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Why Bad Feelings Predict Good Behaviours: The Role of Positive and Negative Anticipated Emotions on Consumer Ethical Decision-Making.

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ABSTRACT

Research suggests that emotions can greatly influence consumer decision-making and behaviours. Notwithstanding, our understanding of the role of anticipated emotions in what is an inherently complex deliberation process – that of consumer ethics – is still quite limited. The present study thus aims to address this gap, in two key ways: first, by measuring the influence of positive and negative anticipated emotions at each stage of the consumer ethical decision-making process; and second by describing the specific emotions that most affect each component of the consumer ethical deliberation process and assessing their relative weight in predicting decisions involving ethical issues. Through the examination of 603 ethical situations and using multiple regression analysis, the findings indicate that anticipated emotions can account for up to 59% of the variance in consumer decisions involving ethics. Anticipating the experience of negative emotions as a result of carrying out an unethical behaviour was the affective component found to most influence consumer ethical deliberation process; and

anticipated guilt was the discrete emotion exerting the greatest effect on consumer decision-making in ethical situations. The findings indicate that more than feeling good, consumers avoid feeling bad; such that ethically favourable decisions emerge to prevent experiencing negative emotions in the future.

Keywords:

Consumer Ethics; Ethical Decision-Making Process; Anticipated Emotions; Guilt; Pride.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a popular piece of trivia that on average, we make 35.000 decisions a day; although not all of these are consequential, nor all necessarily conscious or deliberate. Among these, however, are decisions which relate to what society defines as right or wrong – ethical decisions – and interest in these has been increasing across disciplines. What leads us, faced with such choices, where there is a “right” vs a “wrong” decision, to act in one way or another?

This issue has received particular attention in the realm of consumer behaviour, from practitioners and academics alike, as ethics is increasingly seen as a key element influencing consumer behaviour (Schlegelmilch & Öberseder 2010; Schwartz 2016). Interest lies in uncovering consumer decision-making processes involving ethical issues, as well as how to influence them, and indeed, our understanding of such processes has greatly evolved over time.

Perhaps the most widely used model of ethical decision-making is Rest’s (1986) four component model of moral deliberation, according to which the process of ethical decision-making encompasses four main steps: moral awareness, moral judgment, moral intent and moral behaviour. This model has been central to much of the research in the field of consumer ethics; however, it has been suggested that additional research is required to further our understanding of the individual, situational and issue-related factors that can influence ethical decision-making (Craft, 2013; Lehnert, Park, & Singh, 2015; Rua, Lawter, & Andreassi, 2017).

This is particularly important, because we have progressed from the purely cognitive-developmental approach to decision-making more common when this framework was developed, to a more multidimensional understanding of the ethical decision-making process, which requires the analysis of multiple constructs (Mudrack & Mason 2013) to improve models’ explanatory and predictive capability (Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008). One way to do so is through the inclusion of emotion (Schwartz 2016).

Indeed, emotion has been a topic of growing interest across a diversity of fields, and the field of consumer ethics is no exception. The relationship between emotions and consumer decision-making in situations involving ethics has been variously explored (Vitell et al. 2013), with empirical research suggesting an influential role of emotions on: the formation of moral judgments about unethical behaviours (Winterich et al. 2015); ethical judgments and purchase intentions of counterfeits, grey-market products and imitations (Kim, Cho, & Johnson, 2009); intentions to purchase sustainable products in the future (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014b, 2014a); intentions to engage in ecological behaviours, such as recycling (Elgaaied, 2012); and on ethical work behaviours (Jacobs et al. 2014).

Most of this research has focused on post-decision emotions, however, where in practice, we are also able (and likely) to anticipate the emotions we expect to experience in the future.

Indeed, research shows that when faced with an ethical dilemma, consumers tend to think about the subsequent effects of their actions and make the choice that anticipates the most pleasurable emotions (Mellers & McGraw, 2001). Anticipated emotions have been found to influence desires in goal-directed behaviours (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001), consumer ethical intentions (Steenhaut & Kenhove, 2006) and pro-environmental behaviours (Onwezen et al. 2013).

Yet despite the widely accepted relevance of anticipated emotions for understanding individual decision-making, the manner in which this influence operates and the role anticipated emotions take on at each stage of the consumer ethical decision-making process, are still relatively understudied. How and in what measure do our expected emotions affect our ability to make ethical or unethical decisions? And given that these anticipated emotions have an impact, which ones play the biggest role?

The current research has two main objectives: first, to measure the influence of both positive and negative anticipated emotions at each stage of consumer ethical decision-making process:

ethical awareness, ethical judgment, ethical intention and ethical behaviour; and second, to describe the specific positive and negative anticipated emotions that most affect each stage of consumer ethical deliberation process and assess their relative impact on those outcomes.

Understanding the role of anticipated emotions, both positive and negative, on consumer ethical decision-making is fundamental, for both theory and practice. Better understanding the processes underlying ethical consumer decisions is not only a contribution in itself, but importantly, can also allow us to better identify predictors of consumer ethics, by providing a more thorough understanding of how individuals resolve ethical dilemmas in consumption contexts. Furthermore, focusing on the role of anticipated emotions in decision-making involving ethics also allows us to move beyond the traditional valence-based approach to ethical decision-making, to address the individual emotional mechanisms through which affect can influence the ethical deliberation process. Finally, the results of the current study can also be an important aid, to *i)* distinguish the nature of different types of discrete emotions; and, *ii)* elucidate the impact that these diverse discrete emotions have on decisions involving ethical issues, allowing us to identify which discrete emotions act as the main somatic markers (Damasio, 2006) to support information processing and encourage or discourage ethically favourable consumer decisions.

From a practical point of view, by providing a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between anticipated emotions and consumer decision-making in ethical situations, this research allows the most influential factors underlying consumer choices involving ethics to be identified; improves predictive capability regarding individuals' ethical or unethical actions; and can serve to help increase the effectiveness of marketing efforts aimed at discouraging unethical consumer conduct and/or encouraging ethical consumers behaviour, through communication strategies or physical environments able to promote socially responsible behaviours. In addition, as companies are facing increasing legal and social pressure towards ethical and

socially responsible decisions and behaviours, much of it from consumers themselves, it is important to also have a thorough understanding of what drives ethically favourable consumer behaviours and how to promote them is imperative, to ensure ethical actions from both sides – the seller and the buyer; and that consumers will reward firms for their ethical choices.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section two present an overview of the relevant literature regarding ethical decision-making and anticipated emotions. Section three presents our hypotheses, followed by a description of the methods used (section four). Key results are then presented (section five) and discussed (section six); and the final sections conclude the paper, and present limitations and avenues for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ethical Decision-Making and Emotions

From the 1960s onwards, several contributions emerged in the marketing literature aiming to describe the ethical decision-making process. Based on the assumption that ethical behaviour is a primarily cognitive process (Trevino et al. 2006), these contributions emphasized the large number of variables - environmental, situational, individual, organizational and ethical (Ferrell & Gresham 1985; Hunt & Vitell 1986; Jones 1991; Trevino 1986) - which can influence the ethical decision-making process.

