

Through Thick and Thin: How Fair Trade Consumers Have Reacted to the Global Economic Recession

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ABSTRACT. Research on fair trade has flourished over the past decade as fair trade food products have gained popularity amongst consumers in many developed economies. This study examines the effects of recessionary economic conditions on fair trade consumers' purchasing behaviour. An online survey was administered to 306 fair trade consumers from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The results reveal a discrepancy among fair trade consumers as only consumers that purchase fair trade on an occasional basis adhered to established consumer behaviour norms, i.e. decreasing their purchases of fair trade products and becoming significantly more price aware. Respondents who actively consume fair trade generally remained loyal to their purchase. While some active consumers altered their purchasing behaviour, this phenomenon was not common amongst this group as no statistically significant changes were observed. Differences were also noted among the three countries as the Canadian and US fair trade consumers significantly decreased their consumption of fair trade as a result of the recession, whereas the UK consumers did not. In addition to the research results, theoretical and managerial implications will be discussed along with future research directions.

KEY WORDS: consumer behaviour, Canada, consumption, cross-country analysis, economic recession, fair trade, United Kingdom, United States of America

ABBREVIATIONS: TRA: Theory of Reasoned Action; TPB: Theory of Planned Behaviour; UK: United Kingdom; US: United States of America

Introduction

The recent emergence of fair trade into the mainstream (Moore et al., 2006) has had a significant impact on the value of the fair trade market. For example, according to the Fairtrade Foundation, worldwide sales of fair trade certified products rose by 47% between 2006 and 2007 to £1.6 billion (Fairtrade Foundation, 2008). This mercurial growth in fair trade consumption has sparked much interest within academic literature since these consumers seem to contradict the traditional models that assume consumers to be self-interested beings (Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, b; Varul and Wilson-Kovacs, 2008). After all, fair trade certified products require consumers to reach deeper into their pockets as they are sold at a price premium (Doran, 2009).

Research has previously been conducted to understand the behaviour of fair trade consumers who are not only affected by traditional self-interested motives such as price, convenience and quality but are also driven by ethical considerations when making purchase decisions (Shaw and Clarke, 1999; Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, b; Vitell, 2003; Vitell et al., 2001). Further studies have discovered a broad approval of fair trade within the European market as 46% of Europeans claimed they are willing to pay substantially more for ethical products (MORI in De Pelsmacker et al., 2006). A study based on Belgian consumers revealed a willingness to pay an additional 10% for fair trade labelled products (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Loureiro and Lotade's (2005) research demonstrated French consumers' willingness to pay a higher premium for fair trade products than for organic products.

However, fair trade research has yet to evaluate the effects of a severe global economic crisis on

consumption behaviour. Traditional consumer theory¹ dictates that during economic downturns, consumers alter their purchasing patterns as they become more price aware (Estelami et al., 2001; Howard and Sheth, 1969). It is hitherto unknown what happens to fair trade consumers during recessions, that is, whether their ethical beliefs and behaviour uphold during difficult financial times or whether they conform to traditional consumer theory and veer away from premium priced fair trade products. Our research seeks to fill this gap by investigating if fair trade consumers and their spending habits are affected by economic downturns.

The study focuses on fair trade grocery purchases as they make up the bulk of the world fair trade market. It incorporates a multi-national comparison of the fair trade markets in Canada, the United States of America (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). Much of the fair trade consumer research to date has focused on European fair trade consumers and there is limited understanding of the US consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards fair trade (Doran, 2009). Interestingly, evidence from the National Coffee Association reveals that as of 2006, only 27% of the US consumers recognised the fair trade label, rising from 12% in 2004 (Downie, 2007). Similarly, the Canadian fair trade market, which is the sixth largest in the world, is still in its 'infancy' (Poppowell, 2009). On the other hand, in 2008, the UK became the largest fair trade market in the world, valued at £615.6 million (Fairtrade Foundation, 2009). These countries were included in the study not only because they represent fair trade markets at different levels of development, but also because the economic recession has had a significant negative effect on all three economies.

Fair trade consumer research

Fair trade consumers feel responsible towards society and demonstrate their feelings through their purchase behaviour (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). This statement encapsulates two very distinct and growing streams of consumer research undertaken within fair trade: attitude and perceptions; and actual behaviour. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and its extension, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) are often used to describe the attitudinal

processes of human behaviour (see Ajzen, 1991). The core factor in these theories is the individual's intention to engage in a given behaviour, and thus behavioural intentions are linked with attitudes and subjective norms. An extension of TPB to ethical consumerism has been suggested within fair trade literature (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2006; Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, b). However, much like the majority of traditional consumer models, the original format of this model does not incorporate the whole process of an ethical purchase as it emphasizes hedonistic, self-interested motives and neglects the more "societal-centred" outlook of fair trade consumers (Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, p. 286). Ethical consumers depart from the traditional view of consumers in that they incorporate altruistic motives to their purchase decisions:

Whereas many consumers acting in a rational, self-motivated manner may select coffee on the basis of factors such as price and taste, those concerned about ethical issues may be guided by a sense of obligation to others, where concerns such as providing a fair price for fair trade producers take priority. (Shaw and Shiu, 2002b, p. 114)

Much research has been devoted to extend the TPB and while it has been discovered that the additional predictors of ethical obligation and self-identity (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2006; Shaw and Shiu, 2002a, b; Shaw et al., 2000) are relevant to explain ethical consumption, the results of Shaw and Shiu (2003) have questioned the relevance of applying the TPB to grocery decisions due to their low involvement nature.

The application of the Hunt-Vitell ethical model to the individual decision-making process is another ethical buying behaviour model that has been proposed within the literature. This model views consumers as rational beings whose perception of an ethical problem leads them to identify various potential solutions, such as ethical consumption (Vitell, 2003). Two specific ethical evaluations occur during this process: a deontological evaluation to assess the inherent rightness or wrongness of various alternatives; and a teleological evaluation to assess how much good or bad will result from choosing each alternative (Vitell, 2003). For ethical purchase intentions and behaviour, the deontological approach plays a more significant role than the perception of

consequences through their teleological evaluation which differs from traditional purchase intentions (Vitell et al., 2001).

