

The Future of the Fair Trade Market in Japan: What motivates consumers to purchase fair trade products?

Yoshiaki Takahashi

The Institute for International Policy Studies

Japan Academy of Consumer Education E-mail:ytaka2001@hotmail.co.jp

Ayuri Omoto

The Japan Research Institute, Limited

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that affect consumers' decision making regarding purchase of fair trade products in Japan. Fair trade is an approach that guarantees that producers of goods from developing countries are not economically exploited. However, few models have been tested in Japan. Therefore, in this paper, referring to Shaw et al. (2000), which analyzes factors to purchase fair trade products in the UK based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), we examine the effect of knowledge about fair trade and others on purchase intention in Japan.

The data used here is from a survey in Ibaraki Prefecture (males and females aged between 20 and 79; n = 213). The results showed that knowledge alone did not directly affect purchase intention. Rather, the more important factor influencing purchase of fair trade products was whether it was favorable or easy for consumers to do. Knowledge was related to the outcome evaluation that purchasing fair trade products would be important for society. Such persons did not only obtain the knowledge, but also conduct altruistic behavior frequently. They believed that altruism is socially important in daily life. Therefore, besides simply raising awareness about fair trade, education is important to understand the social significance of altruistic behavior.

We tested only models based on TRA and TPB in this study. On the other hand, there are many possible models to include factors that may explain consumers' decision making for fair trade products. In addition, in order to generalize the results as a model of fair trade products in Japan, it is necessary to carry out another survey targeting the whole of Japanese population.

Keywords

Fair Trade, Consumer Education, Decision Making, Theory of Planned Behavior, Japan

(1) Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify

1. Fair Trade Market

factors that affect consumers' decision making regarding purchase of fair trade products in Japan. The development of international trade has raised various ethical issues. For instance, workers may be employed at low wages and be economically exploited in developing countries. The most important issue is that workers in developing countries often lack bargaining power against importers and producers of final products. Poverty also leads to child labor issues. One of the ways to solve these problems is the fair trade system. Now, business pays greater attention to fair trade because consumers and investors take more interest in corporate social responsibility than they did previously. Awareness of fair trade products is now more than 90% in the United Kingdom, Austria, and Ireland (Fairtrade International & GlobeScan, 2015). It has become one decision-making criteria when consumers choose a company's product. As of 2014, 1.5 million producers and workers had joined the Fairtrade International Certification system.

Global sales of products with this designation reached 5.9 billion euros in total (JPY 830 billion).

The Fair Trade logo was introduced in Japan in 1993. However, awareness of the system in Japan was only 14.7% according to a result from the Cabinet Office's National Life Preference Survey in 2007. There are very few opportunities to find fair trade products in grocery stores. The market size in Japan is increasing and as of 2015 it reached about JPY 10.0 billion (Figure 1). This is equivalent to 0.53 euros per person. The market is still much smaller than those in other developed countries (Figure 2).

What are important factors to promote fair trade products in Japan? A key is consumer behavior because consumer preference develops a market. If we understand the consumers' decision-making process to buy fair trade products, tips to promote fair trade can be discovered.

In recent years, the relationship between consumption and self-identity is one

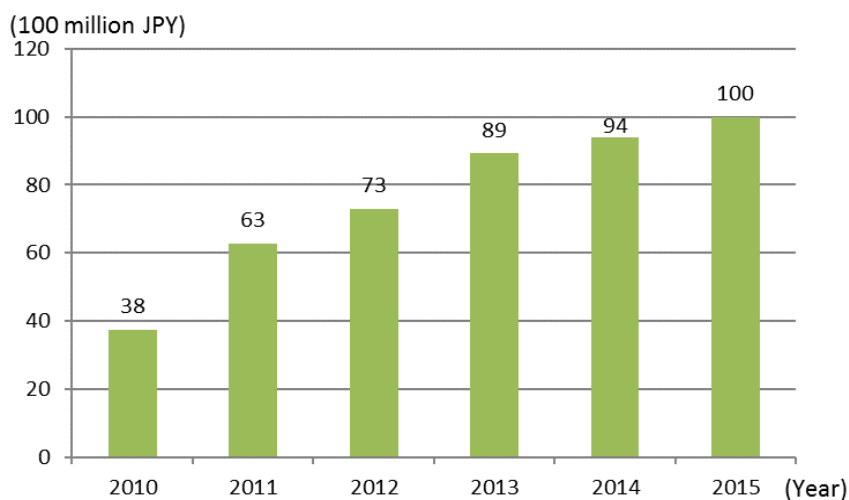


Figure 1. Fair Trade Market in Japan (2010-2015)

Source: Fairtrade Label Japan (2015)