One of the most widely cited models of ethical decision-making emerging from this early research is Rest's (1986) four-component model of moral deliberation. Rest's (1986) cognitive model proposes four main stages in an individuals' ethical decision-making process: *i)* moral awareness – recognizing and interpreting a moral issue; *ii)* moral judgment –making judgments or choices about the morally correct course of action; *iii)* moral intent – establishing an intention to carry out the moral action; and *iv)* moral behaviour – acting on the moral concerns

(Rest, 1986). This has become one of the most used and tested theoretical models of ethical decision-making (Craft 2013; O'Fallon & Butterfield 2005). However, most applications have focused on a single (rather than all) the stages, meaning that integrated analyses of the model are still greatly missing in literature. Further, Rest's (1986) four-component model may not include all the dimensions able to provide a thorough understanding of ethical decision-making (Dedeke, 2015).

Despite its initial focus on cognitive, rational and deliberate processes (Ajzen 1991; Kohlberg 1984), the study of ethical decision-making has moved from a rationalist-based approach to a non-rationalist-based approach, where both intuition and emotion are seen as intrinsic to the ethical deliberation process (Gaudine & Thorne, 2001; Haidt, 2001; Schwartz, 2016). Emotion has been described as a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot function effectively (Damasio 2000), and which can exert a significant influence on individuals cognitive processes (Forgas 1995; Schwarz 2000); choices (Han et al. 2007); decision-making tasks (Bechara 2004; Pfister & Böhm 2008; Schwarz & Clore 2007); and behaviours (King, Blair, Mitchell, Dolan, & Burgess, 2006).

Research on ethical decision-making has, thus, evolved from seeing emotion as a non-essential aspect interfering with rational decisions (Fukukawa 2003) to understanding it as an essential component of human choice (Sanfey et al. 2003), inherent to human cognition (Phelps 2006), and an integral part of ethical deliberation processes (Koenigs et al. 2007). Neurobiological research supports the assumption that emotions play a pivotal role in resolving moral conflicts (Koenigs et al. 2007) and that affective reactions can be good predictors of ethical judgments and behaviours (Haidt 2007; Sanfey et al. 2003). Indeed, studies using neuroimaging show that actions involving ethical judgments activate specific brain areas that process emotions (Greene et al. 2001; Moll et al. 2002); such that a change in emotional state is likely to alter ethical judgments (Valdesolo & DeSteno 2006; Wheatley & Haidt 2005). In fact, some studies indicate

that ethical judgment is more driven by emotion and affective intuition than by deliberate reasoning (Greene & Haidt 2002) which, therefore, should be considered as an integral part of ethical deliberation process.

In the business literature, the relationship between emotions and consumer decision-making in situations involving ethics has received growing attention, because ethical decision-making is seen as an essential part of consumer behaviour (Vitell et al., 2013). From a conceptual perspective, Gaudine & Thorne (2001) suggested that emotions directly affects ethical judgments, intentions and behaviours; Dedeker (2015) developed an integrative cognitive–intuitive model of moral decision-making, where moral judgments are influenced by automatic cognitions and automatic emotions; while Schwartz (2016) proposed an Integrated Ethical Decision-Making Model incorporating rational and non-rational antecedents of ethical deliberation process.

Applied business research has also evolved to explore the role of emotions on ethical decision-making, progressively extending our understanding of the nature and the strength of these relationships. In the organizational context, for instance, Linehan & O'Brien (2017) analysed the link between emotions and the perception of ethical dilemmas of human resource professionals, providing evidence that emotions experienced during an interaction with employees influence the understanding of ethical dilemmas and constrain ethical choices, such as to terminate an employee's contract of employment; Agnihotri, Rapp, Kothandaraman, & Singh (2012) developed and tested an emotion-based model to explore salesperson ethical decision-making and showed that positive and negative emotions have a significant influence on salespeople's ethical attitudes and behaviours; and Harvey, Martinko, & Borkowski (2017) revealed that emotional reactions to negative workplace events facilitate the justification of deviant behaviours.

From the consumer perspective, Singh, Garg, Govind, & Vitell (2016) studied the effect of incidental emotions on consumer decision-making and revealed that negative incidental emotions – anger and fear – influenced the level of ethical judgment in the context of a passive consumption situation (i.e. too much change received); Yacout & Vitell (2018) examined the influence of emotions – fear, power and excitement – and the need for cognition on consumer ethical decision-making, and found that affective responses and need for cognition influence ethical perceptions and ethical intentions; while Bissing-Olson et al. (2016) analysed how positive and negative moral emotions – pride and guilt – affect consumer engagement in daily pro-environmental behaviours, and showed that pride is positively related to pro-environmental behaviours whereas guilt is negatively related to behaviours such as reusing paper, recycling plastic, saving water or riding a bicycle.

2.2. Moral Emotions

An important issue that emerges from the literature reviewed is the presence of a large number of possible discrete emotions that may influence consumer ethical decision-making, posing questions about their different natures, as well as their different impacts on ethical decisions. The subset of discrete emotions known as *moral emotions* is particularly important in determining individuals' ethical choices and behaviours (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). Moral emotions have been defined by Haidt (2003: 853) as “the emotions that respond to moral violations or that motivate moral behaviour”, which can be mainly categorized into “self-conscious emotions”, including, for instance, shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride; and “other-focused emotions”, comprising contempt, disgust, elevation or gratitude (Eisenberg, 2000; Tangney et al., 2007).

As self-conscious moral emotions are evoked by individuals' self-evaluation, they provide an immediate positive or negative reinforcement of behaviour. Negative-valence moral emotions

will emerge when the conduct is not considered socially and morally acceptable, leading to feelings of shame, guilt or embarrassment; while positive-valence moral emotions will arise when individuals adopt morally acceptable courses of action, leading to feelings of pride (Tangney et al., 2007).

Neuropsychological research suggests that moral emotions influence individuals' ethical sensitivity (Moll, de Oliveira-Souza, Eslinger, et al., 2002), helps to distinguish the moral features of an ethical issue (Bechara & Damasio, 2005) and facilitates the moral reasoning required to evaluate a situation (Moll & de Oliveira-Souza, 2007), contributing to and motivating higher-levels of moral judgments and behaviours (Eisenberg, 2000). Thus, both theoretical and empirical contributions seem to indicate that moral emotions should be included in the study of ethical decision-making (Agnihotri et al., 2012; Prinz & Nichols, 2010; Schwartz, 2016).

2.3. Anticipated Emotions

Rational choice involves making guesses about uncertain future consequences and uncertain future preferences (March 1978). In everyday experiences, individuals regularly have to make choices without any certainty of the outcomes of their choices, basing decisions on their predictions of what those outcomes might be, and how they expect to feel about them. Indeed, it has been proposed that all decisions involve predictions of future feelings (March 1978): individuals anticipate how they will feel about future outcomes, and use these projections to guide their decisions (Mellers & McGraw 2001). Thus, it is not only experienced emotions that affect our decisions, but anticipated emotions too can have powerful effects on human cognitive processing and, as such, have been the focus of growing attention.