Further studies have delved into the motives that differentiate ethical consumers from the traditional consumer. For instance, Shaw and Clarke (1999) discovered that ethical consumers' purchasing decisions were largely affected by a desire to enact change. Szmigin (2003) explains the emergence of fair trade consumers as a result of a new desire by consumers to become informed about the production process of their food and to create a relationship with the producers. Crane (2001) notes that for fair trade consumers, the additional ethical considerations of fair trade products are seen as product augmentations; fair trade adds value to the product for these consumers, which results in their willingness to pay a price premium for these goods. In a more economic viewpoint, Steinrücken and Jaenichen (2007) explain that consumers that internalize the utility of producers within their utility function gain a supplementary utility above that acquired from the mere consumption of a good.

However, research within fair trade has reported certain discrepancies between the attitudinal orientation of consumers and their actual behaviour related to fair trade product consumption (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). On the one hand, as discussed above, researchers highlight the role played by perceptions and attitudes in consumer behaviour [e.g. models proposed and tested by Hunt and Vitell (Vitell et al., 2001) and Shaw and Clarke (1999)], on the other hand, there is research that demonstrates a weaker relationship between attitudes and actual consumption behaviour (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). The rising consumer concern about fair trade has not always translated into increased consumption (Vantomme et al., 2006). Vantomme et al. (2006) cite the fundamental characteristics of ethical products as well as measurement issues as possible reasons for this attitude-behaviour gap. Tallontire et al. (2003) point out that surveys show consumers do not cite ethical concerns until prompted about the issues. The social desirability bias and the respondent's inclination to conform to social norms and create a good impression on the researcher contribute to attitudes being more positive than actual behaviour (King and Bruner, 2000). This discrepancy is more prevalent in research methods that involve self-reporting through surveys and questionnaires (Vantomme et al., 2006).

When the price factor is introduced into the equation, researchers argue that regardless of the attitudinal orientation of consumers, the willingness to pay for a higher premium product varies amongst customer segments (Bird and Hughes, 1997). According to Bird and Hughes (1997), the willingness to purchase goods based on ethical credentials is restricted to a minority. This view is supported by De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) who state that not all consumers are equally likely to buy ethical products and that a lot of buying behaviour is based on multiple attributes and the ethical influence may vary amongst consumers. While contending that the ethical consumer may be a 'myth', Carrigan and Attalla (2001) opine that price apart from quality, convenience and brand familiarity was one of the major factors affecting buying decisions. Interestingly, attitudes and intentions towards ethical products are measured without explicitly taking the higher price of these products into account (Browne et al., 2000) and De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) highlight price as one of the major reasons for this attitude-behaviour inconsistency.

According to Szmigin (2003), every individual consumer demonstrates varying degrees of rationalism, individualism, collectivism and social orientation. The post modern perspective on consumer behaviour criticises the notion that a consumer could be converted to being consistently ethical in his or her purchasing decisions (Low and Davenport, 2007). Similarly, consumers demonstrating mass consumer characteristics and focusing on price, quality, convenience and brand familiarity may at some point in time demonstrate a more positive attitude and/or behaviour towards fair trade products. The above-mentioned criteria may partly explain the growth that fair trade sales have enjoyed in the last few years.

According to Davies and Crane (2003), fair trade products are now available in mainstream outlets [referred to by Davies (2007) as the third era in the fair trade marketing evolution]. For example, in 2007, there were more than 4,500 fair trade products available in the mainstream UK market [Fairtrade Foundation, 2007, in Davies et al. (2010)]. With this mainstreaming, fair trade is now being subjected to the same trials and tribulations as mass consumer brands. They face the same challenges as all other businesses in the market system (De Pelsmacker et al., 2006). It comes as no surprise that fair trade products are now facing stiff competition within the

generic product categories they operate in (Doran, 2009).

Our research assumes significance within this dynamic growth context for fair trade as well as its steady transition into the mainstream where fair trade sellers are now more exposed to the economic turbulence existing within traditional consumer markets. Though traditional consumers tend to purchase the same brands on a regular basis (Ehrenberg, 1972), when confronted with the downswing of the business cycle, consumers are likely to alter their regular purchasing behaviour. This is because consumption is directly related to income (Ferber, 1962) and consequently as variables of income fluctuate with the economy, consumers often adjust their spending habits as “crisis hit consumers behave differently from those enjoying economic prosperity” (Ang et al., 2000, p. 97). As explained by the Theory of Buyer Behaviour, as consumers’ confidence in the economic outlook weakens, they tend to become more price conscious as they weigh price more heavily within their purchase decisions (Howard and Sheth, 1969). This is consistent with a study by Estelami et al. (2001) which discovered that as an economy shrinks, consumers increase their price knowledge. This is especially pertinent within grocery products, as consumers do not have the option to hold-off purchases until brighter days. Lahart et al. (2009) note that during 2008, when the US fell into deep recession, private label sales rose by 10%. This is likely a result of consumers switching from premium national brands to private label brands (Ang, 2001) as they are on average 25–30% less expensive (Lamey et al., 2007). As a result, although during normal economic times, price may not be the most influential product variable in a consumer’s decision process, during a recession price is likely to become more influential for mainstream products as consumers change their consumption patterns in an attempt “to maintain the same food value with more limited funds” (Howard and Sheth, 1969, p. 79).

Hypothesis development

Although it has been widely documented that ethical consumers differ from traditional consumers in that they incorporate ethical considerations into their

decision-making process and value the additional ethical content of fair trade products, there has been no research to date that tests whether the ethical convictions of fair trade consumers are upheld during economic downturns. That is to say, although ethical consumers differ from traditional consumers during stable economic times, do they become price aware like traditional consumers during recessionary periods? Will a decrease in the financial outlook and resources of fair trade consumers cause them to heighten the importance of the perceived behavioural control (TPB) or their teleological evaluation (Hunt–Vitell) in their decision-making process in the grocery store and thus decrease their consumption of fair trade? Thus, our first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: Fair trade consumers decrease their average monthly purchases of fair trade products during economic downturns.

It is also assumed that much like traditional consumers, fair trade consumers will increase the importance of price in their decision-making process within the grocery store and, consequently, decrease the importance attributed to ethical concerns in their purchase decisions.

Hypothesis 2a: Fair trade consumers report that price has a stronger influence in their decision-making process during economic downturns.