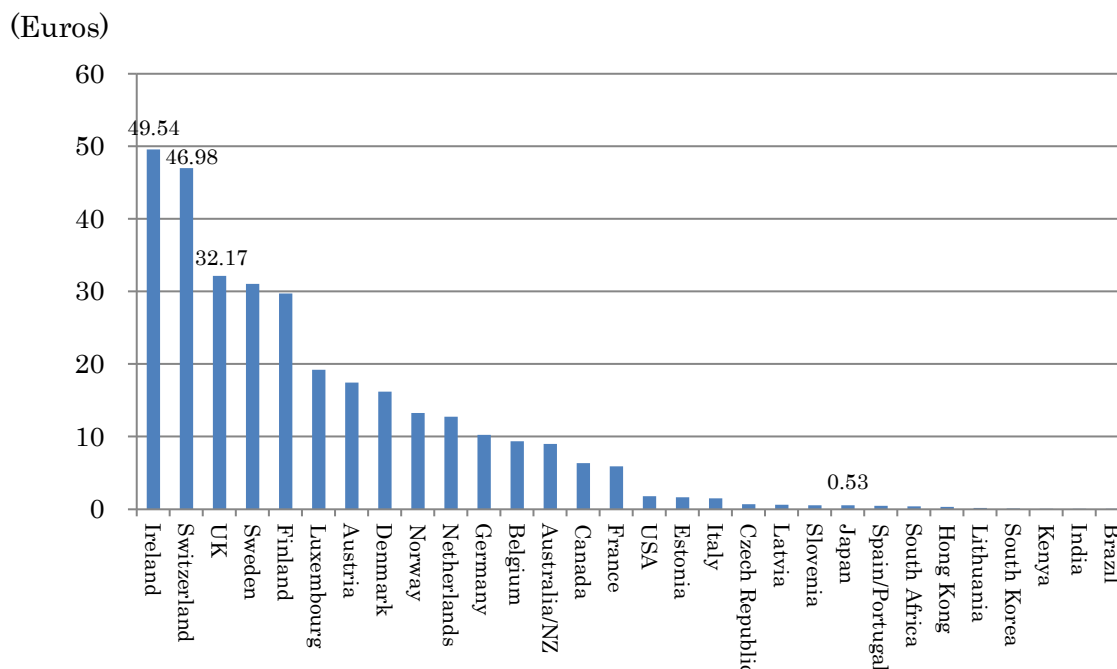


Figure 2. Fair Trade Market in 2014

Note: The figures were calculated with information from Fairtrade International Annual Report 2014-15 and United Nations World Population Prospects

of the drivers to promote consumption. According to Tamaki (2008), the formation of identity through consumption is a process “to find themselves among others, explain their own as a consistent presence, and to maintain a sense of self” (p. 52). Watanabe (2007) concludes that the awareness of fair trade influenced the development of fair trade markets in Western countries. In fact, since the mid-1990s, fair trade organizations and other related associations in European countries have launched awareness raising campaigns and then increased sales of designated products. Therefore, raising awareness through consumer education and increasing a sense of self-identity will be pillars of promoting fair trade products in Japan. Moreover, Watanabe (2007) also noted that the meaning of consumption has changed over time. Consumers choose prod-

ucts not only for economic value (prices) but also relating to social values. Therefore, we can interpret such consumer behavior as irrational behavior because consumers spend more money for “others,” i.e., workers in developing countries. In this paper, we focus more on the effect of the preference for others and education on purchase intention of fair trade products, using survey data from Ibaraki, Japan.

2. The definition of Fair Trade

Three international fair trade organizations, the Fairtrade International (FLO), the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), and the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA), established the Fair Trade Network. The Network defined fair trade to be “a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade”. The Network

states that “(i)t contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers—especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade”. According to the Fairtrade Label Japan, fair trade was begun by Ten Thousand Villages of America for purchase of embroidery in Puerto Rico in 1946.

In 2001, the Fair Trade Network decided its strategy as follows.

1. *To work together so that marginalized producers and workers can break out of vulnerable conditions and obtain economic independence and security;*
2. *To empower the producers and workers to organize themselves and become significant stakeholders in a global market;*
3. *To actively play a wide variety of roles in international trade and make it fair.*

(Watanabe, 2007, p. 5)

Approved products with the fair trade marks follow the standards throughout the process from raw material production, import, manufacture, through shipment. For example, coffee prices fluctuated drastically

in the international market. Even when the price increases due to drought, small coffee plant producers may not have any bargaining power and get enough income to cover their production costs. On the other hand, the fair trade standard sets minimum prices, regardless of the fluctuations of the international market prices (Figure 3). Importers must ensure that the minimum price is paid to producers’ associations. The Japan Fair Trade Labeling mentions that the price of approved coffee beans should be more than USD1.40 per pound (454 g). If it is organic, USD0.30 is added. Moreover, importers should pay USD0.20 per pound as a premium (incentive) to producers’ associations. The Fair Trade system works to support sustainable production and stability of the lives of the workers, and to facilitate trade on a more equal footing.