Anticipated emotions allow decision-makers to “predict the emotional consequences of different decision outcomes in advance” (Zeelenberg et al. 2000: 531); the assumption being that individuals will typically choose the options which provide greater expected pleasure

(Mellers et al. 1999), and/or those that minimize the likelihood of negative emotions (Zeelenberg et al. 2000). In this regard, Perugini & Bagozzi (2004) argue that the influence of negative anticipated emotions on individuals' intentions to perform a given behaviour can be expected to be much greater than that of positive ones. Mellers et al. (1999), in turn, propose in the theory of subjective expected pleasure that people weigh not only anticipated feelings but also the perceived chances of their occurrence, to then select the option perceived to provide the greatest average pleasure.

Anticipated emotions have also been linked to ethical decision-making. Connelly et al. (2004) propose that individuals may be discouraged from engaging in unethical decisions to avoid negative feelings. Consistently, Steenhaut & Kenhove (2006) find that enhancing the anticipation of guilt increases consumers' ethical intentions. Such research notwithstanding, our understanding of the role of distinct anticipated emotions in consumer decision-making involving ethics is still limited. Thus, there is room for further research in this area, and for an examination of the impact and weight of not only negative but also positive anticipated emotions at each stage of the consumer ethical decision-making process. The current study sets out to do this.

3. HYPOTHESES

As noted above, our first research objective pertains to measuring the effect of anticipated emotions at each step of the consumer ethical decision-making process, to better understand consumer decisions involving ethics and how to influence them. Because individuals are motivated to avoid negative feelings and seek out positive feelings, we expect positive and negative anticipated emotions to influence the process of ethical decision-making in different ways, albeit in the same direction throughout all the stages of the ethical decision-making process.

This is because although it presents distinct steps, Rest's (1986) model is representative of a single process, which starts with awareness or the ability to recognize a situation as posing an ethical dilemma, advances through the formation of judgments regarding different courses of action and the creation of intentions, to the practice of those intentions in actual behaviour. These stages can be disconnected, and indeed the intention-behaviour gap in ethical consumption has been well documented (Carrington et al. 2010, 2014); however, we expect that anticipated emotions will tend to lead the process in a single direction. That is, once an anticipated emotion has heightened ethical awareness and judgment in a particular direction, it is expected that this will carry through to intentions and behaviour, albeit with potentially differing strengths at each stage of the process.

Previous research shows that experienced emotions influence ethical sensitivity (Robertson et al. 2007), judgments (Schwartz 2016), intentions (Vitell et al. 2013) and behaviours (Agnihotri et al. 2012). It seems plausible, then, given our ability to "transcend the here and now" and "make predictions about the future" (Trope & Liberman 2010: 440) that anticipating emotions should work in a similar way. Thus, anticipating positive feelings from carrying out an ethical behaviour is expected to positively influence awareness of the ethical issue (our ability to see it) and the formation of judgments with regard to it. Having formed ethical judgments, an individual faced with an ethical decision must then form intentions with regard to her course of action. The literature shows that people seek out the options they anticipate will give them the most expected pleasure (Mellers et al. 1999). Therefore it seems plausible to assume that the expectation that carrying out an ethical behaviour will produce positive emotions will lead to higher levels of intention with regard to that behaviour, and a greater likelihood that those intentions will then be reflected in action. Thus, it is proposed that:

H1: Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour will positively influence consumer *a)* ethical awareness, *b)* ethical judgments, *c)* ethical intentions and *d)* ethical behaviours.

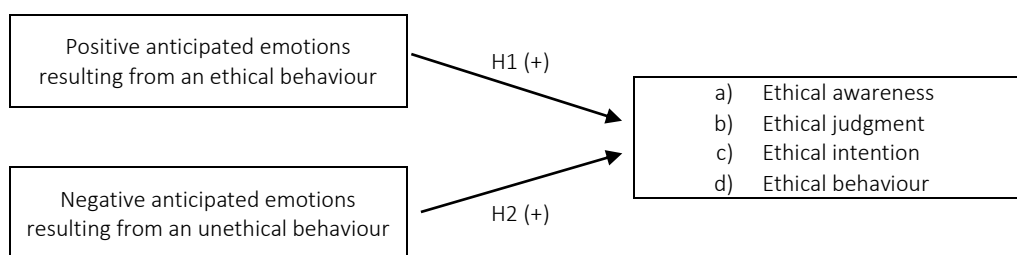
Consistent with an effect of positive anticipated emotions on the ethical decision-making process, it is expected that negative anticipated emotions will also influence decision-making in ethical situations. In fact, it has been posited that the influence of negative emotions on behavioural intentions can be expected to be greater than that of positive emotions (Perugini and Bagozzi 2004), and it seems plausible that this should also apply to decision-making involving ethics. In fact, it is known that individuals weight losses more heavily than gains (Kahneman & Tversky 1979) and that we are more attuned to negative situations and outcomes than positive ones (Abdellaoui et al. 2007; Brenner et al. 2007). Likewise, we are as individuals, hard-wired to avoid pain or otherwise uncomfortable situations (Camerer 2005), and will tend to make choices accordingly, avoiding those which cause or are anticipated to cause negative feelings. In this way, expecting to experience negative emotions (i.e. to “feel bad”) after performing an unethical action is likely to reduce our intentions of carrying out that behaviour, and increase the probability that we will carry out an ethical behaviour instead. Thus, it is expected that negative feelings will increase our ethical awareness and judgment, as well as our intentions to behave ethically and the likelihood that those intentions will be carried out.

Therefore, it is proposed that:

H2: Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour will positively influence consumer *a)* ethical awareness, *b)* ethical judgments, *c)* ethical intentions and *d)* ethical behaviours.

Figure 1 presents the proposed research model for the first research objective.

Figure 1: Proposed research model for the first research objective.



Our second research objective is bound with ranking the specific anticipated emotions that most affect each stage of the consumer ethical deliberation process and assess their relative importance to those outcomes. While a variety of positive and negative emotions can and have been considered in terms of their influence on ethical decision-making (Gregory-Smith et al. 2013; Schwartz 2016), research suggests a primary role for guilt and pride (Agnihotri et al., 2012; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2015; Vitell et al., 2013). Recently, these emotions have been used to explain ethically questionable consumer situations (Steenhaut & Kenhove 2006), sustainable choices (Antonetti & Maklan 2014a, 2014b) as well as pro-environmental behaviours by consumers (Bissing-Olson et al. 2016; Elgaaied 2012; Onwezen et al. 2013). Thus, we expect that guilt and pride will be the discrete emotions with the greatest influence on consumer decisions involving ethics; with both the anticipated guilt from making an unethical choice and the anticipated pride resulting from an ethical action positively affecting consumer ethically favourable decisions (i.e. leading to ethical choices). Faced with an unethical decision they expect will make them feel guilty, consumers are more likely to recognize the choice as unethical and avoid carrying it out. Thus, it is proposed that:

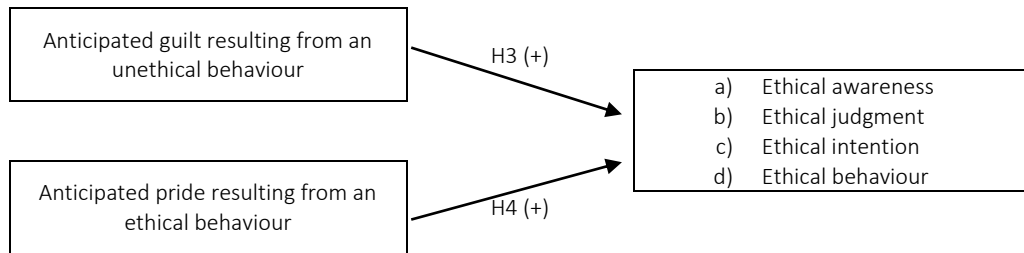
H3: Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour will positively influence consumer *a)* ethical awareness, *b)* ethical judgments, *c)* ethical intentions and *d)* ethical behaviours.