Hypothesis 2b: Fair trade consumers report that ethics have a weaker influence in their decision-making process during economic downturns.

As suggested by the Theory of Buyer Behaviour, the attitudes of consumers may be affected by economic downturns as not only do their consumption patterns change but their product preferences may change as well, which can last long after the recession ends (Howard and Sheth, 1969). However, unlike the predictions, with changes in price influence, the impact of a recession on consumers’ attitudes is individually specific and, therefore, is not expected to have an overarching effect. Consequently, our third hypothesis can be stated as:

Hypothesis 3: Fair trade consumers’ concerns for fair trade and perceived value of fair trade products do not change during economic downturns.

Research has identified a disparity amongst consumers who purchase fair trade. This divide, which is noted among consumers who actively buy fair trade and those that only buy occasionally (Doran, 2009), is a likely result of the recent expansion of fair trade into the mainstream over the last decade (Low and Davenport, 2006; Moore et al., 2006) where many consumers' awareness of fair trade is attributable to the availability of such products at their local supermarkets than to any specific ethical concern. As a result, there is a discrepancy amongst fair trade consumers in regard to their knowledge and overall attitude towards fair trade, as many 'core' followers frowned upon the mainstream shoppers for having the wrong motives; "buying themselves a good conscience...or even buying because one now does so" (Varul and Wilson-Kovacs, 2008, p. 10). In addition, a large proportion of mainstream fair trade consumers are likely to only purchase fair trade products occasionally. Research conducted by De Pelsmacker and Janssens (2007) revealed that both knowledge and concern for the fair trade movement have a direct positive effect on fair trade consumption and perception of price acceptability. Other research has also noted that consumers who buy fair trade more actively differed from Occasional consumers in terms of their values (Doran, 2009). Taking that Occasional and Active fair trade consumers diverge on several levels, it is assumed that their reaction to the recession will differ as well. However, in view of Shaw and Clarke's (1999, p. 115) research which noted that price-sensitive loyal ethical consumers participating in focus groups indicated that the "purchase of fair trade products would often outweigh this traditional concern," it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4a: Occasional fair trade consumers decrease purchases of fair trade products during economic downturns, whereas active fair trade consumers do not decrease purchases.

Hypothesis 4b: Occasional fair trade consumers' decision-making process and attitudes towards fair trade are more negatively impacted by economic downturns than Active consumers.

Although a great deal of fair trade literature has focused on specific countries (De Pelsmacker et al., 2006; Doran, 2009; Megicks et al., 2008; Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2006; Strong, 1996), there is limited

literature comparing fair trade markets and consumers from different countries. As previously stated, this study is focused on the Canadian, US and UK fair trade markets as they are all pertinent to the continued success of the fair trade movement and represent markets at different stages of development. Hira and Ferrie (2006) highlight that the Canadian and US markets are still developing by comparison to the UK, where fair trade has become widely available and recognised. Assuming differences in consumers' orientation towards fair trade in these three countries, the fifth hypothesis can be stated as:

Hypothesis 5: The effect of economic downturns on consumers' average monthly purchases of fair trade grocery products will vary among the Canadian, US, and UK markets.

Another area of interest within the emerging field of fair trade and ethical consumerism has been to demographically identify the 'ethical consumer'. Littrell and Dickson (1997) and De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) found that fair trade consumers tend to be of higher age, with the average fair trade consumer being between 30 and 49 years old. It has also been noted that ethical consumers tend to be of higher income (Littrell and Dickson, 1999; Roberts, 1996). Vitell et al. (2001), Roberts (1995), Littrell and Dickson (1999) and De Pelsmacker et al. (2005, 2006) provide evidence that ethical consumers tend to be more educated than their non-ethical counterparts. The issue of gender has brought forward much literature with several authors noting that women are more likely to purchase ethically (Littrell and Dickson, 1999; Manieri et al., 1997; Roberts, 1996), while other literature counteracts these claims by concluding that gender has no influence on ethical and fair trade consumption (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Doran, 2009; Sikula and Costa, 1994). Although this literature attempts to depict the profile of consumers most likely to support ethical and fair trade products, it is primarily based on research undertaken during stable economic times. To date, there is no literature pertaining to ethical consumer demographics during recessionary periods. Consequently, it will be assumed that those consumers who are most likely to support fair trade during stable economic times will also be those most likely to support fair trade during economic downturns. This leads us to our final hypotheses³:

Hypothesis 6: Middle-aged (35–54) fair trade consumers are less likely to decrease their consumption of fair trade during economic downturns.

Hypothesis 7: Higher income fair trade consumers are less likely to decrease their consumption of fair trade during economic downturns.

Hypothesis 8: Higher educated fair trade consumers are less likely to decrease their consumption of fair trade during economic downturns.

Hypothesis 9: Female fair trade consumers are less likely to decrease their consumption of fair trade during economic downturns.

Methodology

This study was conducted during a period when the world financial market was in crisis. During this period, many countries including Canada, UK and the US fell into a deep recession as unemployment rates rose, consumer confidence and spending dropped, and the stock market experienced extreme volatility. These economic concerns influenced consumers' grocery purchases as reports highlight consumers having decreased the amount they spend on food (Lahart et al., 2009). An offline pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire on a convenience sample of 10 respondents and an 'iterative' approach was followed in modifying the initial set of questions. This pilot sample consisted of ordinary supermarket consumers, fair trade enthusiasts and academics.

The survey

The survey (Appendix 1) method was used to identify and evaluate changes in consumers' purchase behaviour and attitudes towards fair trade food products as a result of the global recession. Since this study concerns consumers who have repeatedly purchased fair trade products, the first section of the survey required respondents to identify their fair trade purchasing behaviour on a 6-point scale from 'never purchase fair trade food' to 'actively seek'.⁴ Only the respondents who answered occasional or above were deemed 'fair trade' consumers and were requested to proceed with the survey. A total of 423 people answered the survey, of which 313 replied occasional or above.

