MARKE MARKETING SCOTTISH SOCIAL ENTERPRISES USING A LABEL?

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Abstract

Purpose – Social enterprises are competitive businesses in the marketplace, yet insubstantial research has investigated how they market their businesses. This paper aims to investigate the impact a social enterprise label – "Buy the Good Stuff" – used in Edinburgh has had on consumer awareness and explore whether a possible national label could be used as a marketing tool by social enterprises in Scotland.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses a mixed-methods approach, consisting of an online questionnaire with 100 participants and 7 semi-structured interviews with representatives of social enterprises involved in the marketing campaign in Edinburgh and representatives of social enterprises who were not involved in the campaign.

Findings – Findings indicate that the label used in Edinburgh has had little impact on increasing consumer's awareness of social enterprises. However, a national label has the potential to help social enterprises increase consumer awareness. Yet successful implementation requires thorough design of the label and broad support for its promotion.

Practical implications – The paper offers insights into the implementation of a national label. Managers of social enterprises and Social Enterprise Networks should consider the findings when adopting marketing activities.

Originality/value – Findings contribute to the sparse literature regarding marketing activities of social enterprises. The paper provides evidence that the broader social enterprise sector and its representatives in Scotland should re-evaluate their position on the introduction of a national

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label, given that one priority identified for the sector is to create and promote a social enterprise brand which the SE Code is not focused on.

Keywords – Social enterprises, Marketing, Label, Scotland

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

Social enterprises often exist in the same marketplace as profit-driven businesses thus should be of interest to marketers and consumer researchers (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015). Literature continues to debate issues such as the motivations, structures and success of social enterprises (Dacin *et al.*, 2010; Mair and Marti, 2006). Yet little research exists exploring the marketing or promotional methods of such organisations (Powell and Osborne, 2018; Shaw, 2004; Sutton, McEachern and Kane, 2018). One concept that has been explored is the Unique Selling Point (USP) of a business and its impact on competitive advantage (Chell, 2007). Using a promotional logo or label to communicate this has been discussed in relation to various sectors including Fairtrade and voluntary organisations (Annunziate, Ianuario and Pascale, 2011; Davenport and Low, 2013; Keller and Lehmann, 2006; McDonagh, 2002; Stride and Lee 2007). However, little research has applied marketing theories to the field of social entrepreneurship (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018; Bull and Crompton, 2006; Powell and Osborne, 2015, 2018; Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015; Shaw, 2004). Hence, a curiosity to explore these concepts in the context of social enterprises has prompted this research.

Social enterprise in the context of this study

Social enterprises can have a positive impact on inequalities, create social change and can be used for delivering welfare services (Kay, Roy and Donaldson, 2016). They are often businesses that sell products and services in the open market but reinvest profit into the community they are serving or back into the business to fulfil a social purpose (Mazzei and Roy 2017). Yet social enterprises can be motivated by a spectrum of purposes, and they can vary in both institutional forms and practices, depending on the socio-economic, political, cultural and religious history of particular nations (Hazenberg *et al.*, 2016; Roy *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, social enterprises can be understood as a hybrid of private, public and third sector organisations due to the complexity of their governance, ownership structures and objectives, in other words, having characteristics from more than one sector. Though, scholars have indicated that hybridity is not a fixed characteristic, as many social enterprises have evolved

over time. Some are started from scratch, whilst some have charitable or public sector origins having responded to changes in the environment (Billis, 2010; Cornforth and Spear, 2010). Consequently, it is evident that social enterprise is a contested term (Teasdale, 2012) with no widely agreed definition (Life Changes Trust, 2017; Littlewood and Khan, 2018), including no *legal* definition in any part of the UK (Roy *et al*., 2015).

The social enterprise 'ecosystem' (Hazenberg *et al*., 2016) differs even between nations in the UK, hence the focus in this paper is on one nation alone, Scotland. Scotland is considered a front runner in the global social enterprise movement (Scottish Government, 2016) and has a supportive environment for social enterprises with many organisations and key policies backing the movement. This has been prominent in the last decade, with the Scottish Government introducing numerous initiatives and extensive financial support (Life Changes Trust, 2017; Mazzei and Roy 2017; Roy *et al*., 2015). It is therefore not surprising that the country has over 5,000 social enterprises, which have contributed £1.68bn to the economy (Scottish Government, 2016). The social enterprise sector collaborated with the Scottish Government to develop Scotland's social enterprise strategy for 2016-2026. As part of this process, a vision was created which stated that social enterprises will "*become central to the 'Scottish approach' to doing business*" (Life Changes Trust, 2017, p. 8). The vision of building a social enterprise nation was argued to require a more confident, coherent and wide-reaching movement. Furthermore, the national membership and lobbying agency for social enterprise, Social Enterprise Scotland (SES) put together a manifesto which shows the views and priorities for social enterprises. One particular priority stands out, which is that a social enterprise brand should be created and promoted, along with building public awareness (Life Changes Trust, 2017). This was also identified by the Scottish Government (2016), arguing that more work was needed in the area of creating better national recognition of the movement.

While the UK Government published an official definition of social enterprise in 2002, this was never fully accepted by the sector (albeit having been adopted also in Scotland), and part of this is due to the rapid increase of social enterprises of various kinds, as well as the overly casual use of the term to describe businesses that arguably are not social enterprises. The meaning of social enterprises has also at times been eroded by those from within the third sector who have not reached the appropriate standard (SE Code, 2018). Social enterprises have been defined by the Scottish Government (n.d.) as "*businesses with a social or environmental purpose, and whose profits are re-invested into fulfilling their mission*", a definition we also adopt for this paper. This is in line with the Voluntary Code of Practice, which sets down the

values and behaviours that can be expected of Scottish social enterprises and the criteria that they need to meet (SE Code, 2018).