(2) Literature review

1. Behavioral model of fair trade products

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) is often used as a model explaining consumer behavior (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is another model to be used (Azjen, 1985; Azjen, 1991). According to the TPB, when a consumer wants to buy something, the consumer has an intention to buy before action. “Attitude toward the behavior,” “subjective norm,” and

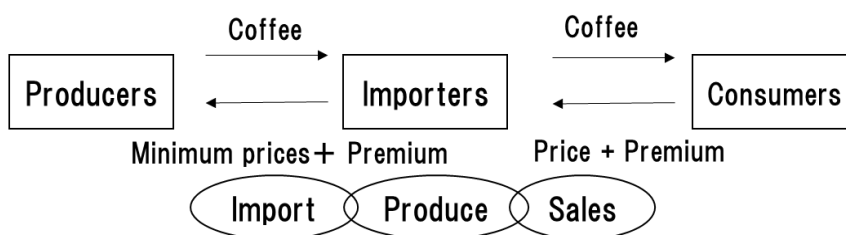


Figure 3. The Framework of Fair Trade

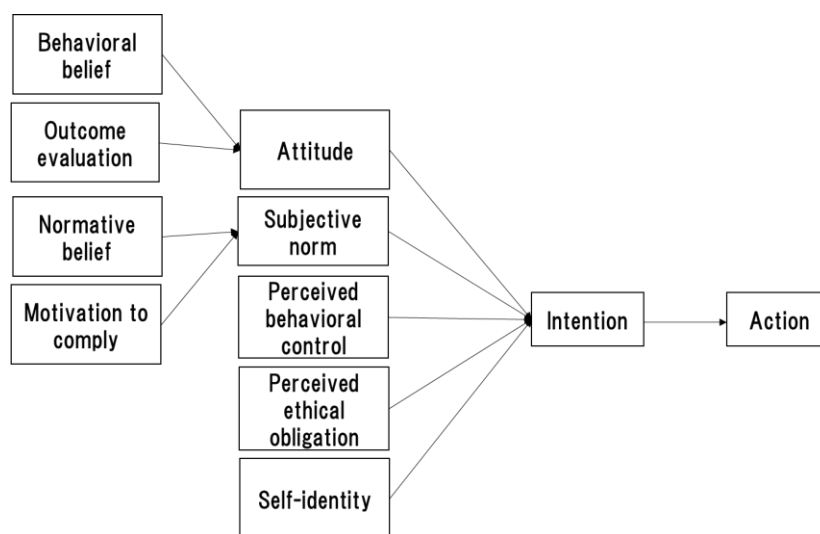


Figure 4. Modified TPB Model (Shaw, et al., 2000)

“perceived behavioral control” affect intention. Attitude means whether one’s evaluation toward the purchase is favorable. Subjective norm is measured by the question whether most people who are important to me think I should purchase the product. Behavioral control asks whether the purchase of fair trade grocery products is easy or difficult.

Shaw, et al. (2000) tested several models including TRA and TPB to interpret ethical consumer behavior to purchase fair trade goods. The data was from 1,400 fair trade magazine subscribers in the United Kingdom. It was more appropriate for the fair trade market to use the TPB model because it had more explanatory power than the TRA model. Shaw, et al. (2000) proposed to modify the TPB model (hereinafter “modified TPB model”) to include ethical obligation and self-identity (Figure 4). Ethical obligation means that a respondent feels an ethical obligation to purchase fair trade products. Self-identity is a variable to measure if a person feels any concern about eth-

ical issues. The results showed that ethical obligation and self-identity affected the behavioral intention to buy fair trade products.

Some research papers tested models to explain decision-making of environmentally friendly behavior and ethical consumption in Japan. For instance, Toyota (2008) examined several kinds of models for five types of ethical consumer behavior: the purchase of solar panels, the subscription of a magazine dealing with poverty issues, saving in a voluntary deposit, the boycott of disgraced corporate products, and socially-responsible decision-making for consumption. However, this paper didn’t include fair trade products as one kind of ethical consumption. Because GFI and AGFI in all five cases were greater than 0.9 in the TPB model, it concluded that the TPB explained the consumer behavior more effectively than others. Among several factors, the paper found that the subjective norm had strong effects on consumers’ decision making.

As shown above, a variety of types of ethical consumption models was discussed

regarding the determinants of consumer behavior such as the TRA and the TPB. On the other hand, there is no study in Japan to test the TPB model or others for fair trade. In this study, referring to the modified TPB model in Shaw et al. (2000), we would like to explore what kinds of factors make effects on fair trade purchasing intention.

2. Personal factors

Consumption has various meanings to consumers. One important factor is attention to one's identity. Sugawara (1984) stated that, "when others look at you or you look at yourself in a mirror, you are conscious of yourself." He called this self-consciousness. In his paper, he developed a Japanese version of a self-consciousness scale based on those developed by Fenigstein et al. (1975). The results of a survey on 438 students show that there were two main factors for self-consciousness: public and private self-consciousness. Public self-consciousness means that a person paid attention to how others evaluate her. Private self-consciousness means that the individual asks her own mind who she is. We decided to include the self-consciousness scale to test the relationship between self-consciousness and consumers' decision making for fair trade.

