Consumer Behaviour on Fairtrade Labelled Products

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Abstract

The global Fairtrade market is constantly growing, and so is consumers’ commitment to socially responsible products. It seems like fair trade products are no longer only accepted, but also demanded by many consumers. The consumption of fair trade products is becoming a mainstream phenomenon. Yet, consumer decision making remains complex. Many researchers dedicated their studies on modelling decision making processes and influencing factors, as well as on ethical consumers. Yet, a lack exists on research that covers ethical consumption patterns in relation with mainstream customers. As a consequence, the main idea of this study is to find out the variables involved in decision making on Fairtrade labelled grocery products by mainstream consumers. Applying the modified theory of planned behaviour model for predicting purchase intention and choice, the variables influencing consumers’ buying intentions for Fairtrade products will be identified and analyzed. From special interest is the component of moral obligation and its influence on decision making. Furthermore, it is examined whether emotions play a role for such a kind of decisions. A study has been conducted to gather quantitative primary data in form of an online questionnaire. In total, 425 complete data sets are available. By analyzing the responses of the questions, the ex ante defined hypotheses are tested. Besides descriptive graphs and basic statistical tests, the main pool for the analysis is the Smart PLS software with which partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is performed. Main findings of the study embodying the primary data gathered have shown that the majority of Fairtrade consumers perceive themselves as non-ethical consumers. Furthermore, the key drivers for behavioural intentions towards purchasing Fairtrade labelled grocery products are self-identity and attitude. Significant relationships do also exist for the between subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, moral obligation and intention. Moreover, the majority of Fairtrade consumers assume to make their decisions based on rational considerations. Finally, Fairtrade consumers are not recognized as a homogenous group.

Key Words: Affect, Cognition, Consumer behaviour, Fairtrade, PLS-SEM, Theory of Planned Behaviour