The hybridisation of organisations and blurring of boundaries between sectors (Billis, 2010) is evident. Though, we believe that the extent is less extreme for Scottish social enterprises and there are several indicators for this. The Scottish Government has managed to set its own definition and a social enterprise strategy in collaboration with the sector. Additionally, sector representatives have managed to develop a distinct code of practice and priorities, such as creating a Scottish social enterprise brand. None of these would be possible if the Scottish social enterprise sector was not somewhat cohesive. It is reasonable to expect that the majority of social enterprises in Scotland comply with the Voluntary Code of Practice (SE Code, 2018) and re-invest 100% of their profits back into their social mission. Hence, we conceptualise social enterprises in Scotland as innovative and dynamic businesses that align with this principle.

Rationale, aim and structure

Various labels exist for social enterprises in the UK (Social Enterprise Mark CIC, 2015). For example, Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) launched a marketing campaign using a logo in 2012 (Buy Social) which aimed to attract consumers as well as encourage social enterprises to support each other. The campaign won awards and was backed by the UK Government and public figures and the brand and assets have been licensed for use in other nations (Social Enterprise UK, 2014, 2016). However, no academic research exists exploring the impact of these labels on consumer awareness of social enterprises. Thus the aim of this study is to investigate the impact a social enterprise label – "Buy the Good Stuff" (BTGS) – used in Edinburgh has had on consumer awareness and explore whether a possible national label could be used as a marketing tool by social enterprises in Scotland.

Three research questions are explored within a Scottish context:

1. Would a label as a form of marketing increase awareness of social enterprises from a consumer perspective?
2. Did social enterprises find the BTGS campaign to be successful in raising consumer awareness of social enterprises?
3. Would a similar promotional label be something social enterprises would consider adopting?

The paper is structured in the following way; first, a review of marketing related works; the paper then explains the method that was applied; after which the focus switches to findings and discussion; and finally culminating in a conclusion.

Marketing and Consumer Behaviour Theories

According to Pinch and Sunley (2015) managers are increasingly recognising the need for their business to become more commercially orientated whilst always putting their social aims first. Scholars argue that social enterprises are adopting mainstream business practices in order to compete for business in the industries which they exist (Bull and Crompton, 2006; Chew and Lyon, 2012). The concept of commercialising the voluntary sector has begun to be addressed in relation to charities adopting branding strategies. Research suggests voluntary organisations have aimed to manage increasing competition in the sector through branding as a way of encouraging trust, awareness and ultimately supporters (Hassay and Peloza, 2009; Stride and Lee, 2007). However, adopting branding techniques has been argued to result in charities losing their own identity (Sternberg, 1998, cited in Stride *et al*., 2007). As discussed in the work by Stride *et al*. (2007), a brand is not just about a well-designed logo, it is about building a relationship with consumers to communicate the values and intangible aspects of the brand which matters. It is this dimension in the voluntary sector in which there continues to be a lack research.

Conti (2002) found that the most useful business practices for non-profit organisations to adopt from profit-driven businesses included marketing activities. The purpose of marketing for any business is to attract new customers and satisfy current customers through providing value (Kotler *et al*., 2015). Though, marketing activities have only recently been embraced by non-profits (Hassay and Paloza, 2009) and it has been suggested that these activities lack a customer orientation (Pope, Sterrett Isely and Asamoa-Tutu, 2009). Thus it is worth considering how profit-driven businesses make use of marketing activities in order to apply them to a social enterprise context.

Motivation

Literature suggests marketers are increasingly seeking to understand what motivates a consumer to make a purchase decision and find ways to promote their business in order to raise consumer's awareness of their brand (Solomon *et al*., 2016). Consumer awareness refers to a consumer's rights in understanding what they are buying, and the information and choices

available to them (Guido, 2001). This definition is most useful as it encompasses the idea that promotion is not merely about getting a consumer's attention, but also generating interest and educating the consumer about the product.

Motivational theories have long been applied to the understanding of consumer behaviour (Dichter, 1985; Maslow, 1945). In the context of social enterprises, Hibbert, Hogg and Quinn (2005) argued that the intangible rewards of helping are likely to motivate consumers to buy. This is in line with Maslow's (1945) hierarchy of needs, which argues that individuals are often motivated by the need for esteem and self-actualisation after fulfilling basic needs. With regards to consumer's purchasing to help others, the two main aspects of motivation that have been explored are the external stimuli and internal motives for helping that influence a person's actions (Hibbert *et al*., 2005). Indeed, in the context of Fairtrade, Wright and Heaton (2006) argued that through increasing branding and promoting knowledge about Fairtrade, consumers are more motivated to buy. This could be considered as justification for developing external stimuli such as a logo, in order for social enterprises to engage with consumer's motives. The key point emerging from previous literature is that consumer motives may be influenced by an increase in knowledge and branding.

However, Choi and Junyong (2016) found that in Korea many social enterprises did not use social enterprise promotional labels available to them as they felt that advertising the fact that socially vulnerable groups have created their products may deduct from the quality consumers perceive. Although it must be noted that such findings may not be applicable to Scotland, where social enterprises create thousands of jobs for the country and significantly contribute to the economy.