One of the main objectives of fair trade is to help and protect producers and workers in developing countries. Therefore, the mindset of showing respect to others can be an important driver for fair trade. Psychologists measure this mindset as altruism or pro-social behavior. However, Koppel and Schulze (2013) posit, "while the determi-

nants of altruism are well known, the specific mechanism that fair trade uses is still an under researched issue" (p. 370). Kikuchi (1988) define it as a behavior to try to enhance the relationship with others and desire it to become more appropriate. It may cause self-sacrifice and costs to the person who takes such pro-social behavior. He distinguished between pro-social behavior and behavior that expects returns or financial rewards from others. On the other hand, it includes behavior expected to get intrinsic rewards such as satisfaction and pride. Kikuchi (1988) developed a pro-social behavior scale based on the altruistic behavior scale developed by Rushton (1981). In his paper, he examined the correlation between self-consciousness and pro-social behavior. The results showed no statistical correlation between them. He concluded that it happened because people behave socially when they do not expect to receive rewards but does respect others' situations.

The other important factor relating to fair trade can be education. The main aim of education is that people achieve the capacity to improve their lives. The capacity includes how people communicate and collaborate with each other to make society better. Knowledge is also important to understand why some issues would be a problem and how they can be solved. For instance, the Cabinet Office of Japan (2008) found that the longer a person had attended consumer education classes, the higher the test scores on environmental issues.

In our research, we will include three factors into our model: knowledge, self-con-

sciousness, and pro-social behavior (or altruism).

(3) Methodology

1. Hypothesis

In order to clarify what purchasing intention of fair trade products looks like in Japan and what kinds of factors make effects on decision-making to buy fair trade products, we follow the modified TPB model developed by Shaw, et al. (2000). Although this model was used to get the results in the United Kingdom, we selected it to determine whether the same results would be found in Japan.

Based on Shaw, et al. (2000), **H1** is if attitudes, subjective norms, behavior control, ethical obligation and self-identity affect behavioral intention directly. Behavioral belief and outcome evaluation affect attitude. Normative belief and motivation to comply affect subjective norm. Moreover, based on the findings about the role of education on consumer behavior by the Cabinet Office (2008),

knowledge about fair trade can enhance behavior intention (**H2**).

Because fair trade is a framework to support workers in developing countries, consumers cannot obtain extrinsic rewards from them. As Koppel and Schulze (2013) noted the under-researched issue, we test the relationship between self-consciousness, pro-social behavior and purchase intention toward fair trade products. We expect that, if a person gets a higher score on the self-consciousness scale and the pro-social behavioral scale, he or she is more likely to buy fair trade products (**H3**).

The hypothetical model is illustrated in Figure 5. To compare to this model, we would also test other models such as TRA and TPB. We used the logit model and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesis.

2. Data

Data used in this paper is from the Second Life Condition Survey in Ibaraki Prefecture (hereinafter “second Ibaraki Survey”),

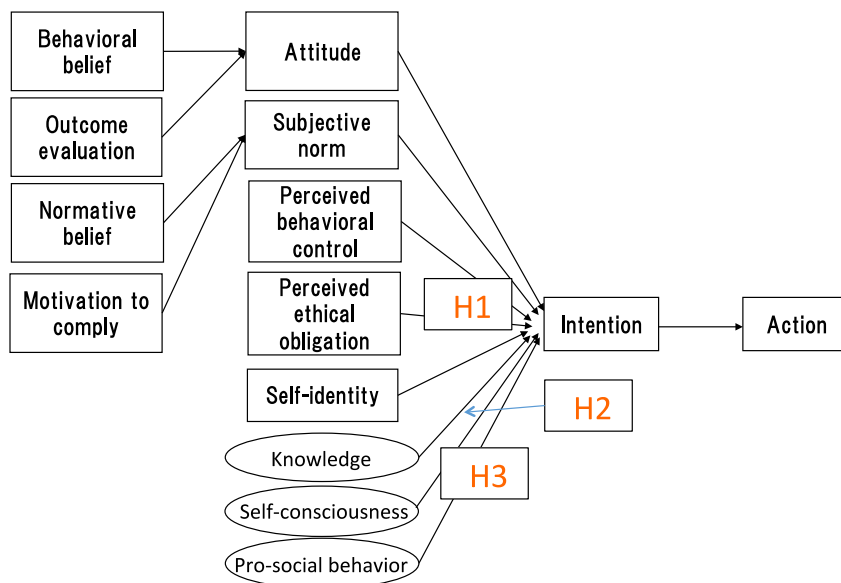


Figure 5. Hypothetical model

which was conducted by Yoshiaki Takahashi Laboratory Group, University of Tsukuba, from November to December 2015. A total of 2,000 people from 20 to 79 years old named on voters' lists in Ibaraki Prefecture (1,042 males and 958 females) were randomly selected as the sample of the first Ibaraki Survey. The first survey was conducted in November and December 2014. The respondents to the second Ibaraki Survey were persons who agreed in the first survey to cooperate again in the next survey. Students visited those 305 persons to ask questions in the second Ibaraki Survey questionnaire. A total of 213 persons accepted and sent the completed questionnaire back by post (response rate: 69.8%).