The subsequent section regarded respondent's demographic characteristics, such as gender and age. Following this section, the participants reported how many fair trade grocery items they bought on average per month prior to the economic recession and alternatively since the onset of the recession. A frequency measure was used as it is the most appropriate for repeat purchase behaviour (Honkanen et al., 2006). Following this section, fair trade consumers were then presented with several questions regarding potential changes in their purchasing behaviour within the grocery store and changes to their attitude/perception of fair trade as a result of the recession. The above questions were based on a five-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5, strongly agree.⁵

Finally, fair trade consumers were presented with an open-ended question welcoming them to discuss factors that affected their intention to purchase fair trade food. This qualitative question was administered in order to provide further understanding of their fair trade consumption behaviour (Dickson, 2005).

Samples

Keeping in mind the overall objective of investigating the fair trade consumer, links to the online survey were posted on 22 interactive social networks dedicated to fair trade (Appendix 2). In addition, in order to acquire responses from individuals from the mainstream segment who buy fair trade on a more occasional basis, links to the survey were posted on social networks devoted to mainstream grocery stores, such as Tesco and Sainsbury's, and circulated via email requests. These postings and requests were mainly targeted at consumers from Canada, UK and the US. The online surveys ensured a higher penetration amongst the target respondent and also helped reduce the 'social desirability bias' within respondents' answers (Worcester and Dawkins, 2005).

Inclusion criteria

The data collection stage lasted for around two and a half months, from May 2009 to the middle of July 2009, with a total of 313 suitable responses collected. Respondents were given the option to decline to participate in the survey and could elect to withdraw from the survey at any time. Seven respondents left

the section regarding fair trade consumption and beyond unanswered and as a result were excluded from the analysis. This created a final response count of 306. In addition, in order to ensure reliability in respondents' answers, several of the attitude and behavioural topics had two very similar questions associated with it. In these cases, the mean of the two responses was applied (Rawwas, 1996).

Statistical methods

The data regarding the number of fair trade products that respondents purchased before and since the onset of the recession is not normally distributed. Consequently, non-parametric tests are used to analyse this data when applicable. In addition, a significance level of 5% was applied to all statistical tests.

Results

Impact of the recession on fair trade consumption

In order to analyse the first hypothesis that consumers will decrease their consumption of fair trade food products during an economic recession, a Wilcoxon test was conducted using the raw data of consumers' average monthly fair trade food purchases prior to the recession and since the recession. There were a total of 306 responses and the mean number of monthly fair trade product purchases before the recession is 4.97 and this mean decreases to 4.69 since the onset of the recession. Although the decrease in consumption does not appear to be large (a decrease of 0.28 units), the results indicate a significant difference, $z = -3.613$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed. As a result, there is strong statistical evidence suggesting that the amount purchased during the recession is smaller thereby validating the first hypothesis.

However, although the data demonstrate that the decrease in fair trade purchases is statistically significant, it is important to note that a large majority of the respondents' fair trade consumption has not been affected by the current recession. As shown in Table I, 72.2% of the respondents have not changed their level of consumption as a result of the recession. Nonetheless, 21.3% of the respondents have decreased their purchases, which is a substantial proportion of the subjects.

TABLE I

Overview of changes in respondents' purchases of fair trade food products since the onset of the recession

Change	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative (%)
-6	2	0.7	0.7
-5	4	1.3	2.0
-4	9	2.9	4.9
-3	6	2.0	6.9
-2	15	4.9	11.8
-1	29	9.5	21.3
0	221	72.2	93.5
+1	4	1.3	94.8
+2	9	2.9	97.7
+3	2	0.7	98.4
+6	4	1.3	99.7
+7	1	0.3	100.0

Change = Average monthly amount of fair trade purchases since the recession – average monthly of fair trade purchases before the recession.

Much like previous studies on fair trade consumers (Doran, 2009), respondents were separated into two groups depending on their fair trade purchase behaviour, whether Occasional or Active.⁶ Table II demonstrates the break down of each demographic variable surveyed as well as its corresponding χ^2 and p value. The only two variables to have significantly different frequencies between Occasional and Active are Age and Country-of-residence.

Conducting a Wilcoxon test on each of the consumer groups (see Table III), it is confirmed that consumption was not affected equally over the two consumer groups, as hypothesized. The monthly mean purchases for Occasional consumers (43% of the respondents) for before and since the onset of the recession are 3.73 and 3.18, respectively. This decrease is found to be statistically significant, $z = -4.371$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed. These results provide strong evidence that consumption has decreased among Occasional fair trade consumers.

In contrast, Active fair trade consumers only decreased their consumption from 5.92 to 5.84, which is not statistically significant ($z = -0.910$, $p = 0.182$, one-tailed). The negative impact of the recession on Occasional consumption is highlighted by the fact that 29.5% of these respondents decreased their consumption whereas just under 15% of the Active

TABLE II
Demographic makeup of occasional and active consumers

Demographic variable	Occasional		Active		χ^2 results
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Male	39	29.5	53	30.6	Gender: $\chi^2(306) = 0.030, p = 0.863$
Female	93	70.5	121	69.4	
Under 34	73	55.3	71	40.8	Age: $\chi^2(306) = 6.831, p = 0.033$
35 to 54	35	26.5	67	38.5	
55 and over	24	18.2	36	20.7	
Income up to £25,000	47	35.6	76	43.7	Income: $\chi^2(306) = 4.832, p = 0.089$
Income between £25,001 and £45,000	48	36.4	67	38.5	
Income over £45,000	37	28	31	17.8	
UK	33	25.8	92	56.4	Country: $\chi^2(291) = 27.507, p < 0.001$
Canada	43	33.6	32	19.6	
USA	52	40.6	39	23.9	
Attended University	112	84.8	135	77.6	Education: $\chi^2(306) = 2.544, p = 0.111$
Currently a student	25	18.9	34	19.5	

TABLE III

Wilcoxon signed ranks test for average monthly purchase before and since the onset of the recession pertaining to Hypotheses 1, 4 and 5

	Mean before	Mean since	z Value	p Value ^a	Conclusion
Hypothesis 1					
All respondents	4.97	4.69	-3.613	<0.001	The means are significantly different. Hypothesis is supported
Hypothesis 4b					
Occasional	3.73	3.18	-4.371	<0.001	Occasional consumers have decreased consumption and Active consumers have not. Hypothesis is supported
Active	5.92	5.84	-0.910	0.182	
Hypothesis 5					
Canada	4.23	3.93	-2.00	0.023	The US and Canadian consumers have decreased consumption. The UK consumers have not. Hypothesis is supported
UK	5.99	5.82	-1.534	0.063	
US	4.19	3.67	-3.580	<0.001	

^aOne-tailed.

respondents decreased (an additional 9.2% of Active consumers increased their consumption). These contrasting results confirm Hypothesis 4a that Occasional fair trade consumers decrease purchases of fair trade products during economic downturns, whereas Active fair trade consumers do not.