Expectations of feeling pride, in contrast, are likely to lead us towards an ethical behaviour, as we seek out positive affect. Thus, expecting an ethical behaviour to make us feel proud is likely to lead to stronger ethical awareness, judgment, intention and finally behaviour. Thus:

H4: Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour will positively influence consumer
a) ethical awareness, b) ethical judgments, c) ethical intentions and d) ethical behaviours.

Research model for the second research objective is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proposed research model for the second research objective.



4. METHODS

A scenario-based questionnaire depicting ethical issues was used. Scenarios have been widely used in the business ethics literature (Antonetti & Maklan 2014b; Dietz & Kleinlogel 2013; Singhapakdi et al. 2013; Vitell & Patwardhan 2008; Winterich et al. 2015), featuring as “extremely useful vehicles for understanding subjects’ judgments in hypothetical ethical decision situations” (Trevino 1992: 128). The use of scenarios “helps to standardize the social stimulus across respondents and at the same time makes the decision-making situation more real” (Alexander & Becker 1978: 103). In addition, scenarios allow researchers to manipulate some variables of interest through the control of environmental factors (O’Fallon & Butterfield 2005); thus, they are a good fit with the purposes of this research.

Data analysis and hypothesis testing were carried out using multiple regression analysis to address the two main objectives of this research: first, to measure the influence of both positive and negative anticipated emotions at each stage of the consumer ethical decision-making process; and second, to describe the specific positive and negative anticipated emotions that

most affect each stage of consumer ethical deliberation process, and assess their relative impact on this process.

According to Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson (2014), multiple regression analysis is the most widely used multivariate technique and appropriate for two broad classes of research problems: those pertaining to the prediction and those relating to the explanation of the predictive power of each independent variable, thus providing a substantive justification for the relationships between the variables under study. These two classes of research problems perfectly fit the research objectives described above.

In addition, through the backward elimination method, the multiple regression analysis starts by including in the model all independent variables and then eliminates those variables that do not exert a significant contribution in predicting the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014). This procedure allows multiple regression analysis to provide an interactive and dynamic evaluation of the dependence relationships, which clarifies relative contributions and facilitates decision-making. Therefore, the backward elimination method was particularly useful to assess the relative influence of specific and aggregate positive and negative emotions on each stage of the consumer deliberation process involving ethics.

All four main assumptions of regression analysis (Hair et al., 2014) were met in the current study, namely: *i*) linearity of the phenomenon measured (through the PP-Normal graphical analysis); *ii*) constant variance of the error terms (Scatterplot graphical analysis); *iii*) independence of the error terms (Durbin-Watson; Tolerance and VIF); and *iv*) normality of the error term distribution (Normal Probability Plot graphical analysis).

Regression models were performed with anticipated emotions as the independent variables and the four components of consumer ethical decision-making process as the dependent variables.

One multiple regression model was completed for each dependent variable tested.

4.1. Participants, Procedures and Measures

A valid convenience sample of 201 respondents was collected ($M_{age} = 22,6$ years; 58% female and 42% male), in the North of Portugal. Each respondent completed three different scenarios, resulting in 603 ethical situations for analysis. The scenarios pertained to: *i*) photocopying (rather than purchasing) a copyrighted book, recommended for a university course; *ii*) switching price tags in a shop, to pay less for a shirt; and *iii*) keeping extra money mistakenly handed by a bank cashier.

The final three scenarios used were chosen based on two criteria: first, a prior exploratory qualitative research, through 47 in-depth interviews, using Critical Incident Technique to understand consumer decision-making in situations involving ethical issues; second, the main contributions provided by literature to evaluate consumer ethics. The goals of the exploratory research were *i*) to describe the most frequent critical incidents involving ethics in consumption contexts; and *ii*) to identify the variables that influence consumer decision-making in situations involving ethical issues. In fact, the in-depth interviews supported some of the main conclusions of literature, indicating that some of the most common consumer critical incidents involving ethical issues are shoplifting; cashier mistakes; downloading music and software; or photocopying a book, among others. The detailed and valuable information obtained from the interviews, culturally applied and adapted to Portuguese consumers, combined with the contributions provided by the literature, namely the Consumer Ethics Scale proposed by Muncy & Vitell (1992) and Vitell & Muncy (2005), formed the basis of the scenarios developed and used. In the current study, we analysed situations containing the three most contrasting types of questionable consumer behaviours as proposed by Muncy & Vitell (1992) and Vitell & Muncy (2005) – actively benefiting from illegal activities (price tag switching scenario); passively benefiting (keeping extra money mistakenly handed by a bank cashier scenario); no harm/no foul activities (photocopying a copyrighted book scenario).

Prior to being exposed to the scenarios, participants were first asked how they expected they would feel after behaving in an ethical way and how they expected they would feel after behaving in an unethical way, in situations akin to those to which the scenarios pertained. These anticipated emotions were measured using an adapted version of the 17 anticipatory goal-directed emotions proposed by Bagozzi et al. (1998), including the contributions of Kugler & Jones' (1992) guilt inventory and Tracy & Robins' (2007) authentic pride scale. Five positive and five negative emotions were included in the questionnaire and were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1-“Not at all” to 7-“Very much”. For instance in Scenario 1: “Imagine you needed a new book for a university course and decided to photocopy it. How would you feel after photocopying a copyrighted book?” Guilty; Proud; Remorseful; Satisfied; Uncomfortable; Confident; Ashamed; Accomplished; Sad; Happy; and “Imagine you needed a new book for a university course and decided to buy it instead of photocopying. How would you feel after purchasing a copyrighted book?” The same adjectives were used, however in a different order to avoid automatic and non-reflective responses.

After expressing their anticipated emotions, the participants were then given the scenarios containing ethically questionable consumer situations to read, and asked to answer the questions that followed them, which assessed the four stages of the ethical decision-making process. Ethical awareness was measured through the single item “For me, the behaviour described above involves an ethical problem” adapted from Karande et al. (2000) and rated on a seven-point Likert scale from 1-“Strongly disagree” to 7-“Strongly agree”. Ethical judgment was operationalized using a 4-item modified version of the moral equity dimension, proposed by Reidenbach & Robin's (1990) multidimensional ethics scale. Participants were invited to express their evaluations regarding “For me, the situation described above is: wrong–right; unfair–fair; unethical–ethical; not morally right–morally right” using a 7-point semantic differential scale. Ethical intention was assessed by asking the respondents if they would act in the same manner as the consumer depicted in the scenario, consistent with Vitell &

Patwardhan (2008) and Vitell et al. (2001) operationalization of the construct, measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1-“Strongly disagree” to 7-“Strongly agree”. Finally, ethical behaviour was evaluated by a single item: Scenario 1 – “I usually photocopy copyrighted books.”; Scenario 2 – “I usually switch price tags in stores.”; Scenario 3 – “I usually keep extra money mistakenly handed to me by a cashier for myself.” Respondents were invited to evaluate these statements on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 - “Strongly disagree” and 7 - “Strongly agree”.

