from=search&tags=|20000¶m=harpic&parentContainer=SEARCHharpic_SHELFVIEW
- Ecover Toilet Cleaner:
 - http://www.ocado.com/webshop/product/Ecover-Ocean-Waves-Toilet-Cleaner/38718011?from=search&tags=|20000¶m=ecover+toilet&parentContainer=SEARCHecover+toilet_SHELFVIEW

The kettles were taken from the Amazon website on the 20th January 2011:

- Russell Hobbs Black Kettle:
 - http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/B002FB5J0S/ref=s9_simh_gw_p79_d0_i1?pf_rd_m=A3P5ROKL5A1OLE&pf_rd_s=center-

[2&pf_rd_r=17WPT17PGMGD3PATAJTN&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=467128533&pf_rd_i=468294](#)

- Philips Kettle in Black Brushed Metal:
 - http://www.amazon.co.uk/Philips-HD4669-Kettle-Capacity-Brushed/dp/B00491BX5M/ref=sr_1_cc_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1295612439&sr=1-1-catcorr
- Russell Hobbs Stainless Steel Kettle:
 - http://www.amazon.co.uk/Russell-Hobbs-13355-Stainless-Classic/dp/B000IHYSB2/ref=sr_1_2?s=kitchen&ie=UTF8&qid=1295612375&sr=1-2
- Philips Energy Efficient Kettle:
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Philips-HD4671-Energy-Efficient-Brushed/dp/B001EHF3P0/ref=sr_1_1?s=kitchen&ie=UTF8&qid=1295612323&sr=1-1

The cameras were taken from the UK Amazon website on the 6th of January 2011:

- Pentax Optio A30 Digital Compact Camera [10MP, 3x optical] - £122.95
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Pentax-Digital-Compact-Camera-optical/dp/B000NI6J7W/ref=sr_1_299?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1294319263&sr=1-299
- SONY Cyber-shot DSC-W320 – black - £122.49:
http://www.amazon.co.uk/Sony-SONY-Cyber-shot-DSC-W320-black/dp/B003DQKKCQ/ref=sr_1_296?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1294319263&sr=1-296