Either way, Bull and Crompton (2006) found that due to increasing competition and funding pressures, social enterprises were beginning to define what their USP was in order to engage in marketing activities. This is in line with work investigating branding in the voluntary sector (Hassay and Peloza, 2009; Stride and Lee, 2007). Some participants in Bull and Crompton's (2006) study had previously not considered their social value to be worth marketing, however were now considering this. In our study, social value refers to the benefits a social enterprise brings to the community it exists to support (Chell, 2007). Evidently there has been a change in perceptions with regards to the need for marketing in the social enterprise sector.

The 4P Model

Various marketing models and frameworks exist (Jobber, 2012; Kotler *et al*., 2015), proposing ways in which businesses can form sustainable relationships with their target markets. However, these often require extensive market research or expensive campaigns which may be inappropriate for smaller enterprises struggling with limited resources (Resnick *et al*., 2016). Although, according to Hill (2000), smaller organisations have more flexibility to implement marketing activities, therefore they can respond quicker to change and opportunities.

According to Leigh and Gabel (1992), businesses can convey their marketing message across the marketing mix using McCarthy's (1960) 4P model: Product, Place, Price and Promotion. Marketers seek to consider these in order to satisfy the needs of target markets. This paper utilises the 'Promotion' element, focusing on how businesses communicate a message to customers and which marketing strategies are most effective.

Promotional Logo

Branding is an intangible, complex and long debated topic in literature, but can be seen as a clear strategy for successfully making consumers see a message beyond a products basic offering (Allan, 2005). Whilst a brand may be considered intangible (Chiagouris, 2006), a logo can be used across all marketing channels to communicate a message to consumers (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). The Fairtrade movement has made use of this, which is worth considering in this study, as both social enterprises and Fairtrade operate as an enterprise and seek to create social value (Peattie and Morley, 2008). Doherty *et al*. (2009) argued that in terms of promotion, both have the opportunity to market as collective groups in order to promote the values of their products and services. The Fairtrade logo also acts as a certification label for products which have met international Fairtrade standards. Allan (2005) and McDonagh (2002) argued that this label provides assurance to consumers that they know that what they are buying has been produced ethically. A US study found that sales for one type of coffee increased by 10% when branded with the Fairtrade label (Hainmueller, Hiscox and Sequeira, 2011). Yet, it focused on products being sold by profit-driven companies, which may be less applicable to social enterprises who have their own channels of distribution. Nevertheless, whilst the Fairtrade label acts as a branded logo communicating ethical business practices to consumers, it also is a *certification mark* (Daveport and Low, 2013). This concept may be a framework that social enterprises could adapt.

Current Social Enterprise Marketing

MARKETING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Marketing and consumer behaviour theories have been explored in for-profit and ethical businesses, but scholars (Bull and Crompton, 2006; Powell and Osborne, 2015, 2018; Shaw, 2004; Sutton *et al*., 2018) have noted that there are relatively few studies that have investigated the contribution marketing could make to social enterprises. Bull (2007) found that many social enterprises perceived marketing to be an activity which only 'big businesses' do, or they were too busy to create a marketing strategy. In addition, Hill (2000) suggests that social enterprises engage in marketing activities subconsciously and informally, with little assessment of the impact activities are achieving. This may be justified by the argument that restricted resources and the local-embeddedness of social enterprise markets are preventing marketing activities (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018; Powell and Osborne, 2015; Shaw, 2004). Pinch and Sunley (2015) explored this idea further, discovering that in certain English cities, it was the local authority that was restricting resources and the ability for social enterprises to grow. Those who had the support of their local authority and other social enterprises in the area were better equipped to exploit opportunities to grow. This could be interpreted as marketing being of no interest to social enterprises or not being possible due to barriers in accessing resources. Yet, Doherty *et al*. (2009) have found that social enterprises are using word of mouth and social media as marketing tools due to the cost effectiveness and often close geographical location between the social enterprise and their consumers. Powell and Osborne (2018) recently found that while marketing is indeed used by social enterprises, it is considered a separate activity to other management functions and can only be implemented by marketing specialists. So, while previous literature has explored aspects of marketing activities in social enterprises, more research is required, including focusing on how any resource constraints could be overcome.

Social Enterprise Labels

Allan (2005) proposed that social enterprises should adopt a label similar to that used in the Fairtrade movement, arguing it would help raise awareness of social enterprises and subsequently increase their market share and social impact. He highlighted that a label should represent social value to consumers and differentiate social enterprises in crowded markets. Since Allan's (2005) report, social enterprise labels have been adopted in the UK (the 'Social Enterprise Mark', the 'We're a Social Enterprise badge' and the 'Buy Social logo'). However, there remains a shortage of academic publications investigating the impact they have had (Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012), and where investigations have been made the labels have reportedly made little impact in terms of promotion or influence on consumer awareness of social enterprises (Social Enterprise Mark CIC, 2015).

The 'Social Enterprise Mark' was launched in 2010, followed by the 'We're a Social Enterprise' badge in 2012 with looser criteria than the mark, allowing also older social enterprises to have an identifier (Ainsworth, 2013). In 2012 SENSCOT, Scotland's main Social Enterprise Network, launched its own identifier (the 'Social Enterprise Code of Practice'), choosing not to support either the mark or the badge due to a lack of rigour in entry criteria and a weakening of the principles of the social enterprise movement, specifically in relation to the ability to distribute profits to shareholders, which the Scottish code does not allow (Ainsworth, 2010, 2013; SE Code, 2018). Reports suggested SENSCOT would support a version of the mark but only if it had a stricter asset lock requirement (Ainsworth, 2010).