5. RESULTS

Positive and negative anticipated emotions resulting from ethical and unethical behaviours were measured and both constructs presented good measures of internal reliability, significantly over the recommended threshold of .70 (Hair et al. 2014) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Internal reliability of anticipated emotions.

Constructs	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour.	5 items	,923
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour.	5 items	,960

Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations and correlations for the primary variables of interest with regard to the influence of anticipated emotions on the different stages of the ethical decision-making process. As expected, the data show a significant correlation between negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour and positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour ($r=.577$; $p<.01$). That is, participants who anticipated they would experience negative emotions because of a future unethical behaviour, also anticipated positive emotions from an expected ethical action.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and correlations for primary variables of interest ($n=603$)

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	5,38	1,58					
2. Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	4,27	2,20	,577**				
3. Ethical Awareness	5,44	1,69	,384**	,538**			
4. Ethical Judgment	5,90	1,38	,411**	,586**	,523**		
5. Ethical Intention	5,23	2,07	,487**	,759**	,498**	,540**	
6. Ethical Behaviour	5,28	2,07	,404**	,712**	,453**	,489**	,821**

** $p < .01$

In terms of the stages of the consumer ethical decision-making process, all four steps were significantly correlated to each other. As such, the impact of positive and negative anticipated emotions was in the same direction for all stages. Anticipating that an ethical behaviour would produce positive emotions led to higher levels of ethical awareness, judgment, intentions and behaviour. The pattern held for negative emotions: anticipating negative emotions as a result of an unethical behaviour led to an increase in all stages of the ethical decision-making process. The data further evidence higher correlations between negative (rather than positive) anticipated emotions and all stages of the ethical decision-making process, suggesting that ethically favourable choices and actions are more likely to occur when we anticipate feeling bad after an unethical behaviour than feeling good after behaving ethically.

In addition to uncovering the direction of the effect, we were also interested to measure the extent of the impact of anticipated emotions at each stage of the ethical decision-making process. Multiple regression results for the impact of positive and negative anticipated emotions (independent variables) on the stages of the consumer ethical decision-making process (dependent variable) are reported in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 3.

The data showed that anticipated emotions explain almost 30% of the variance in consumers' recognition of an ethical problem (ethical awareness); a result indicative of the importance of

anticipated emotions on this first stage of consumers' ethical decision-making process. Expecting to feel good after behaving ethically ($\beta=.117$; $p=.009$) or bad after an unethical behaviour ($\beta=.363$; $p=.000$), both increased ethical awareness, confirming H1a and H2a. However, the effect was larger for negative anticipated emotions than for positive anticipated emotions, with the greatest impact on ethical awareness coming from an expectation of negative emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour.

The impact of anticipated emotions on ethical judgment also spoke to the importance of anticipated emotions, with these found to account for 35% of the variability in consumers' ethical judgment. The findings showed that positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour ($\beta=.095$; $p=.007$) and negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour ($\beta=.328$; $p=.000$) predicted consumers' ethical judgments, confirming H1b and H2b. Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour were the component exerting the greatest impact on consumers' ethical judgment, suggesting that consumers who expressed negative anticipated feelings towards an unethical behaviour were better able to make ethical judgments.

Table 3: Regression results of positive and negative anticipated emotions.

Variables	Coefficient (Std error)	t-value	Sig.
Dependent variable: Ethical Awareness			
Constant	3,261 (,205)	15,944	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	,363 (,032)	11,325	,000
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	,117 (,045)	2,623	,009
Model Summary	R sq. = ,297; Adj. R sq. = ,295; F-value = 127,043; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Judgment			
Constant	3,982 (,161)	24,759	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	,328 (,025)	13,001	,000
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	,095 (,035)	2,719	,007
Model Summary	R sq. = ,352; Adj. R sq. = ,350; F-value = 162,870; F-sig. = ,000		

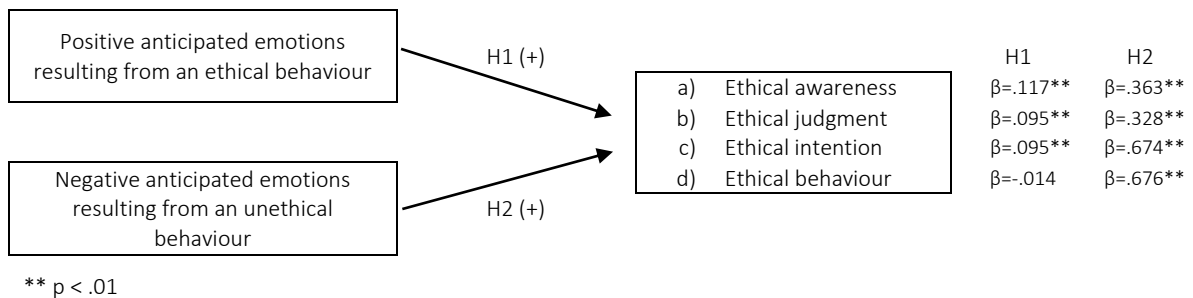
Dependent variable: Ethical Intention			
Constant	1,840 (,194)	9,482	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	,674 (,030)	22,138	,000
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	,095 (,042)	2,242	,025
Model Summary	R sq. = ,580; Adj. R sq. = ,579; F-value = 414,187; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Behaviour			
Constant	2,472 (,211)	11,724	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	,676 (,033)	20,437	,000
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	-,014 (,046)	-,306	,759
Model Summary	R sq. = ,506; Adj. R sq. = ,505; F-value = 307,810; F-sig. = ,000		

In terms of the intention stage, anticipated emotions explained almost 60% of the variance in consumers' ethical intentions. Once more, both positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour ($\beta=.095$; $p=.025$) and negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour ($\beta=.674$; $p=.000$) statistically predicted consumer ethical intentions, confirming H1c and H2c; and negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour were the affective element that most influenced ethical intentions.

Finally, with regard to ethical behaviour, anticipated emotions explained more than 50% of the variance in consumers' ethical actions. Negative anticipated emotions towards an unethical behaviour were the affective component that most influenced consumers' ethical behaviour ($\beta=.676$; $p=.000$); positive anticipated emotions did not statistically predict consumer ethical behaviours (thus H2d was confirmed, but not H1d).

These results of predictive accuracy for the regression models highlight the key role of predicted future feelings in explaining consumers' ethical choices and behaviours, and support the indispensable inclusion of the emotional dimension for an integrated analysis of the ethical decision-making process.

Figure 3: Regression results for the first research objective.



We were also interested in identifying the specific positive and negative anticipated emotions (such as happiness, pride, guilt or discomfort) that most affected each stage of the consumer ethical deliberation process, as well as to assess their relative importance.

