

IC - (20866) - SWEET CHOCOLATE O' MINE: PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SUSTAINABLE CHOCOLATE BARS

Shirin Betzler¹; Janina Arnold¹; Lena Schmeiduch¹; Regina Kempen²; Karsten Müller¹

1 - Osnabrück University; 2 - University of Applied Sciences Aalen

Background and objectives

In the struggle for biodiversity conservation, furthering sustainable consumption behaviors is a key field of action. The cocoa sector constitutes a particularly challenging field of consumption, with conflicted global value chains between production countries and end consumers worldwide. In light of problematic conditions such as soil degradation, water pollution or serious health risks for cocoa farmers, a growing number of consumers considers social and ecological aspects when purchasing chocolate. Against this backdrop, understanding the specific factors influencing sustainable chocolate consumption decisions can help foster consumption patterns accordingly.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Following previous research, this study jointly considers knowledge-based, rational, value-based, and affective factors as influences on individuals' decisions to purchase sustainable chocolate. Data will be obtained from an online panel survey. A model integrating influencing factors to predict sustainable chocolate consumption is proposed and tested with structural equation modelling.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Results on participants' problem awareness, feelings of guilt, personal and subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions as predictors for sustainable chocolate consumption will be presented. As dependent variable, participants' willingness to pay for a fairtrade, organic and carbon-neutral certified chocolate bar will be examined.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Understanding the drivers and obstacles of sustainable chocolate consumption constitutes the basis for effective educational interventions and political measures. Also, these insights are of great value when targeting individuals' receptivity for sustainability information in product design and marketing. The present study incorporates influencing factors from different theoretical streams in order to comprehensively predict chocolate consumption behavior. The influences investigated in this study may serve as an important starting point for promoting a socio-ecological transformation through the purchase of sustainable products.

Palavras-chave : sustainable chocolate consumption, willingness to pay, purchase decision, psychological influences, structural equation modelling