This diverging reaction of Occasional and Active consumers to the current economic climate was also evident within their responses to the open-ended question regarding factors affecting their intention to

buy fair trade products during this current economic climate. A total of 49 Active consumers wrote a response, of which the majority demonstrated a sincere concern for the fair trade cause. Many emphasized a personal commitment to continue to support fair trade during these hard times and highlighted the difficulties that farmers in developing nations continue to endure. For instance, one Active consumer (female, aged 45–54, annual income between \$35,000 and \$50,000) from the US stated:

While the recession affects me, it has an even more significant impact on marginalized populations and the choice to purchase food that has been produced fairly is even more important now.

In contrast, Occasional consumers (36 responded to the question) were less inclined to mention the welfare of disadvantaged farmers but often highlighted price and other product variables as the main factors affecting their incentives to purchase fair trade. For instance, an Occasional consumer (female, aged 24–34, annual income below €15,000) replied:

Superior quality and taste is all that matters to me as long as the price premium is not extremely high.

In addition, an Occasional consumer (female, aged 25–34, annual income between £15,000 and £25,000) from the UK stated:

I will buy more if they lower the price or I start to have more disposable income, which I can't see happening for a while.

Consequently, the diverging reaction of the two fair trade groups to the current economic recession in terms of their fair trade consumption may be explained to some extent by the groups' motives for buying fair trade during this time. Active consumers appear to be as motivated now to continue to support fair trade as prior to the recession, irrespective of the price, due to a deep belief and concern for the fair trade cause. Conversely, Occasional consumers seem to be more driven by product variables such as price and quality.

Impact of the recession on the decision-making process

In order to test whether any significant changes have occurred in consumers' decision-making process and attitude towards fair trade since the onset of the recession, one sample *t* tests have been conducted on the mean responses regarding changes to purchasing behaviour in the grocery store as well as changes to attitude/perception of fair trade. This was conducted in order to test whether mean responses were significantly greater than the indifference scale point of 3.⁷ In addition, independent sample *t* tests have been conducted between Occasional and Active responses to these questions in order to test whether they are

significantly different. Mean responses and the results of these tests are displayed in Table IV.

In terms of changes to fair trade consumers' decision-making process since the onset of the recession, 40% of the respondents indicated that since the recession, price has had a stronger influence on their purchasing decisions within the grocery store as their combined price sensitivity score was above the indifference scale point of 3. However, no statistically significant change in price behaviour has occurred as the mean score (2.94) is below the indifference point. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a that states fair trade consumers will become more price sensitive is rejected.

In analysing the two fair trade groups separately, further evidence is revealed for the reasoning as to why Occasional consumption has decreased, whereas Active consumption has not. Just over 46% of the Occasional consumers indicated that price has become a stronger influence on their purchasing decision within the grocery store and only 36% of Active consumers did so. While the mean response of Occasional consumers (3.09) was not found to be significantly higher than the mid-scale indifference point ($t(125) = 1.156, p = 0.250$) and Active consumers' mean response was below 3 (2.82), when conducting an independent sample *t* test between the two groups a significant difference was found between the Occasional and Active consumers in regards to the impact of the recession on their price awareness ($t(290) = 2.352, p = 0.019$).

Although price has become more important for several fair trade consumers since the recession, it appears as though the influence of ethics on purchase decisions has been unaffected. Of all the fair trade consumers, only 13.4% agreed, with only 2 individuals having strongly agreed, that ethical issues have less of an influence on their purchasing decisions in the grocery store with an overall mean of 2.11. Consequently, Hypothesis 2b that predicts ethics to have a diminished impact on fair trade consumers' decision process is rejected. Nevertheless, differences are evident between the two fair trade groups as 21.6% of Occasional consumers indicated they agree, whereas only 7.2% of Active consumers did so. In comparing their scale means (Occasional = 2.49 and Active = 1.82), an independent sample *t* test finds a significant difference in scores ($t(288) = 6.018, p < 0.001$) thereby indicating that ethics have become significantly less important for Occasional consumers as compared to Active consumers.

TABLE IV

Overview and results for the hypotheses regarding changes in consumers' decision-making process and attitudes towards fair trade

Survey topic	Test population	% Agree	Mean	<i>t</i> Value	<i>p</i> Value	Conclusions
Price has a stronger influence on purchase decisions since the onset of the recession	All	40.4	2.94	NA	NA	The mean is not greater than the indifference point of 3. Hypothesis 2a is rejected
	Occasional	46.0	3.09	2.352	0.019	Significant difference between responses. Hypothesis 4b is supported
	Active	36.1	2.82			
Ethical considerations have less of an influence on purchase decisions since the onset of the recession	All	13.4	2.11	NA	NA	The mean is not greater than the indifference point of 3. Hypothesis 2b is rejected
	Occasional	21.6	2.49	6.018	<0.001	Significant difference between responses. Hypothesis 4b is supported
	Active	7.2	1.82			
Less concerned for the fair trade cause since the onset of the recession	All	9.4	2.12	NA	NA	The mean is not greater than the indifference point of 3. Hypothesis 3 is supported
	Occasional	16.9	2.54	7.973	<0.001	Significant difference between responses. Hypothesis 4b supported
	Active	6.7	1.79			
Value fair trade products less since the onset of the recession	All	11.1	2.25	NA	NA	The mean is not greater than the indifference point of 3. Hypothesis 3 is supported
	Occasional	16.9	2.58	6.300	<0.001	Significant difference between responses. Hypothesis 4b is supported
	Active	6.7	2.00			

Impact of the recession on consumers' attitude towards fair trade

Although the recession has had an impact on the consumption of fair trade products, what is encouraging for the fair trade market is that no significant changes in consumers' attitude towards fair trade were noted thereby confirming Hypothesis 3.⁸ Fair trade consumers continue to believe in the value of fair trade products as less than 12% indicated that they agree with the statement concerning fair trade products becoming less valuable since the beginning of the recession. In addition, no significant change is noted in consumers' attitude regarding the importance of the fair trade movement as only 9.4% indicated they agreed that they are currently less concerned with the movement.