Table 4 summarizes the multiple regression results for specific anticipated emotions, and uncovers three main findings. First, consistent with the previous analyses, negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour were found to exert a greater influence on consumers' ethical decision-making process than positive anticipated emotions. Second, the direction of the impact of each positive and negative anticipated emotion resulting from an ethical or unethical behaviour respectively, on each stage of the ethical decision-making process was in the expected direction, namely that of more ethical outcomes. Third, despite the relevant influence of emotions such as discomfort, regret, happiness, satisfaction or accomplishment, guilt and pride stood out as those exerting the most consistent effect at every stage of the ethical deliberation process. The influence of anticipated guilt was particularly significant with regard to ethical intentions ($\beta=.177$; $p=.002$) and ethical behaviours ($\beta=.312$; $p=.000$), which were also the stages at which anticipated emotions had the biggest influence on consumers' ethical decisions (59,3% and 51,9%, respectively). The impact of anticipated pride was greater on ethical judgments ($\beta=.109$; $p=.012$) and ethical intentions ($\beta=.091$; $p=.049$).

Table 4: Regression results of individual anticipated emotions.

Variables		Coefficient (Std error)	t-value	Sig.
Dependent variable: Ethical Awareness				
Constant		2,948 (.227)	12,993	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	Discomfort	,194 (.049)	3,944	,000
	Regret	,156 (.048)	3,249	,001
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	Satisfaction	,165 (.053)	3,080	,002
	Accomplishment	,136 (.057)	2,409	,016
	Happiness	,133 (.061)	2,181	,030
Model Summary		R sq. = ,314; Adj. R sq. = ,308; F-value = 54,591; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Judgment				
Constant		3,896 (.150)	25,954	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	Discomfort	,139 (.043)	3,260	,001
	Guilt	,125 (.041)	3,078	,002
	Shame	,075 (.037)	2,033	,042
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	Accomplishment	,112 (.040)	2,773	,006
	Pride	,109 (.043)	2,534	,012
	Confidence	,083 (.037)	2,270	,024
Model Summary		R sq. = ,367; Adj. R sq. = ,361; F-value = 57,588; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Intention				
Constant		1,938 (.217)	8,909	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	Regret	,241 (.059)	4,057	,000
	Guilt	,177 (.057)	3,116	,002
	Discomfort	,151 (.053)	2,837	,005
	Shame	,090 (.047)	1,941	,050
Positive anticipated emotions resulting from an ethical behaviour	Pride	,091 (.046)	1,943	,049
	Satisfaction	,097 (.051)	1,896	,059
	Happiness	,086 (.052)	1,664	,097
Model Summary		R sq. = ,593; Adj. R sq. = ,588; F-value = 123,740; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Behaviour				
Constant		2,268 (.133)	17,105	,000
Negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour	Guilt	,312 (.061)	5,131	,000
	Discomfort	,209 (.053)	3,985	,000
	Regret	,150 (.061)	2,456	,014
Model Summary		R sq. = ,519; Adj. R sq. = ,516; F-value = 215,200; F-sig. = ,000		

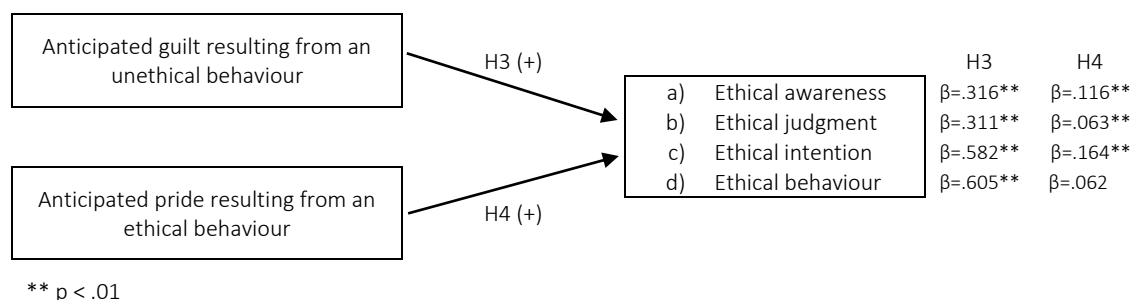
Multiple regression analyses for anticipated guilt and pride towards an unethical and an ethical behaviour respectively were performed (Table 5). Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour positively influenced consumers' ethical awareness ($\beta=.316$; $p=.000$), ethical judgment ($\beta=.311$; $p=.000$), ethical intentions ($\beta=.582$; $p=.000$) and ethical behaviours ($\beta=.605$; $p=.000$). These findings confirmed research hypotheses H3a, H3b, H3c and H3d (Figure 4).

Table 5: Regression results of anticipated guilt and pride.

Variables	Coefficient (Std error)	t-value	Sig.
Dependent variable: Ethical Awareness			
Constant	3,421 (.168)	20,340	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,316 (.030)	10,615	,000
Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour	,116 (.034)	3,381	,001
Model Summary	R sq. = ,263; Adj. R sq. = ,260; F-value = 106,780; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Judgment			
Constant	4,169 (.132)	31,559	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,311 (.023)	13,295	,000
Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour	,063 (.027)	2,313	,021
Model Summary	R sq. = ,321; Adj. R sq. = ,319; F-value = 142,044; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Intention			
Constant	1,763 (.163)	10,835	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,582 (.029)	22,213	,000
Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour	,164 (.033)	4,909	,000
Model Summary	R sq. = ,542; Adj. R sq. = ,540; F-value = 354,959; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Behaviour			
Constant	2,220 (.172)	12,926	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,605 (.030)	19,927	,000
Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour	,062 (.035)	1,750	,081
Model Summary	R sq. = ,492; Adj. R sq. = ,490; F-value = 290,273; F-sig. = ,000		

The anticipation of pride was also found to exert a significant role in predicting consumer ethical decisions. Anticipated pride resulting from an ethical behaviour positively impacted ethical awareness ($\beta=.116$; $p=.001$), ethical judgments ($\beta=.063$; $p=.021$) and ethical intentions ($\beta=.164$; $p=.000$) (confirming H4a, H4b and H4c), but did not have a statistically significant effect on ethical behaviour (therefore H4d was not confirmed).

Figure 4: Regression results for the second research objective.



To complete these analyses and assess the primary role of anticipated guilt in predicting consumer ethical decision-making, a simple regression analysis using anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour as the sole independent variable was run. The results show that the expected future feeling of guilt triggered by an unethical behaviour was able to explain, by itself, 24.8% of the variance in consumers' ethical awareness; 31.5% of the variance in ethical judgments; 52.4% of ethical intentions and 48.9% of consumers' ethical behaviours (Table 6).

Table 6: Regression results of anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour.