Evidently, the appetite in Scotland is "*to keep social enterprise distinct – to explore a different way of organising economic activity*" (Demarco, cited in Ainsworth, 2013) as opposed to being too closely aligned to profit driven businesses. However, the SE Code helps social enterprises recognise each other, so does not seem to explicitly aim to help consumers recognise social enterprises, and as such does not appear to be focused on marketing. While it is concerned with values of social enterprises, it is not concerned with communicating these to consumers, which aligns with broader findings of non-profit marketing (Pope *et al*., 2009). It could be that this stems from the notion that social enterprises are "*morally superior to the marketing activities*" (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018, p. 10). Since these developments, Edinburgh so far has been the only Scottish city to create a collective, city wide marketing campaign and label (Social Value Lab, 2015).

Buy the Good Stuff Campaign

In 2014 the BTGS marketing campaign was launched by Edinburgh's Social Enterprise Network (ESEN), which is the membership network for social enterprises within the city. The campaign is relevant to this research as it made use of a logo to communicate the brand message and the purpose of the campaign was to raise consumer's awareness of social enterprises in the city (Martin, 2015).

Whilst BTGS only operated in one Scottish city, ESEN (2014, 2015) suggests that the aim was to use the campaign nationally across Scotland and that social enterprises involved had asked to use the logo for further promotional activities. Although, it is worth noting the possible bias, as ESEN aim to promote the campaign in a positive light, and subsequently may have chosen not to include any negative feedback. In order to address this bias, our study investigates whether those involved in the campaign found it to be a successful form of marketing,

providing the first scholarly study to investigate a social enterprise marketing campaign in Scotland.

Method

Social entrepreneurship is already recognised as a complex and evolving field, thus a mixed-method design allowed for the essence of such dynamics to be captured (Seymour, 2013). This study sought to analyse results from two interview formats and a survey. The purpose of using this research design was to compare and contrast responses from three different types of participant groups to analyse different perspectives of the idea of a social enterprise national label and how social enterprises can promote their business. All data was collected between December 2016 and February 2017.

Survey

The first part of the research involved an online survey, using the software Survey Monkey. This package was chosen due to its capacity to add images to questions (for labels and logos) and its low cost. The majority of questions took a ranking format on a scale of 5 representing not very likely to 1 being very likely. This design was used to assess consumer awareness of social enterprises in Scotland and whether they felt a national social enterprise label would help them identify a social enterprise more easily. The BTGS logo was also included to assess whether consumers in Scotland had been aware of this campaign. The survey questions were designed to cover similar areas to the interviews but from a consumer perspective.

The online survey was made available to a sample of Scottish consumers rather than conducting a census in order to achieve a greater response rate (Fricker, 2012), and did not include any participants under the age of 18, however it was not confined to any other age group in order to provide a greater representation of the Scottish population. This was ensured through initial filtering questions which determined the age and current location of participants so that results were applicable to Scotland. A non-probability-based convenience sampling technique was used whereby a link to the survey was posted on the main authors Facebook page. A degree of snowball sampling then took place as early respondents shared a link to the survey on their own Facebook account. Whilst non-probability-based sampling does have the implication of higher levels of bias (Fricker, 2012), social enterprises are still relatively unheard of for many people, thus the level of bias may not be significant. The free version of the survey software limited it to 100 participants. Survey data was analysed using Survey Monkey and Microsoft Excel. Since the survey questions were designed to produce descriptive data, percentages were

sufficient in order to answer the research questions, which allowed for clear conclusions and comparisons between results to be made. For the purpose of this paper, survey data is only discussed, and is sometimes supported by descriptive data. No tables or graphs presenting the data are included, as this forms a rather small part of the findings and discussion.

Interviews

The second part of the research involved carrying out semi-structured interviews. Interview questions were designed for interviewing representatives from social enterprises who were located in Edinburgh and involved in the BTGS campaign. A further set of interview questions were designed to focus on the possibility of a promotional label becoming available to social enterprises nationally. These questions were used to interview representatives from social enterprises in Dundee and Glasgow, as they host a significant number of social enterprises in Scotland (EKOS, 2014). In the 2015 National Census Glasgow had the largest proportion of social enterprises at 14%, Edinburgh 13% and Dundee 3%, thus they were appropriate cities to target to gather participants (Social Value Lab, 2015).

Qualitative research requires a much smaller sample size than quantitative research, and the appropriate sample size in qualitative research is a matter of judgement, thus, due to the nature of a mixed-methods design, a total of 7 interviews was seen as appropriate to complement the survey. A probability-based purposive sampling strategy was employed to identify social enterprises which were relevant to this study. In order to identify social enterprises involved in the BTGS campaign, the campaigns web page was accessed which listed organisations involved. Contact details for each enterprise were gathered and an email was sent enquiring whether they would be interested in taking part in the study. A sample of social enterprises in Glasgow and Dundee was identified through accessing both cities' Social Enterprise Network websites, and again contacting possible participants by email. Whilst saturation of data did occur in the samples of social enterprises from each interview group, sample sizes could have been increased to include the views of a wider range of social enterprises.