However, once more a significant difference was noted between the two fair trade groups. While 17% of Occasional consumers indicated they agreed with

the statements regarding a decrease in concern and value of fair trade, only 4 and 7% of Active consumers agreed (Occasional = 2.54 vs. Active = 1.79, $t(285) = 7.97$, $p < 0.001$; Occasional = 2.58 vs. Active = 2.00, $t(285) = 6.30$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that Occasional consumers' attitudes towards fair trade become more negatively impacted by economic hard times than those of Active consumers.

Country analysis

Conducting a non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis test on the change variable of the three countries under observation provides evidence that these populations are significantly different ($\chi^2(2, N = 291) = 10.460$, $p = 0.005$) thereby confirming Hypothesis 5 that fair trade consumption would not be affected equally across the countries.

Analysing the change variable of each country separately using the Wilcoxon test, strong statistical

evidence is provided that consumers in the US have significantly decreased their consumption of fair trade products from a monthly mean of 4.19 to 3.67 ($z = -3.580$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed) as well as consumers in Canada with their mean purchases decreasing from 4.23 to 3.93 ($z = -2.000$, $p = 0.023$, one-tailed). With a significance level of 5%, there was no significant decrease in purchase of fair trade products reported by the UK consumers since the onset of the recession ($x = 5.99$ to $x = 5.82$, $z = -1.534$, $p = 0.063$, one-tailed).

The divide between Occasional and Active consumers in terms of the impact of the recession on their consumption of fair trade was evident in both the UK and Canadian respondents as only Occasional consumers were found to have significantly decreased their consumption in both markets. Within the US market, while Occasional consumers were found to significantly decrease their consumption (Occasional₀ = 3.48 to Occasional₁ = 3.0, $z = -3.280$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed), there is evidence that Active consumers have significantly decreased their consumption as well (Active₀ = 5.13 to Active₁ = 4.56, $z = -1.879$, $p = 0.030$, one-tailed). Consequently, while it can be concluded that the Canadian and US markets are similar as both markets significantly decreased their overall consumption of fair trade products, the US market has diverged from the ‘norm’ as Active consumers within it have significantly decreased their fair trade consumption too.

Demographics

While it has been shown that Active consumers’ fair trade consumption has been unaffected by economic downturns, χ^2 tests were conducted dividing respondents who have decreased consumption and those who have maintained/increased their consumption. This was done in order to test whether certain demographic groups that extend beyond the Occasional/Active divide are more inclined to maintain their fair trade consumption during economic downturns. The results of these tests are displayed in Table V, and the demographic groups were divided in the same way as in Table II.

The test verifies Hypothesis 6 that middle-aged (35–54 years old) fair trade consumers are less likely to decrease their consumption (see Table V). In this age group, only 8.8% decreased their consumption, whereas within the younger (under 35) and older respondents (55 and over), 29.2 and 23.3% decreased their consumption, respectively. Interestingly, no relationship was noted with income. Therefore, consumers with lower incomes are not more likely to decrease their consumption of fair trade during recessions. As expected, similarities between these findings and those conducted on Active and Occasional consumers are evident as the only factor to have a significant difference in frequency in both tests, other than Country-of-residence, was Age.

TABLE V
 χ^2 Statistics

Demographic variable	Decreased		Maintained		χ^2 Results	Conclusion
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Male	15	16.3	77	83.6	Gender: $\chi^2(306) = 1.917$, $p = 0.166$	Hypothesis 9 is rejected
Female	50	23.3	164	76.6		
Under 34	42	29.2	102	70.8	Age: $\chi^2(306) = 14.965$, $p = 0.001$	Hypothesis 6 is supported
35 to 54	9	8.8	93	91.2		
55 and over	14	23.3	46	76.7		
Income up to £25,000	31	25.2	92	74.8	Income: $\chi^2(306) = 3.514$, $p = 0.173$	Hypothesis 7 is rejected
Income between £25,001 and £45,000	18	15.7	97	84.3		
Income over £45,000	16	23.5	52	76.5		
Attended University	53	21.5	194	78.5	Education: $\chi^2(306) = 0.036$, $p = 0.850$	Hypothesis 8 is rejected
Did not attend University	12	20.3	47	79.7		

Discussion

Theoretical implications

This research highlights the role played by price for certain segments of fair trade consumers (in this case Occasional consumers) who may not be bulk purchasers or 'committed' to the fair trade cause but may constitute a substantial proportion of an ever evolving mainstream fair trade market where traditional motivations of price apart from other multiple attributes (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Shaw et al., 2004) may override ethical concerns. The established theories of consumer behaviour especially with respect to price sensitivities are to some extent applicable to fair trade consumers during economic downswings as the evidence demonstrates that while they have not significantly become more price aware, they have decreased their monthly purchases of fair trade food as a result of the economic recession (see Tables III, IV, V for overview of results). However, the decrease in the average monthly purchase of fair trade grocery food is attributable to a small but significant proportion of the respondents who have shied away from their pre-recession fair trade purchase levels. Consequently, this demonstrates that although fair trade may not be recession proof, the fair trade market may experience only a small decrease in sales in the short-term. This finding appears to be supported by wider evidence as the Latin American regional director for the World Fair trade Organization has recently stated that several groups that sell fair trade in Europe, Canada and the United States have reported a 5% decline in sales in 2008 compared to the previous year (Cevallos, 2009).⁹

The decline in the respondent's monthly fair trade purchases is, however, not attributable to all fair trade consumers. The results demonstrate that mainly Occasional consumers have significantly decreased their consumption and have become significantly more price aware than Active consumers. The latter's consumption of fair trade products appears to have been unaffected by the recession (except in the case of the US sample). Interestingly, Active consumers within the US market were also found to significantly decrease their consumption of fair trade products thus differentiating themselves from the 'typical' Active consumer. This may be a result of several different factors such as the youthfulness of the US fair trade market or the severity of the recession in that particular context.