Variables	Coefficient (Std error)	t-value	Sig.
Dependent variable: Ethical Awareness			
Constant	3,777 (,132)	28,536	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,366 (,026)	14,095	,000
Model Summary	R sq. = ,248; Adj. R sq. = ,247; F-value = 198,683; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Judgment			
Constant	4,360 (,103)	42,154	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,338 (,020)	16,635	,000
Model Summary	R sq. = ,315; Adj. R sq. = ,314; F-value = 276,733; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Intention			
Constant	2,262 (,129)	17,492	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,652 (,025)	25,699	,000
Model Summary	R sq. = ,524; Adj. R sq. = ,523; F-value = 660,438; F-sig. = ,000		
Dependent variable: Ethical Behaviour			
Constant	2,408 (,134)	17,941	,000
Anticipated guilt resulting from an unethical behaviour	,632 (,026)	23,990	,000
Model Summary	R sq. = ,489; Adj. R sq. = ,488; F-value = 575,509; F-sig. = ,000		

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was two-fold: first, to measure the impact of anticipated emotions, both positive and negative, at each stage of the ethical decision-making process; and second, to describe the specific positive and negative anticipated emotions that most affect each stage of consumers' ethical deliberation process and assess their relative impact on those outcomes.

Although the importance of emotions in individuals' decision-making, and in decisions involving ethical issues in particular, is well known (Craft 2013; Schwartz 2016; Vitell et al. 2013), anticipated emotions have received relatively less attention (Elgaaied 2012; Steenhaut & Kenhove 2006). This is despite the fact that it is known we are not only able to anticipate future emotional states, but that these anticipated emotions can affect our decision-making processes, as we seek decision outcomes that will maximize pleasure and minimize pain (Mellers 2000; Zeelenberg et al. 2000).

Measuring the role of anticipated emotions at different stages of ethical decision-making is important to not only to further our understanding of ethical decision-making processes, but also to help us better comprehend what leads consumers towards ethical or unethical behaviours and how these behaviours can be encouraged. As pressure toward ethical and socially responsible behaviours by firms increases (Öberseder et al. 2011), so too does the need for a concurrent increase in consumer ethics, as a means of rewarding firms' ethical efforts and promoting more ethical stances all around.

Our findings show that anticipated emotions play a key role in the ethical decision-making process laid out by Rest (1986), accounting for up to 59% of the variance in the different stages. This suggests, in accordance with the literature (Gaudine & Thorne 2001; Gregory-Smith et al. 2013; Schwartz 2016; Vitell et al. 2013), that emotions are an integral part of the ethical decision-making process - not only experienced emotions, but anticipated emotion as well. In this regard, this study corroborates the neurobiological posits of Haidt (2001), Bechara (2004), Greene & Haidt (2002) and Koenigs et al. (2007), who propose that ignoring this affective reasoning is likely to result in an insufficient analysis of decisions and behaviours involving ethics.

The impact of anticipated emotions was lower for the initial stages, of ethical awareness (31%) and ethical judgment (37%), and greater for ethical intentions (59%) and ethical behaviour

(52%). This pattern is interesting, because although behaviour is the ultimate stage and goal in decision-making, there is a well-documented gap between attitudes and behaviours, and even intentions and behaviours, when it comes to ethical decisions: the so-called attitude–behaviour gap (Carrigan & Attalla 2001; Chatzidakis et al. 2007; Gregory-Smith et al. 2013).

Notwithstanding, our results show a significant impact of anticipated emotions on this final step, affecting both behaviours, and the intentions that precede them. It seems plausible that since emotions are fundamentally non-rational, anticipated emotions might be more influential than attitudes or intentions on ethical behaviour, and thus a potential instrument for bridging the attitude–behaviour gap in ethical context.

Indeed, ethical awareness and judgment, are described as moral cognition processes (Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). As such, it seems likely that they may be the more “cognitive” elements of the ethical decision process, based on underlying values and norms; whereas intentions and behaviours – the more “behavioural” and “practical” elements – are more susceptible to the impact of anticipated emotions, because we more closely associate these anticipated feelings with the actual ethical or unethical act; i.e. carrying out the behaviour (or intending to).

This is of consequence where the aim is to encourage ethical behaviours, because it suggests a very concrete way in which to do so: by getting consumers to anticipate how (good) those behaviours will make them feel; or by contrast, how (bad) not carrying them out/carrying out unethical behaviours might make them feel. This latter route may in fact be the more effective one, since our results indicate that negative anticipated emotions resulting from an unethical behaviour are the affective component that most influences consumers’ decision-making in situations involving ethics.

Thus, consumers who anticipate negative feelings resulting from an unethical behaviour (i.e. that they will feel bad after behaving unethically) not only show higher levels of ethical awareness, judgment and intentions, but also appear more likely to perform ethically

favourable decisions. These outcomes reinforce the importance of considering the role that negative anticipated emotions towards a potential unethical behaviour can have on consumer ethical decisions (Chun et al. 2007; Elgaaied 2012; Steenhaut & Kenhove 2006), and may be explained by loss aversion theory (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; Thaler 1980). According to loss aversion theory, individuals are more sensitive to losses than to commensurate gains (Abdellaoui et al. 2007; Brenner et al. 2007; Camerer 2005), and therefore, in the context of the current study, appeared more sensitive to potential negative future emotions than to potential positive future emotions. More than feeling positive, consumers want to avoid feeling negative; specifically in the context of ethical deliberations, more than wanting to feel pride, they want to avoid feeling guilty.

Indeed, our findings show that anticipated guilt is the discrete emotion that most influences consumer decisions in situations involving ethics. In comparison with pride, which is the most relevant positive anticipated emotion in predicting ethically favourable decisions, the feeling of guilt influences ethical awareness almost three times more, ethical judgment almost five times more, ethical intentions almost four times more, and ethical behaviours more than eight times as much. This primary role of guilt is consistent with previous studies (Antonetti & Baines 2014; Elgaaied 2012; Gregory-Smith et al. 2013; Steenhaut & Kenhove 2006); however, it is worth bearing in mind that in those studies guilt was not examined simultaneously with other discrete emotions as it was here. Studying it in conjunction with other emotions might have been predicted to lower its effects, but this was not the case.

Although smaller, the role of positive anticipated emotions was also significant in the prediction of consumer decision-making involving ethical issues. Pride, in particular, emerged as the most important positive predictor of consumer ethically favourable decisions; one which could be used to encourage ethical choices (Gregory-Smith et al. 2013) and to promote socially-desired behaviours (Bissing-Olson et al. 2016), through marketing communications, for instance.

7. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

By analysing the influential role of emotions –positive and negative – on each stage of ethical deliberation process, this research advances theoretical knowledge in three main respects. First, current findings help explain when and why consumers engage in ethical judgments and behaviours. The study advances the existing literature through additional insights about how ethical decision-making is formed and why some individuals may behave ethically while others do not, namely in what pertains to the essential role of emotions in explaining and predicting consumer ethics.

Second, this research broadens the analysis from a single stage to compare and measure the impact of emotions on all four stages of the ethical deliberation process. The results indicate that the effect of emotions is particularly significant on ethical intentions and behaviours, which correspond to the last stages of the process and those typically of greatest interest to academics and professionals alike.

Third, this study analyses and compares valence-based anticipated emotions as well as individual-based anticipated emotions, providing relevant results about the direction and strength of their respective impacts. Our results suggest that by stimulating people to think about the negative and positive expected emotions derived, respectively, from unethical and ethical behaviours, academics and practitioners can promote consumer ethics and reduce deviant behaviours that might negatively affect all parties involved, including shareholders, employees, consumers and the natural environment. The current research indicates that anticipated guilty, regret and discomfort (negative valence), and pride and satisfaction (positive valence) are the most relevant somatic markers (Damasio, 2006) in consumer decision-making involving ethics; i.e., the feelings that drive consumer attention to predict future outcomes and act as alarm bells or beacons of incentive for ethical behaviours, usually below the radar of our awareness (Damasio, 2006).