The respondents were asked the questions about intention, attitudes, and other subjects regarding fair trade products. Most of the measurements were applied from Shaw, et al. (2000). The knowledge was measured by 11 questions as a quiz (see Appendix. The correct answers are circled). For instance, we asked the respondents to choose the correct definition of fair trade. We also asked them to identify the logo mark shown on a package of fair trade products. We used several questions from a quiz developed by the Fairtrade Foundation in the United Kingdom. One question was if Fairtrade beauty products have ever been tested on animals. Self-consciousness was measured by the Japanese version of self-consciousness scale developed by Sugawara (1984). When we measured altruism, we modified the pro-social behavior scale developed by Kikuchi (1988).

When we check if the sample is a representative sample of population in Ibaraki Prefecture in 2015, we found that the elderly was overrepresented (see Table 1). For instance, males and females aged 60-69 should be 7.58% and 7.71%, respectively, of the total samples. The percentages of male and female respondents in their 60s were 15.76% and 13.30%, respectively. On the other hand, males and females aged 20-29 comprised only 1.97% and 2.46%, respectively, of the respondents, though they should consist of 5.07% and 4.40% of the sample, respectively. Therefore, we must conclude that the data was not representative of demographics of the general population in Ibaraki. However, because there is not any research to examine consumer behavior for fair trade products in Japan, and the size of sample was sufficient to conduct statistical analysis, we decided to use it in this paper.

(4) Empirical Analysis

1. Opinions and attitudes to fair trade

A few of the respondents recognized what fair trade was. In Figure 6, two-thirds of the respondents in Ibaraki were not at all familiar with fair trade. Another 20% had heard of the term, but didn't know much about it. Further, 24% believed that most people who are important to the respondents thought that they should purchase fair trade products ("subjective norm"), and 33% said that it was easy for them to buy fair trade products in Japan ("perceived behavioral control"). Moreover, 36% agreed that they feel an obligation to purchase fair trade products ("ethical obligation"), and 20% con-

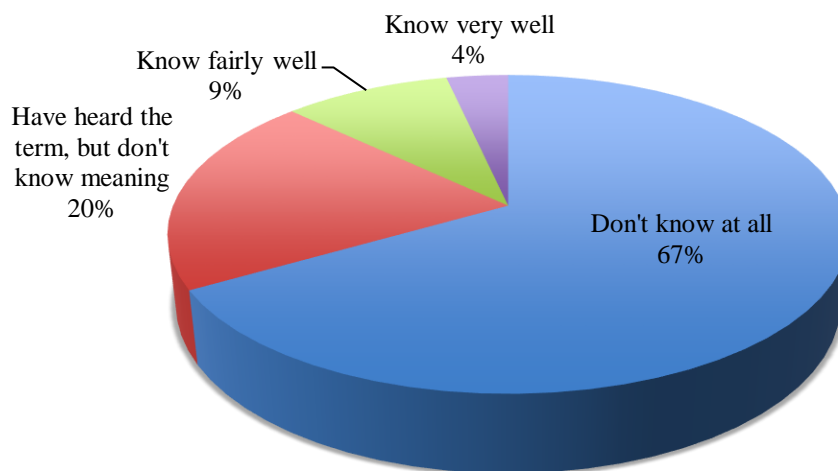


Figure 6. Awareness about Fair Trade

Source: The second Ibaraki Survey

Table 1. Evaluation of representativeness (gender and age)

Age group	Expected sample		Ibaraki Survey	
	male	female	male	female
20-29	10 (5.07)	9 (4.40)	4 (1.97)	5 (2.46)
30-39	13 (6.27)	12 (5.73)	7 (3.45)	10 (4.93)
40-49	15 (7.30)	14 (6.79)	11 (5.42)	21 (10.34)
50-59	13 (6.28)	12 (6.14)	18 (8.87)	26 (12.81)
60-69	15 (7.58)	16 (7.71)	32 (15.76)	27 (13.30)
70-79	11 (5.35)	12 (5.78)	25 (12.32)	17 (8.37)
Total	101 (49.88)	102 (50.12)	97 (47.78)	106 (52.22)

Note: Expected sample is calculated with the percentage of population by age and gender in Ibaraki Population Survey in July 2015.

sidered themselves as a person who is concerned about ethical consumer issues (“self-identity”). In this situation, only 28% was more likely to purchase fair trade products the next time they went to a grocery store (“intention”). On the other hand, more than half (53%) of the respondents said that

purchase of fair trade goods is favorable and only 10% considered that fair trade was not favorable (“attitude”). Finally, 56% said that fair trade was important for our society (“outcome evaluation”).