Thus, even though this research was specifically looking at changes in consumption brought about by the recession, this research does find support for the view that the willingness to pay for a higher premium product varies amongst customer segments (Bird and Hughes, 1997; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Tagbata and Sirieix, 2008) since our findings demonstrate that the recession has had a varied effect on fair trade consumers' frequency of purchasing premium priced goods.

The finding that ethical product variables maintain their importance with Active consumers is consistent with their responses regarding alterations to their decision-making process within the grocery store since the onset of the recession. Although a large proportion of Active consumers have adapted to the current recession as over 36% agreed that price has become more important while making purchase decisions, an overwhelming 92% indicated that ethics has not decreased in importance. This implies that while price has likely increased in importance over other product variables, such as quality and value, when ethical criteria are present, such as when fair trade alternatives exist, ethical considerations maintain a dominant role. This position was mirrored within Active consumers' responses to the open-ended question. These findings support the study by Shaw and Clarke (1999), which noted that price-sensitive loyal fair trade consumers would often forgo price concerns to purchase fair trade. Occasional consumers are more likely to revert to traditional decision-making processes, as many respondents appear to have forgone their usual intake of ethically valued fair trade products for cheaper alternatives. Thus, for Occasional consumers, perceived behavioural control and teleological evaluations play a more significant role during economic recessions. These findings highlight the need for further research in respect of these models during difficult financial times and the inclusion of financial constructs in future fair trade research.

Though the outputs of this research with respect to demographics do not necessarily validate or contradict previous research, this research has implications on our understanding of the typical demographic make-up of the 'loyal' fair trade consumer. Age was found to be the only demographic factor to have a significant effect on recessionary fair trade consumption as middle-age consumers between the ages of 35 and 54 were less likely to decrease their purchase of fair trade. Interestingly, income had no impact on the consumers' likelihood to remain loyal

to fair trade. In addition, while gender has been highlighted within the fair trade consumer profile, with several authors stating that women are more likely to purchase ethically (for example, Manieri et al., 1997), this research supports Doran's (2009) view that gender roles in contemporary society are less defined. Our study demonstrated that gender as well as education had no effect on the likelihood of consumers decreasing or maintaining their consumption of fair trade products during recessions. These findings highlight the importance of investigating factors other than just demographics, such as consumer values [as espoused by De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) and Doran (2009)], since other than age no significant discrepancies between the demographics of those that remained loyal to fair trade and those that decreased their consumption were found.

Managerial implications

This research demonstrates that a large majority of the respondents have maintained a positive attitude towards fair trade products throughout difficult economic times. The majority of those who have decreased their consumption have not altered their perception of the value of fair trade products which may imply that they are likely to resume their pre-recession level of fair trade purchases once their financial troubles disappear. However, as reported by researchers, the attitude-behaviour gap is a reality (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005) and consumer concern does not always translate into increased consumption (Vantomme et al., 2006). This further accentuates the importance of carefully implementing well-researched strategies.

In US and Canada, there is limited availability and variety of fair trade products as they are often only sold in premium grocery stores such as WholeFoods. Consequently, when financially stretched consumers sometimes forgo these stores for less expensive outlets, they eliminate the option of purchasing fair trade altogether. Therefore, in order for fair trade to continue to advance within the Canadian and US market and to reduce business cycle fluctuation effects, it is imperative that producers increase the availability of fair trade products and gain support from a wider range of stores.

In addition, our findings show that it is the Occasional and thus mainstreamed fair trade consumers who are most prone to reducing their purchases of fair

trade products during economic downswings. Thus, corporate interest in fair trade maybe an economic blessing, however, this transition into the mainstream has also shifted the message from participation in an international programme of trade to individualized shopping for a better world (Low and Davenport, 2005). The latter orientation has the potential to be applied as deemed fit especially by mass retailers/manufacturers who may decide to use their communication as a brand building mechanism. Consequently, marketing communication efforts should be concentrated towards consumers in mainstream retail outlets in order to increase their attitudinal (and not just behavioural) loyalty to fair trade products. This is to avoid social/environmental concerns becoming subordinated to price (Davies et al., 2010).

Limitations

A limitation of this research is that the 'self-selecting' sampled group may be biased towards active and committed fair trade consumers. This is possible since a large proportion of the responses were collected from online fair trade social networks. These respondents may have been more active in terms of their fair trade consumption. While these respondents may represent the motives of very dedicated consumers, who form the core of the market, they are likely not representative of the average fair trade consumer. The overrepresentation of Active consumers is especially apparent within the UK response group as more than 70% of these respondents were Active consumers, as compared to 43% for both the Canadian and US samples. While the UK may have more Active fair trade consumers in comparison to the US and Canada as a result of their differing evolutions, the actual breakdown of fair trade consumer types within each country is unknown.

One of the major objectives of this research was to look at changes (if any) with respect to overall fair trade consumption behaviour irrespective of retail location (whether traditional grocery shops or special FT shops). It is possible that there is an association between these two groups and the Occasional/Active consumer split, however, this aspect has not been addressed in this research. Another limitation of this study is that it tests on the basis of the number of products purchased and not on the basis of the value of these products.

In addition, while this study aims to depict and analyse fair trade consumers' reaction to economic recessions, the results are unable to determine the effect of recessions on the overall fair trade market. In terms of the three country markets, as previously stated, the samples are likely not representative of the fair trade populations within these countries. Therefore, while these findings can be used for comparisons, there are limitations as to their application to the broader fair trade populations.

Conclusion and future research directions

The results of this study demonstrate a clear divide between Active and Occasional fair trade consumers. During economic downturns, Occasional consumers adhered to the 'traditional' postulates of consumer behaviour as they diminished their purchases of fair trade and became significantly more price aware. These results question the stability of the mainstream fair trade market during periods of economic upheaval, when such fair trade consumers are likely to purchase more economic alternatives. As a result, further research delving into the motives and values of mainstream fair trade consumers would assist fair trade marketing endeavours reach out to these consumers. This future research will also be important to further develop fair trade buying behaviour models and theory.

On the other hand, Active consumers were found to be unaffected by the troubles in the global economy as they continued their support of fair trade thus revealing that their ethical convictions cannot be shaken. Consequently, the Theory of Buyer Behaviour is unable to explain the motives and behaviour of Active consumers during economic downswings. As a result, further research pertaining to these consumers is thus required for the current consumer theory to develop and incorporate the motives of these consumers. Our research findings concerning the US Active consumers highlight the need to further investigate this type of consumer as well as shed light on cross national differences that may exist.

