

DO CONSUMERS CARE ABOUT ETHICS? INFLUENCE OF DEAR AND GDI ON BUYING PREFERENCES

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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how DEAR (Development Education Awareness Rising) affects consumers preferences in the environment of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Consumers can express their concern about ethical behavior companies by means of ethical buying and consumer behavior. Doane (2001) defined ethical consumption as the purchase of a product that concerns a certain ethical issue (human rights, labor conditions, animal welfare, environment etc.) and is chosen freely by the consumer. It is important to notice that ethical consumption or consumerism is a burgeoning social movement. Mainstream consumers increasingly express their concerns about the ethicality and impact of their consumption choices upon the environment, animals and society (Carrington et al., 2014; Shaw and Shui, 2002).

Methods

The survey was conducted among university students of the Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague in the Czech Republic from February to March 2014. Data collection was done through online survey, which was sent via email and Facebook to the respondents. Our survey involved 136 respondents out of total 488. Collected data were categorized, coded and analyzed in a statistical programme Statistica 10. Due to the nature of data Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ) was used to detect possible relation between knowledge and consumers care.



Picture 1: Organic farmers in Sri Lanka

Results & Discussion

Undoubtedly Global Development Education (GDE) and DEAR is one of the essential and fundamental missions of educational system in different countries (Farahani, 2014). The necessity of DEAR is essential because of undignified conditions in some countries.

Summary of the survey results on Knowledge of Global Development Issues (GDI) is following: 65 % of respondents are familiar with GDI. If we consider also partial knowledge of GDI we are at the rate of 94%, which may indicate already essential absorption of these issues. Knowledge of respondents is empowered by aim and activities of Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences; such as involvement of subjects about ethical trade, agriculture practices in the Countries of Global South, interest of the students about issues of development world and also activities of student's organisation BeFair at CULS which aims to the promotion and spread of information about ethically created products.

Results & Discussion

If we target on specific terms (Figure 1), we can see that 40 % of respondents know about Issues of child labour and undignified working conditions, 33 % know dismemberment to the Countries of Global South and Countries of Global North, and 27 % know term of "socially responsible consumption".



Picture 2: Sri Lankan organic tea

Results & Discussion

A few researchers and studies moved even beyond cognitive intention formation to gain insight into the translation between intentions and actual behaviour. For example Carrigan and Attalla (2001) reveal that social desirability bias plays a significant role in respondent's ethical intention-behaviour gap. Auger and Devinney (2007) extend these findings by positing that social desirability bias inherent in the self-reported surveys favoured by researchers in the ethical consumerism field inflates espoused ethical purchase intentions. Some of most recent studies tend to assume that some ethical intentions are authentic; however internal and external factors affect actual purchase decisions (Carrington et al., 2014). This is why we also aimed at finding of relationship between DEAR and ethical consumption behaviour

Conclusion

In this pilot study we investigated Czech university students at CULS Prague to find out their preferences and basics about their intentions connected with knowledge background, consequently buying preferences. We found out relationship between DEAR and ethical consumption behaviour. It showed us positive correlation between examined factors ($\rho=0.664$). Examined factors were knowledge of specific terms, GDI and DEAR with the importance of the factors to the respondents in acting as socially responsible consumers. This confirms importance of knowledge about GDI and proper DEAR, as main linkage between knowledge and consumers habits and their socially responsible behaviour in connection with shopping preferences.

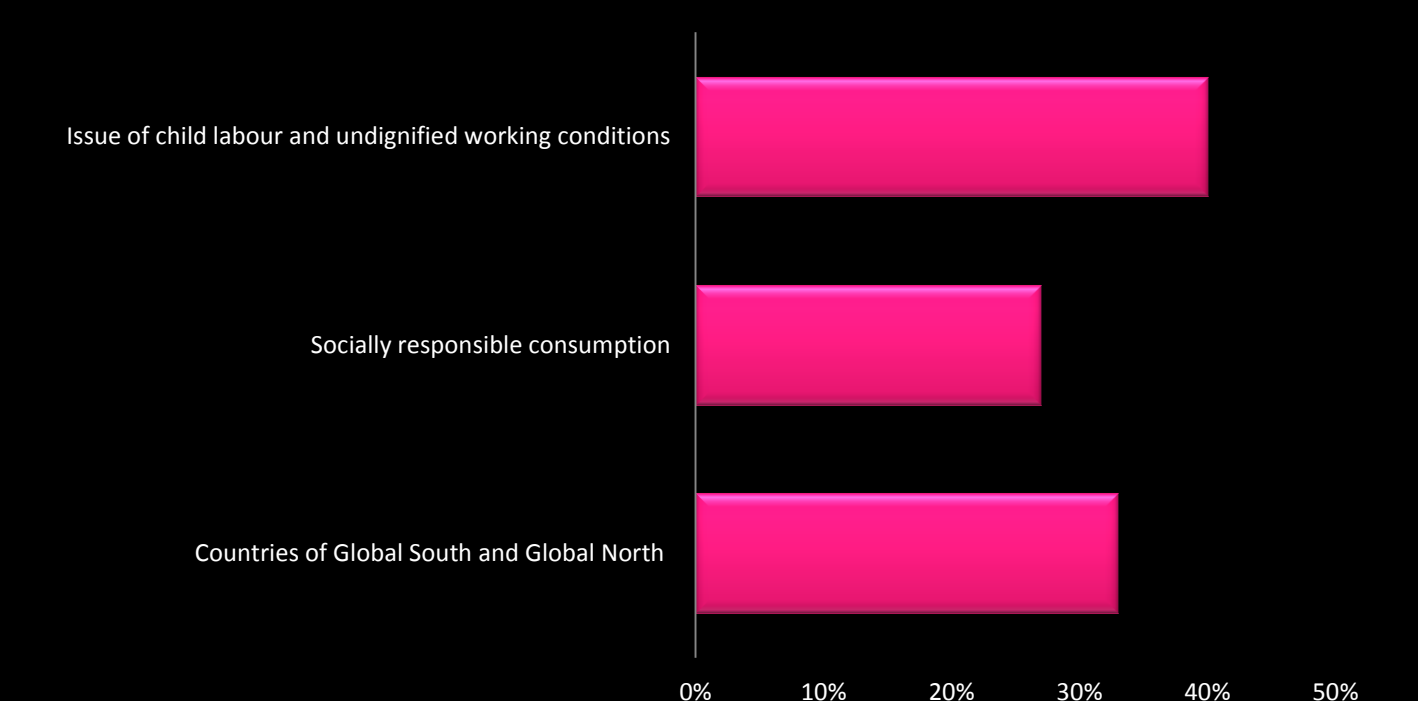


Figure 1: Knowledge of Specific Terms

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