2. Knowledge about fair trade

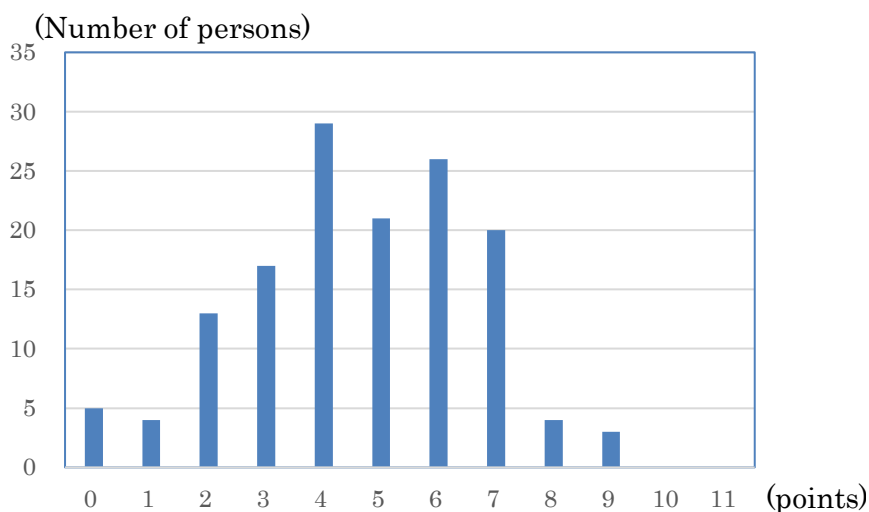


Figure 7. The distribution of test scores of fair trade
 Source: The second Ibaraki Survey

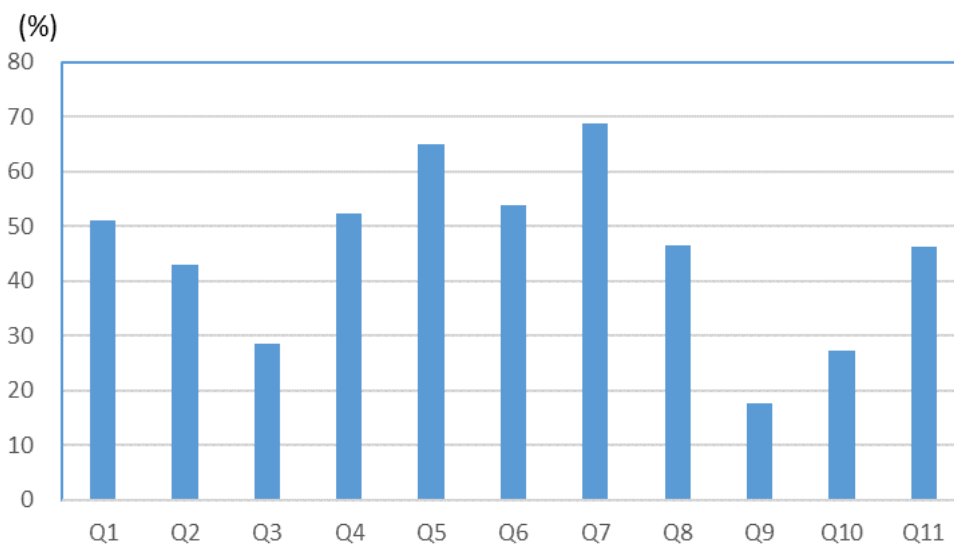


Figure 8. Percentage of correct answers about fair trade
 Source: The second Ibaraki survey

The mean score of the quiz about fair trade in the second Ibaraki Survey was 4.627 out of 11 (Figure 7). The highest score was 9 and the lowest was 0. Standard error was 2.016.

The percentage of correct answers is different for each of the 11 questions (Figure 8). The Appendix shows all questions in the quiz. Each correct answer is circled. The qu-

estion with the most correct answers is Q7, asking about female ownership of land in Africa; 68.7% answered it correctly. The second question most correctly answered was Q5, which asked the effect of fair trade; 64.9% answered it correctly.

On the other hand, the question with the lowest rate of correct answer was Q9 about a product in which 100 million rural

households in developing countries are involved. Only 17.7% chose the correct answer, cotton. That may be because there are a very few fair trade certificated cotton products in Japan.

The second lowest correctly-answered question was Q10 about the market share of fair trade cacao in the global cacao market: 27.3% answered 1% as the correct answer. The third lowest correctly-answered question was the fair trade sales values per capita in Japan (Q3). The correct answer was around JPY100 and 28.5% selected it correctly. In contrast, 33.1% and 24.6% chose around JPY500 and JPY1,500, respectively. Respondents may not have imagined that Japanese spend such a small amount of money on fair trade products.

3. Regression analysis

The results of the logit model for the proposed models are detailed in Table 2. For the TRA, attitude and subjective norm had significant effects on purchase intention for fair trade. However, when we added perceived behavioral control as the TPB model, subjective norm was not statistically significant. The pseudo R^2 (.204) was also improved. Moreover, when we added ethical obligation and self-identity as the modified TPB model shown in Shaw et al. (2000), the AIC and pseudo R^2 were improved more. As a result, we are able to conclude that attitude and behavioral control were important factors for consumers in Japan when they decide to buy fair trade products. What we must note here is that, when we delete subjective norm and self-identity among the explanatory variables in the modified TPB model, the effect of

ethical obligation on intention was statistically significant at 10% level. Therefore, the results in this paper were slightly different from those in Shaw, et al. (2000), showing that attitude, behavioral control and ethical obligation had effects on the purchase intention.