Bull (2007) found that most social enterprises did not have a marketing manager, and this was evident also in this study, where the participants were usually the founder of the social enterprise (see Table 1). The founders of the social enterprises in this study, make all management decisions and work in the enterprise. Participant 5 however was the Marketing Manager for Dundee's Social Enterprise Network, thus, worked to promote the network as well as social enterprises within the city. In line with the Longitudinal Small Business Survey 2017

(Scottish Government, 2018), all social enterprises we studied were micro businesses with 1-9 employees or small businesses with 10-49 employees.

Table 1. Interview participants

Participant	Role in SE	Description of Enterprise	Size of Enterprise
Edinburgh (Involved in BTGS):			
1	Founder/ Manager	Ceramic Studio offering workshops, project support and facility hire supporting Autistic adults in the community.	Micro: 1-9 employees
2	Founder/ Manager	Music Academy making music and instruments accessible for families in deprived areas by offering affordable tuition and giving young tutors the opportunity to gain experience.	Micro: 1-9 employees
3	Manager	Café to give adults on the autistic spectrum experience in a workplace and help build up their confidence.	Micro: 1-9 employees
4	Manager	Indian café selling traditional curries made by refuge women from ethnic minorities who have the opportunity to gain independence, skills and qualifications.	Micro: 1-9 employees
Glasgow and Dundee (Not involved in BTGS):			
5	Marketing Manager	Dundee Social Enterprise Network which is the main body for social enterprises in Dundee and has a network of around 80 members.	Small: 10-49 employees
6	Founder/ Manager	Digital Events Company which delivers bespoke event management, filming and editing to businesses in both the private and public sector, whilst working with long term unemployed people who have fallen into hardship.	Micro: 1-9 employees
7	Founder/ Manager	Furniture Designer and Retailer which supports vulnerable young people and people affected by homelessness through providing work experience.	Small: 10-49 employees

Interview data was coded using the process of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows for themes to be identified. Through coding and refining such themes, key ideas relevant to the aim of the study emerged. The process consisted of coding each subset of data separately (those involved in the BTGS campaign and those not involved) with a number of themes and sub-themes identified. For example, the theme 'Potential National SE Label' consisted of subthemes such as 'Potential positives/drawbacks', 'Need for coordination between networks', and 'Communicate quality of SE's'; whereas the theme 'Problems facing SE's in Scotland' consisted of subthemes such as 'Low marketing budget' and 'Lack of customer awareness – feeling more needs to be done'. Whilst thematic analysis has limitations in terms of the researcher misrepresenting the data or failing to include contradictions, it has been chosen as it allows the researcher to interpret themes and meanings. This was particularly

appropriate for this study as there was a lack of current theories in literature regarding the marketing of social enterprises.

Findings and Discussion

Promoting social value

One participant in each interview sample strongly believed social enterprises should promote the fact they are creating social value as much as possible. They argued this is the reason most of their customers chose to buy from them over their competitors:

> *"I would say around 80% of our customers come to us because we are a social enterprise."* (Participant 1)

This supports the work by Hibbert *et al*. (2005) and Peattie and Morley (2008), who argue that social enterprises can use their social impact to create competitive advantage. Hibbert *et al*. (2005) found that consumers are likely to be motivated to buy from a social enterprise due to the intangible reward of helping others. Yet at the other end of the spectrum, Participants 3 and 7 were hesitant to promote the fact that their business was creating social value due to their perception that society viewed social enterprise as poor quality:

> *"Some people are put off by a café run by a social enterprise because I think there is a stigma attached where people think it's cheap homemade stuff by volunteers. Which is really stupid because we are competing with private sector cafés."* (Participant 3)

This could be due to a consumer stigma attached to charities for example, where the idea of a business helping a social cause is associated with second hand goods. So rather than being put off by the fact the business is a social enterprise, consumers may have negative preconceptions of businesses aiming to benefit communities. Yet, findings from the survey representing a consumer perspective found that almost 70% of participants would be more than likely to buy from a social enterprise rather than a profit-driven organisation.

As social enterprises are increasingly in direct competition with profit-driven businesses (Chew and Lyon, 2012), it seems that the potential opportunities from marketing social value would outweigh the potential negative implications. If social enterprises are to effectively compete with profit-driven businesses, why not use marketing to its maximum extent, as their competitors would likely not hesitate to do so. The findings also allude to the idea that the quality of social enterprise equals that of private businesses, and social value should almost be an added benefit for consumers. Thus, there is an opportunity to address this mismatch in

consumer/social enterprise perceptions through marketing. To further this point, Participant 6 highlighted that consumers in Scotland need to be made aware of the quality and high standards social enterprises deliver which rivals that of major corporate companies.

As a result, findings support the work by Choi and Junyong (2016) by providing evidence that in Scotland, some social enterprises also do not want to promote the fact they are a social enterprise due to the idea that existing to create social value means low quality. Although, the majority of participants felt that the USP of their social enterprise combined social value with delivering quality products or services. Therefore, there appears to be little harm in promoting the social value of social enterprises.

Current Marketing

Our data contradicts the work by Bull and Crompton (2006), who reported that in many cases social enterprises found marketing to be irrelevant and only done by "big businesses". According to our findings, word of mouth was found to be the most popular form of communication, as well as markets/festivals and social media. Of lesser importance were local press and website promotion. So, contrary to previous literature, this study suggest that social enterprises *are* engaging in marketing activities. Perhaps this difference in findings is due to the increase in pressure for social enterprises to become more competitive in times of economic downturn in Scotland, since Bull and Crompton (2006) first published their work. Evidence from this research can be seen to contribute an updated perspective of social enterprises views of marketing. These results are in line with Doherty *et al*. (2009) who argue word of mouth to be a powerful tool for smaller organisations. However, our study provides evidence specifically related to social enterprises, and supports recent findings by Powell and Osborne (2018) that social enterprises use marketing explicitly.