Notes

¹ Traditional consumer theory and models refers to the long-established theories and literature based on the consumer as a rational self-interested being and thus does not consider ethical and altruistic consumer motives.

² Mainstream fair trade consumer refers to the consumers who began to buy fair trade only once it became available in mainstream grocery stores over the past decade.

³ In this research, we formulate separate hypotheses for demographics, however, it is acknowledged that interaction effects are also possible (for example, as investigated by Roberts (1995) who found that consumers who did not purchase from companies that discriminated against minority groups or women were mainly female with slightly lower incomes and a median age of 47.

⁴ The six options to describe a consumers' fair trade purchasing behaviour were: Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Quite Often, Whenever Possible and Actively Seek

⁵ The options on the five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

⁶ Active fair trade consumers comprise the respondents who indicated they purchase fair trade Quite Often to Actively seek where as Occasional consumers are those who indicated that they purchase fair trade occasionally.

⁷ This method of analysis was also used by Ang (2001) in his study of consumers during the Asian crisis.

⁸ Here, we do acknowledge the limitations of using a five-point Likert scale (i.e. the use of 3 and above as a measure of an indifference point) as an indicator of a change in the decision-making process. Thus, we are not according as much importance to this particular finding.

⁹ Reports have indicated that world fair trade sales have increased during 2008. This is a likely result of fair trade products expanding into new markets in addition to existing retailers increasing their fair trade commitment. However, the increase in world fair trade sales does not indicate what has transpired with existing fair trade consumers' purchasing patterns.

Appendix 1

The following is a summary of the online survey that participants responded to. Respondents were invited to participate in this survey through online web postings and via emails. A web link was provided for individuals to directly access the survey, which was conducted through SurveyMonkey.com.

Fair trade consumer survey

The following is a survey in regard to your consumption and opinion of fair trade during this current global recession.

Fair trade indicates that a fair price has been paid to the producers of the products from developing countries. Fair trade products are consequently often sold at a higher price than their non-fair trade competitors.

This survey is specifically in regards to fair trade when buying food or grocery shopping:

1. What best describes your fair trade purchasing behaviour. Please tick one option:		
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not purchase	<input type="checkbox"/> Quite often	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Whenever Possible	
<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> I actively seek	
2. Gender:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
3. Age:		
<input type="checkbox"/> under 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44	<input type="checkbox"/> 65 to 74
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54	<input type="checkbox"/> 75 and over
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34	<input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64	
4. Approximate annual Income:		
<input type="checkbox"/> below £15,000/\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> £35,001 to 45,000 or \$50,001 to \$70,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> £15,001 to £25,000, or \$20,001 to \$35,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 45,0001 to 55,000 or \$70,001 to \$100,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> £25,001 to £35,000, or \$35,001 to \$50,000	<input type="checkbox"/> over 55,000/\$100,000	
5. Country of residence:		
<input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom	<input type="checkbox"/> United States of America	
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
6. Have you been to University?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
7. Are you currently a student?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

8. Why do/did you buy fair trade products? Pick up to four choices	
<input type="checkbox"/> because it tastes good	<input type="checkbox"/> for environmental reasons
<input type="checkbox"/> because of its quality	<input type="checkbox"/> because it has become popular
<input type="checkbox"/> because of a moral obligation	<input type="checkbox"/> to make a difference in the world
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> because it guarantees a fair price to the producers in developing countries

9. Prior to this economic recession, approximately how many fair trade products did you buy on average, during a one month period?		
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 or more
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	

10. Since the recession, approximately how many fair trade products do you buy on average during a one month period?		
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 or more
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	

11. Please indicate your response to the following statements which are in regards to the recession and your purchasing decisions in general at the grocery store					
	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My grocery shopping purchases and habits have been affected by the recession					
Price now has a stronger influence on my purchasing decision in the grocery store than it did before the recession					
Since the recession, ethical considerations (such as animal rights, the environment, fair trade) have less of an influence on my purchasing decisions.					
Price has the same influence on my purchasing decisions in the grocery store as it did before the recession					

12. Please indicate your response to the following statements in regards to the recession and the fair trade cause					
	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I am less concerned now with the fair trade cause than I was before the recession.					
I am not willing to pay as high of a price premium for fair trade products now because I value them less now than I did before the recession.					
I believe it is as important or even more important now to purchase fair trade products than it was before the recession					
Fair trade products are as valuable as they were before the recession and should continue to be sold at a higher price.					

13. Please indicate your response to the following statements about whether your intention to buy fair trade during this recession will increase given certain conditions change					
	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I would buy more/start buying fair trade food during this recession if there was more information available to me about fair trade and its available products					
I would buy more/start buying fair trade products during this recession if there was more fair trade food available in my local grocery store					
I would increase my purchases of fair trade food during this recession if they were not sold at a premium price					

12. Are you likely to buy fair trade food in the near future?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>Please feel free to explain your answer. That is, what is affecting your intention to buy or not buy fair trade products, especially during this current economic time?</i>

Thank you for your participation in this survey.
Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

Appendix 2

List of online networks and groups on which the link
to the survey was posted

Online Network	Groups in network
Facebook: www.facebook.com	<i>Fair trade groups:</i> Ethical Consumer Ethical Consumerism Equal Exchange: Fairly Traded Coffee, Tea & Chocolate Fair Trade Abroad, Fair Trade in America Fair Trade Canada Fair Trade Certified FAIRTRADE CHOCOLATE Fair Trade Coffee Fair Trade Federation Fair Trade for Canada Fair Trade foundation UK Fair Trade towns USA Milwaukee Fair Trade Coalition MAKE TRADE FAIR Peace Coffee World Fair Trade Organization <i>Mainstream Grocery Groups:</i> Waitrose Sainsbury's Morrisons Tesco Target Whole Foods Food Network
Yahoo! Groups: http://groups.yahoo.com	Basingstoke Fairtrade Group Fairtrade FairtradeTown LBTH_FT CSR International
Taking It Global: http://www.tigweb.org/connections/groups/	Fairtrade Universities & Colleges discussion forum

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