We then tested the H1, H2 and H3 with the structure equation modeling (SEM) of full information maximum likelihood. The first results are shown in Figure 9. GFI and CFI were not above 0.9. However, RMSEA was lower than 0.1 (0.075). Similar to the results of the logit model, only attitude and perceived behavioral control affected intention to buy fair trade products. The behavioral belief and outcome evaluation influenced attitude. Normative belief and motivation to comply affected subjective norm. However, knowledge about fair trade, self-consciousness, and pro-social behavior didn't seem to matter for fair trade at the 5% significant level.

In order to check indirect effects of knowledge and pro-social behavior on purchase intention, we developed an alternative model (model 2) shown in Figure 10. We assumed that knowledge had effect on outcome evaluation and pro-social behavior had effect on attitude. In addition, we deleted subjective norm because the results of logit model and SEM for the Model 1 didn't show any relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention. When we looked at the results, GFI was higher than 0.9. AIC was improved from Figure 9. However, CFI was not above 0.9. RMSEA was not also lower than 0.1 (0.174). According to the indicators, the model is not perfect. However, we can look at

Table 2. The results of multivariable analysis (Logit model)

	TRA		TPB		Revised TPB1		Revised TPB2	
	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.	Coefficient	S.E.
(Intercept)	-5.487	(1.092) ***	-6.857	(1.278) ***	-7.718	(1.529) ***	-6.934	(1.272)
Attitude	0.670	(0.192) ***	0.504	(0.208) **	0.389	(0.214) *	0.478	(0.205) **
Subjective norm	0.260	(0.182)	0.230	(0.197)	0.182	(0.213)	-	
Behavioral control	-		0.526	(0.186) ***	0.526	(0.196) ***	0.556	(0.190) ***
Ethical obligation	-		-		0.208	(0.209)	0.325	(0.186) *
Self-identity	-		-		0.314	(0.244)	-	
n	144		144		140		140	
AIC	153.03		146.00		143.62		143.83	
pseudo R2	0.152		0.204		0.241		0.217	

Note: () shows standard errors. *** p< 1%, ** p<5%, * p<10%

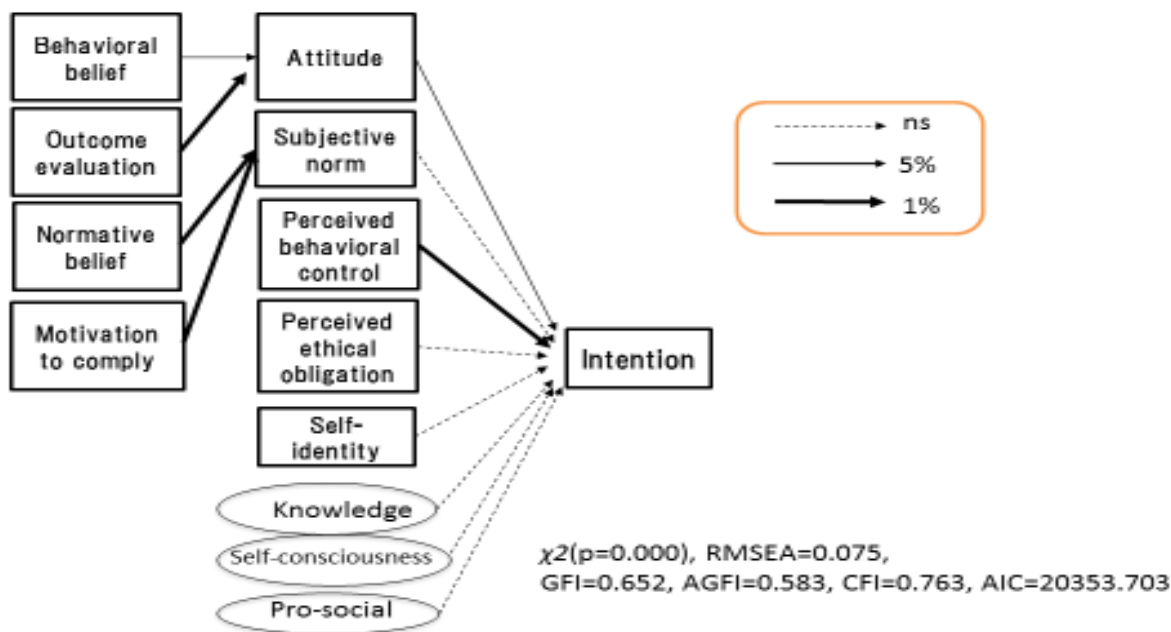


Figure 9. The results of Model 1 (SEM)

the relationship between know knowledge, pro-social behavior, and attitude. Knowledge affected outcome evaluation at 1% significant level and then outcome evaluation affected attitude at 1% significant level. Pro-social behavior also influenced attitude at 5% significant level. Therefore, knowledge and pro-social behavior had indirect effects

on purchase intention of fair trade products.