Impact of the BTGS Label

Social enterprises participating in the BTGS campaign held favourable opinions of the campaign and continued to use the logo in their business and marketing materials due to the perception that the logo:

> *"Gives people that extra confidence that it will be a good place to sit and try out food."* (Participant 4)

The idea of a label giving 'extra confidence' is in line with consumer's views of the role of the Fairtrade label (Hainmueller *et al*., 2011). Despite the idea of a label acting as a certification

tool not occurring in any responses, contrary to previous findings (Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012), the above quote could indicate that the BTGS logo was seen as a form of assurance, or a signal of an ethical business to consumers.

The consensus from Participants 5-7 (not involved in the campaign) was that they knew about BTGS, but they thought that not enough was done to make it a success. Participant 5 thought the campaign was a good starting point and liked how social media posts used frontline pictures of the logo being used. However, they did not find the logo itself effective:

> *"Personally I'm not actually that a big a fan of the brand they used.* [Laughs] *I mean the weird sort of honey monster logo..."* (Participant 5)

This supports Allan's (2005) conclusion that a label would need to capture the meaning of social enterprise, and communicate a brand message effectively to consumers (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). The use of a cartoon logo may contradict Allan's (2005) recommendations about social enterprise labels needing to visually represent social value. Therefore, findings of this particular marketing campaign indicate that it has potential in theory, but in reality, needs more work.

Furthermore, all responses revealed that the BTGS campaign made little difference to consumer awareness of social enterprises:

> *"Unfortunately, I don't think a lot of people know about it or even understand what it's about. I don't think it was pushed well."* (Participant 1)

> *"I think that if you didn't know anything about social enterprise and weren't in the network then if you saw Dougie* [the cartoon used in the logo] *you wouldn't have a clue what he was all about."* (Participant 2)

Indeed, the majority of survey participants had never seen the BTGS campaign before despite residing in Scotland, which aligns with the Scottish Governments' (2016) findings of overall public awareness and recognition of social enterprises. Findings suggested that a lack of resources and government support are the reasons why the campaign was not more successful. This is in line with the work by Shaw (2004) and Powell and Osborne (2015) who found limited resources are restricting the marketing activities of social enterprises. Pinch and Sunley (2015) found a lack of support from local authorities in England to restrict the opportunities for social enterprises in a network, and whilst in our study local authorities were not mentioned, support from the government was identified as a restriction. Findings can arguably further this view by considering the support of the government limiting opportunities for social enterprises in cities in Scotland. This evidence of social enterprises feeling they need more support from the

Scottish Government is surprising given that the government has claimed to be increasing financial support for social enterprises in subsequent years. Though, this is an area that was recognised as needing improvement by Scotland's social enterprise strategy (Scottish Government, 2016) and perhaps the required support is not of a financial nature, directly. Therefore, the government may wish to consider supporting a collective social enterprise marketing campaign.

A Future Scottish Social Enterprise *Promotional Label?*

It emerged across the survey and interviews that the introduction of a national social enterprise label would be beneficial. These findings are surprising considering some participants were reluctant to promote the fact they were a social enterprise. Nevertheless, participants from both interview samples supported the concept:

> *"I think a national label would be phenomenal. Scotland has a great opportunity to have a support network and need to embrace it. Each network would really need to work together."* (Participant 2)

> *"Social enterprises having some form of label would definitely communicate their impact to consumers better. Especially with the growing number of people looking to buy ethical and social products."* (Participant 5)

Participant 5 evidenced the correlation between a label and consumer awareness, applying the concept of a brand logo communicating a message to consumers (Chiagouris, 2006). This participants' views also bring to light the trend of consumer purchases becoming more ethically driven, identifying what could be seen as an opportunity for social enterprise to gain competitive advantage using a label to form relationships with these consumers. This fits within the broader changes in consumer behaviour (Annunziate, et al., 2011), but more importantly aligns with Scotland's social enterprise strategy (Scottish Government, 2016) which identified that consumers will increasingly make ethical choices, and while this may lead to growth of the sector, it is necessary for social enterprises to become more visible. Thus, perhaps any previous misgivings about a national label are no longer valid.

Findings were conclusive with a resounding support and enthusiasm for a national label to be introduced as a marketing tool. Despite less than half of survey participants knowing what a social enterprise was before the survey; almost all felt a label would help them identify a social enterprise in the future. Three key reasons for such strong support stood out across interview responses:

1. A national label would help educate the country what a social enterprise was

2. A label would differentiate social enterprises from charities and profit-driven businesses

3. A label has the potential to create unity and a platform for sharing knowledge between social enterprises across Scotland

These points were also mentioned by Allan (2005) as justification for social enterprises adopting a logo. Thus interestingly, over a decade after his report, the same reasons for a label are provided in a Scottish context. Differentiation from profit-driven businesses was also identified as a key opportunity for social enterprises in literature (Chell, 2007; Dart, 2004; Shaw, 2004). However, findings provide an additional idea of the label acting as a platform for sharing expertise across Scotland and could help overcome the issues of marketing requiring experts (Powell and Osborne, 2018). This may be due to the smaller geographical location of Scotland compared with previously studied sample groups or the increasing support from the different cities' Social Enterprise Networks.