There are also managerial implications to these findings. Our research shows that anticipated emotions are one of the most influential motivations underlying ethical decision-making; and that anticipated feelings of guilt, regret or discomfort will discourage to engage in unethical actions; while expecting to feel pride, satisfaction or happiness will foster good behaviours. Thus, this study not only reinforces the applied role of anticipated emotions in predicting ethical decision-making, but also compares and evaluates the nature of different discrete emotions and their ensuing effect on decisions involving ethics. As such, it suggests practical guideline for practitioners (e.g. managers or policy makers) wanting to encourage ethical consumer behaviours or discourage unethical consumer practices, through appeals to anticipated emotions, rather than or in addition to more rational or cognitive arguments.

Effective communication messages that aim to inspire socially responsible behaviours for instance, would do better to emphasize the future emotional costs (negative anticipated emotions) or benefits (positive anticipated emotions) of different choices, rather than the illegal/punitive nature of the acts. These strategies might be useful in a variety of contexts, such as: reducing retail theft; promoting recycling or water saving; reducing the consumption of unhealthy food; reinforcing campaigns against excessive alcohol consumption; preserving authors' copyrights of books or music; preventing speeding; or promoting charitable participations or donations. For instance, recent and devastating statistics show that one million plastic bottles are bought every minute around the world (Laville & Taylor, 2017); more than 90% of plastic produced is not recycled (Geyer, Jambeck, & Law, 2017); and it is expected that by 2050 the oceans will contain more plastic waste than fish, by weight (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2016). Urgent changes in consumer behaviour are needed, and the findings of this research can help define more effective communication appeals, which should evoke the anticipated negative emotions that current plastic consumption behaviours will bring in future. Another practical application can take place in the publishing industry or in public transports. For instance, educational campaigns in the publishing industry could focus on the negative (guilt

inducing) effects that photocopying books has on talents in the industry and its potential ripple effects through generations.

Furthermore, communication messages stressing future desirable/undesirable emotions have the added bonus of being less likely to negatively influence organizational image or brand loyalty, in comparison with more freedom reducing or even “threatening” messages.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This research examined the role of anticipated emotions – both positive and negative – on consumer decision-making involving ethics. Incorporating both a valence-based and an individual-based analysis of emotions, the findings provide an understanding of how consumer decide and behave under ethically questionable situations. The main conclusions demonstrate that anticipated emotions guide consumer ethical decision-making at every stage of this process, as consumers look for positive emotions and try to avoid negative ones. The implications for the promotion of ethical consumer behaviours and discouragement of unethical ones are clear. Rather than getting consumers to “think ahead”, the effort should be to get them to “feel ahead”, anticipating the guilt associated with an unethical behaviour and/or stimulating the expected positive emotion of being pride associated with acting ethically.

This is likely to be of particular relevance for practitioners (e.g. managers or policy makers) intending to encourage ethical consumer conduct through social marketing communications, for example; but can also be of consequence for companies wanting to encourage customers to reward their own socially responsible behaviours, hence promoting the reproduction of ethical actions from both sides.

10. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As with any research, there are some limitations that must be noted. First, and as usual in social sciences, the constructs under study were measured through a questionnaire using self-reported scales. Despite the validity and reliability achieved, these kind of scales are subject to the respondents' understanding and ability to respond, and as such are vulnerable to some degree of inaccuracy. Second, in spite of efforts to avoid social desirability bias by explaining the purpose of research and methodology of the analysis, and its guarantee of total anonymity, social desirability can also pose a research limitation, given the sensitivity of the scenarios analysed (Al-Khatib, Al-Habib, Bogari, & Salamah, 2016), which is particularly relevant when the situation is perceived as more unethical (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Third, 82% of respondents were university students, who are young and highly educated (Henrich et al. 2010). Future research might benefit from using a more representative and heterogeneous sample of individuals to help generalize the findings.

The data come from the Portuguese context. The question of how culture shapes ethical evaluations and behaviours is still an open one, and Chiu & Hackett (2017) suggest that individuals' perceptions of the ethicality of situations and behaviours are partly determined by their cultural context. Therefore, further analyses should be done in other regions or countries, aiming at comparing different cultures, values, attitudes or religions. In addition, Lehnert, Craft, Singh, & Park (2016) suggest that qualitative research methods are valuable strategies of inquiry to uncover the deep meaning and experience of human judgments and activities, thus an important component for future ethical decision-making research.

Due to the multidimensionality of the topic under study, it is possible that there are additional variables or dimensions, not considered in this study, which may also help predict ethical choices and improve our understanding of consumer ethical decision-making process. Future research might therefore aim to comprise additional moderating variables of the relationship observed between emotions and consumer ethics. Also of interest would be to combine and

test anticipated and post-decisional emotions within a single framework, or to test the moderating role of moral intensity on consumer ethical deliberation.

This research examines consumer decision-making in situations involving ethics by using unethical scenarios. However, additional contributions to this topic could be provided by analysing the determinants of ethical choices and behaviour. Examples include exploring the positive scenarios of doing the right thing/doing good proposed by Vitell & Muncy (2005) or other ethical situations that may arise from new exploratory research. Furthermore, specific scenario-based analyses aimed at comparing the differences among various consumer ethical and/or unethical situations would also be welcomed. In addition to comparative scenario-based analyses, it would be relevant to explore and compare specific emotion-based analyses, once the findings from this study indicate that different anticipated emotions are expected to differently influence consumer ethical deliberation.

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APPENDIX

Used Scenarios

Scenario 1: Photocopying book.

James is a Master's student. After the 1st class of the semester, and when analysing the program of his favourite subject, James verifies that there is a book recommended in the bibliography that covers almost all the matter to be taught. Most of James's colleagues are ordering this book from the library and photocopying it. James decided to do the same.

Scenario 2: Switching a price tag in a shop, to pay less for a shirt.

On a Saturday, Maria decided to go shopping. She entered a clothing store and "fell in love" with a shirt. However, the price of the shirt was too high for Maria's disposable income. On another shelf, Maria found a shirt of the same colour, with some resemblance to the first, which cost less than half of her favourite shirt. Taking advantage of the high movement in the store, Maria decided to discreetly change the labels with the price of the shirts, getting her favourite shirt for a much lower price.

Scenario 3: Keeping extra money mistakenly handed by a bank teller.

On a beautiful spring morning, Antonio went to his bank to carry out a bank survey, since he had a family party in this weekend. There were many people at the branch, and the service was rushed by the employee. At the same time, António requested the withdrawal of EUR 200 and the employee proceeded to process the operation. To shorten the time of service, the employee took the money from his box, counted manually and handed the notes to Antonio.

Already outside the branch, and when checking the amount raised, Antonio verified that he had been delivered EUR 300. Since he was already outside the branch, António decided to go to his car and return home quietly.