(5) Discussion and Conclusion

At first, H1 was partially supported. The results of the logit model and the structure equation modeling showed that it was important whether purchasing fair trade products would be desirable (attitude) or

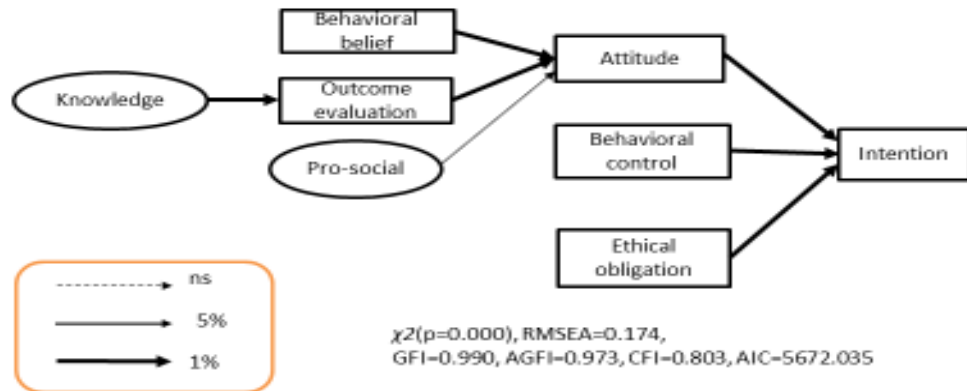


Figure 10. The results of Model 2 (SEM)

easy to purchase (behavioral control). Therefore, the availability of fair trade products in shops mattered in Japan.

On the other hand, knowledge of fair trade and altruism did not directly affect purchase intention. Rather, knowledge was related to outcome evaluation which measured if purchasing fair trade products would be important for our society. Moreover, persons who want to buy fair trade did not only obtain knowledge, but also conducted pro-social or altruistic behavior frequently. They believed that altruism is socially significant in daily life. Therefore, we concluded that H2 and H3 were supported. Besides simply raising awareness about fair trade in promoting the purchase, education is an important measure to encourage understanding the social significance of altruistic behavior.

We only tested several models based on TRA and TPB in this study. On the other hand, there are many possible models to include factors that may explain consumers'

decision making for fair trade products. For instance, referring to discussion by Basu & Van (1998), we can also understand that the promotion of fair trade is a form of subsidies to wage. The economics of child labor suggests that subsidies to wage cannot stop supplying child labor in developing countries. Rather the promotion may create a black market of child laborers if governments in developing countries are not able to regulate such black markets effectively. However, we could not take into account the relationship on consumers' decision-making in this study explicitly.

Lastly, the data used here was not a nationwide sample. The number of the sample was also limited. The percentage of elderly people among the respondents was very high. In order to generalize our results, it is necessary to carry out surveys targeting the whole population of Japan. We need further research to compare our models with other potential models in a nationwide survey.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our great appreciation to respondents in the second Ibaraki Survey. Without their kind cooperation, we would not have been able to do this important research. We would also like to extend our thanks to support from staff in 41 municipalities in Ibaraki Prefecture. We are also grateful to two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments.

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Appendix: Fair trade quiz in the Ibaraki Survey

Q1: The definition of fair trade is

- ① a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade;
2. a free trade by producers and vendors without government's intervention like customs duty;
3. financial aids that governments provide to assist economic development in developing countries;
4. loans without interest to contribute to economic development and welfare in developing countries.

Q2: The global sales values of fair trade in 2014 was JPY

1. 8 billion 2. 80 billion ③ 800 billion 4. 8 trillion

Q3: Fair trade sales values in Japan per capita was around JPY

1. 16 ② 114 3. 525 4. 1,621

Q4: The main product of fair trade in Japan was

- ① coffee 2. banana 3. cosmetics 4. chocolate

Q5: One of effects of fair trade is

1. cost-cutting to improve efficiency in business;
2. training technicians to convey technology in Japan to developing countries;
3. promoting competition in trade;
- ④ improving working conditions in developing countries.

Q6: Which of these is the Fairtrade mark?

1. the logo of Consumer Agency of Japan
2. the logo of foods for specified health uses
- ③ the logo of Fairtrade International
4. the Woolmark logo

Q7: Women produce 60-80% of the food in most developing countries, but how much land in Africa is owned by women?

- ① 1% 2. 9% 3. 16% 4. 21%

Q8: Smallholder farmers often receive low returns from their produce. According to a Fairtrade Foundation report in 2013, what percentage of the retail value of a chocolate bar are cocoa smallholders likely to receive?

1. 21-26% 2. 10-15% ③ 3-6% 4. 1%

Q9: These statements are all true for which fair trade product?

- Developing countries produce two thirds of this product
- 100 million rural households in developing countries are involved in its production
- West Africa produces about 4% of its total global production

1. rice 2. coffee ③ cotton 4. cacao

Q10: Close to 50 million people depend on cocoa for their livelihoods. What percentage of cocoa is sold on fair trade terms globally?

- ① 1% 2. 6% 3. 11% 4. 21%

Q11: Have fair trade beauty products ever been tested on animals?

1. Yes ② No

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