Conversely, each supportive response did have a 'but' attached to it. Findings indicated that for a promotional label to be implemented, various barriers would have to be tackled. Participant 3 noted that there would need to be a massive marketing campaign, perhaps a TV ad, in order to educate the public what the label stood for which would be expensive. According to Participant 6, the reputation of the logo could be damaged if it was misused and just one enterprise could ruin its value. Participant 7 highlighted that the campaign would require significant funding, but the question of funding from whom remained.

Thus, whilst the idea of social enterprises launching a collective marketing campaign may overcome the issue of social enterprises individually lacking resources for marketing, this may also give scope to other issues such as trust and risk, limiting realistic implementation. A difficulty to get different Social Enterprise Networks across Scotland to communicate and work together to develop a branded logo was also identified:

> *"Social Enterprise networks in Scotland are really independent of each other and the cities all have a different ethos. So for a national campaign there would need to be some sort of agreement across all of the networks which wouldn't be easy. One thing might suit us but not suit other regions."* (Participant 5)

Participant 5's views are particularly valuable as the participant was a representative of Dundee's Social Enterprise Network and may have more experience regarding the ability of networks to communicate, which other participants may be lacking. However:

> *"Glasgow's* Social Enterprise *Network would be more than happy to communicate with other networks to make this happen. I really think it could work."* (Participant 7)

Evidently, cooperation between Social Enterprise Networks would be required in order to implement a national marketing campaign, though it cannot be concluded whether coordination and support amongst networks could be achieved in practice. Still, a national label presents an opportunity to strengthen the social enterprise movement collectively.

Meaning Behind the Logo

Allan (2005) and Ridley-Duff and Southcombe (2012) proposed that social enterprise labels should be accessible through criteria a social enterprise must meet. Interestingly however, findings from this study do not support this, with only Participant 5 signifying that a national label should be a form of legitimacy. One could argue that the SE Code already deals with the issue of criteria. The most popular suggestions for the function of a social enterprise label were a logo which represents what a social enterprise is and the diverse value social enterprises create, and a logo functioning as a platform for promotion.

Findings indicated it would be difficult to determine a particular brand and find a logo that could be agreed on nationally. Participant 7 thought the logo should be clear and simple, similar to Participant 5 who said the logo should represent social impact and be *"a recognisable symbol that people can actually remember"*. Participant 6 argued that the logo should represent the quality of social enterprises:

> *"Because although Scotland is one of the front runners in SE, there is still a presumption social enterprise doesn't mean quality."* (Participant 6)

This evidence is worth taking into consideration if a label was to be designed, although it cannot be concluded whether the association of quality would be a key interest to all social enterprises in Scotland. Quality was not mentioned by other interview participants, nor survey participants. We believe that a social enterprise label should not be directly linked to quality, due to the risk that poor quality from a few could damage the reputation of the many. Either way, the idea in marketing literature that a branded logo can help consumers see beyond a products basic offering, can be applied to the context of social enterprises (Allan, 2005; McDonagh, 2002; Shaw, Shiu and Clarke, 2000). Findings therefore offer evidence that a logo similar to that used by Fairtrade, could be adopted by the social enterprise movement and the label should be focused on increasing awareness of social enterprises.

Conclusion

Research Questions Answered

The first research question focused on investigating from a consumer perspective whether a label as a form of marketing could increase awareness of social enterprises. Results were conclusive that a label would help participants identify a social enterprise more easily and the majority of survey participants would rather buy from social enterprises than profit-driven businesses. These results can contribute a new perspective to literature which has previously found labels, such as Fairtrade, to increase consumer awareness of a brand message (Allan, 2005; Hainmueller *et al*., 2011; McDonagh, 2002). Yet, while introducing a label may increase consumer awareness, it does not equate to consumers increasingly choosing to purchase from social enterprises due to the attitude-behaviour gap found for instance in fair-trade consumption (Pérez and del Mar García de los Salmones, 2018). In Scotland, the subject of social enterprises is becoming more normalised as part of learning at all levels of education (Scottish Government, 2016), thus, consumer awareness could rise even without a label.

The second research question focused on whether social enterprises found the BTGS campaign to be successful in raising consumer awareness of social enterprises. The campaign was in theory a positive idea, but in reality, was unsuccessful. Findings indicate that social enterprises are looking for ways to market their business to consumers, yet, the BTGS campaign was ineffective in targeting wider populations. Social enterprises have multiple constituencies, making it difficult to cater to the different expectations (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018). The SE Code seems to be catering to the broader social enterprise constituency, therefore, the label should focus on the general population, i.e. the consumers. Obviously, there are distinctions within this constituency too as some consumers will be direct service users of the social enterprise (e.g. in a social service sector) and some may simply be consumers choosing between a profit-driven and non-profit driven café. These are considerations that should be taken into account if planning a national label.

The third research question focused on investigating whether a promotional label would be a marketing tool Scottish social enterprises would consider adopting. The BTGS campaign was a praiseworthy idea, but the cartoon logo was ineffective in communicating the value of social enterprises. Allan (2005) previously raised concern over this, thus a future social enterprise logo would require discussion as to what would constitute a meaningful logo. Participants supported the introduction of a Scottish label and felt the country had a real opportunity to exploit a promotional campaign collectively. Findings on Fairtrade labelling suggest that

consumers become disengaged if there are too many labels and certification initiatives (Pérez and del Mar García de los Salmones, 2018). This should not be an issue in Scotland given only the SE Code is utilized, which does not target consumers. However, better integration and promotion of labels is also important (Pérez and del Mar García de los Salmones, 2018), and this was a challenge with the BTGS campaign, which seemed to only be known to those within the local Social Enterprise Network.

With conclusive support for a label as a marketing tool, it cannot be denied that this is something which should be recommended. This may be surprising bearing in mind almost half of social enterprises did not necessarily want to promote their social value. Though, if considering a label from the brand management perspective, with a social enterprise representing the brand, consumers are less likely to switch to competing brands if they identify with the brand (Wymer and Muzahid Akbar, 2018). By teaming up under one label, social enterprises can leverage their joint brand – 'social enterprise' – yet consumers need to be able to identify with the brand. Labelling is a way for organisations to help consumers make purchase decisions that are consistent with their needs, by reducing the information asymmetry between the organisation and its customer (Annunziate et al., 2011). Thus, one could argue that labelling is a way to help consumers identify with a brand. From a resource perspective, it makes sense to utilize a collective marketing tool, rather than social enterprises developing their individual brands and marketing tools. Nonetheless, while in theory a label could have numerous benefits, for a national label to be introduced, numerous barriers would have to be tackled.

Contributions, Limitations and Future Research Directions

Theoretically, this paper develops current understanding of marketing activities undertaken by social enterprises to communicate with consumers. The lack of agreed conceptualisation of social enterprises poses challenges for generating theory (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018), yet this paper develops current literature of promotional logos in the field of social enterprise and creates the basis for future research, especially in a Scottish context. Findings contribute a new perspective to the use of a promotional logo, through highlighting the role of communicating the purpose or features of a business (in this case social enterprise) to consumers.

Practically, social enterprises should find ways to implement a marketing strategy. A promotional logo has been identified as a way to communicate their message and promote themselves in order to increase awareness. Drawing on fair-trade research (Pérez and del Mar

García de los Salmones, 2018), a label's value lies in its availability, limited complexity and relevance to consumers. Thus, managers of Scottish Social Enterprise Networks should engage in discussion as to how a successful label could be achieved in practice.

The subject of social enterprise and networks is a growing area (Littlewood and Khan, 2018) so is worth investigating further. Future studies should investigate the degree of communication and cooperation which could be achieved from social enterprise networks collaborating. While social enterprises in Scotland involve a limited population, various industries exist within the sector. Participating social enterprises were micro and small organisations serving a local market. The marketing activities of a small café may be different to a city-wide housing association, for example. Therefore, research findings may be limited to smaller organisations and caution should be taken when applied to the whole sector. Perhaps these smaller social enterprises feel they lack a voice amongst all the Scottish social enterprises and it is the impetus behind why they favour a national label. In the context of small and medium sized organisations, studies have showed networks as essential when engaging with markets (Hanna and Walsh, 2008). Furthermore, networks can provide legitimacy especially for new organisations unknown in the marketplace. Legitimacy is particularly important for social enterprises due to their hybrid nature (business and charity) as this makes them less recognisable to consumers (Folmer, Nederveen and Schutjens, 2018). A Scottish label could provide social enterprises with this much needed legitimacy. A lack of brand recognition has been found in small local non-profits, which struggle to make their name known (Pope *et al*., 2009). Comparing small and large social enterprises would be compelling, as these may face different challenges in achieving consumer awareness. A label could help smaller organisations in particular to get their message out there. It is also the small, local non-profits that have limited time and staff and should therefore make use of all available resources (Pope *et al.*, 2009), and as studies have suggested that entrepreneurial and innovative approaches are needed in social enterprise marketing activities (Bandyopadhyay and Ray, 2018), perhaps a well-designed label would meet both requirements. Marketing for social enterprises creating business-to-business relationships may also differ compared with findings in this study investigating business-to-consumer relationships. Future research could also explore differing sectors. Nevertheless, findings represent a range of different businesses and there is no indication why social enterprises across the sector could not make use of a promotional label. Finally, findings concluded that a label should visually represent the social value created by

social enterprises. Introducing a label requires possible logo designs being explored in greater depth and the viewpoint of different stakeholder groups being considered.

Concluding remarks

This study contributes to the social enterprise literature, by investigating the use of a promotional label in Scotland, considering the views of consumers, social enterprises who have used a collective promotional logo, and those who have not. This provides valuable insights from different perspectives which other studies fail to consider. This study challenges current social enterprise literature which pays little attention to the growing need for social enterprises to devise a marketing strategy. Importantly, our empirical findings help develop the limited body of knowledge concerning social enterprise marketing, thus our study can act as a springboard for future theoretical developments in the field. Managers of social enterprises and Social Enterprise Networks may consider the findings when adopting marketing activities, and representatives of the broader sector may wish to re-evaluate their position on the introduction of a national label. Given that the SE Code helps social enterprises recognise each other, but a priority of the Scottish social enterprise strategy and the manifesto by SES is to create and promote a social enterprise brand and to increase wide-reaching recognition of the movement amongst the public, it seems reasonable to consider a label to increase awareness of the sector. Also, the deliberate blurring of definitions of social enterprises in England where most UK labels stem from, makes Scottish social enterprises sufficiently distinct to warrant a separate label.

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