

**THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION**

**CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF FAIR TRADE IN HUNGARY**

TÓTH ESZTER

Supervisor:

Felföldi János PhD



UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

Károly Ihrig Doctoral School of Management and Business

Debrecen

2023

## **1. INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPICS AND OBJECTIVE**

Although Fair Trade is one of the best-known ethical trademarks in several European countries (GlobeScan, 2019), the movement is still in its infancy in our country. Although there have been attempts to promote the concept in Hungary over the past ten to fifteen years, and there are currently NGOs working to promote the movement's views, these efforts seem to have met with little success so far, as the fair trade mark is still hardly known among the Hungarian population (EB, 2018).

The phenomenon is therefore a grey area in the layman's mind, but it has a significant international literature. There are studies from a range of disciplines, including marketing, rural development, corporate social responsibility, consumer behaviour, finance, quality assurance, international trade and psychology.

In my research, I try to review the history of the phenomenon in Hungary and present the consumer perception of it. My aim is to get a more complex picture of consumers of fair trade products and to understand the aspects that most influence their purchasing behaviour.

The thesis focuses on fair trade, with an emphasis on the producer and the way trade is conducted. The interpretation of fair trade shows a certain degree of heterogeneity: Szmigin (2009) refers to it as an example of conscious consumption, Francois-Lecompte-Roberts (2006) presents it as socially responsible consumption, Tallontire et al. (2001) describe it as an exercise of ethical behaviour, E. Gulyás (2007) compares it to value-based shopping, and Andersen and Tobiasen (2004) describe it as a solidarity movement linked to consumption.

The Fair Trade movement has very well-defined expectations for all three pillars of sustainability - environmental, economic and social - for those who participate in to those who wish to participate in this movement, and as such, it comes into focus in my study as a form of conscious consumerism.

Based on the literature reviewed and my own knowledge, the basic hypothesis of the thesis is the following: the Hungarian population is basically unfamiliar with the concept and nature of fair trade, which is mainly due to the lack of information available on the topic. If they do have knowledge about fair trade, the financial situation of the buyer, the limited

availability of products and the pursuit of other consumer preferences (e.g. support for other producer groups) are barriers to supporting the movement financially, i.e. to buying products produced in accordance with fair trade principles. My research aims to explore the reality of this scientific hypothesis.

Based on the basic hypothesis, the overall aim of the dissertation was to examine the consumer perception of fair trade in Hungary through the attitudes and values of the Hungarian population. To the best of my knowledge, no similar or representative survey has been conducted so far. The theoretical framework of the research is based on the theory of conscious consumer behaviour, which is based on one of the most widely used models, the theory of planned action (AJZEN, 1991). In order to identify as accurately as possible the consumers of fair trade products, I also considered it important to understand the values held by the consumers, and combined this theory with a set of psychological questions on basic human values (SCHWARTZ, 1992).

The focus of the paper is on the perception of the popularity and awareness of fair trade products in Hungary. My research sought to answer the questions of what factors most influence the purchase of fair trade products in Hungary, what patterns of consumption emerge from the purchasing behaviour of the population, and whether any patterns can be identified in the values held by fair trade consumers. The objectives of the thesis are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: System of objectives of the dissertation**

<b>Num ber</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Research Method</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
O1	Understanding fair trade as a conscious consumer behaviour, introducing the conceptual framework	secondary	2.1.- 2.5.
O2	The relationship between fair trade and behavioural models based on consumer attitudes and their systematisation	secondary	2.6.
O3	Mapping the history of fair trade in Hungary, its Hungarian roots, and preparing a summary of this	secondary and primary (personal interviews)	4.1.
O4	Identifying factors that influence the purchase of fair trade	secondary and primary (focus group interviews in Pécs, Budapest and Debrecen)	2.6., 4.2.
O5	Examining the consumer behaviour of domestic consumers towards fair trade products	secondary and primary (results of the survey and path analysis)	4.3.1.
O6	Identifying a trend-like relationship between fair trade and the values held by the Hungarian population	secondary and primary (survey and value analysis)	4.3.2.
O7	An international comparison of the Hungarian fair trade	secondary and primary (study trips)	2.7., 4.1.

*Source: own editing, 2023*

The hypotheses related to the objectives of the thesis are summarised in the following table.

**Table 2: Structure of the hypotheses of the dissertation**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Relating Objectives</b>	<b>Research Method</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
H1	The quantity and quality of information material available on fair trade in our country is insufficient, which negatively affects the purchase of such products.	O5	secondary and primary	4.1., 4.2., 4.3.1.
H2	Hungarian residents' willingness to buy fair trade products is low.		secondary and primary	4.1., 4.2., 4.3.1.
H3	Among the Hungarian population, a pattern emerges that higher scores on basic human values related to self-promotion predict the propensity to buy fair trade products.	O6	secondary and primary	4.3.2.
H4	An international comparison of fair trade shows that the characteristics and trends of the movement in Hungary are similar to those in Central and Eastern European countries.	O7	secondary and primary	2.7., 4.1.

*Source: own editing, 2023*

## **2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

During the literature section, I managed to define precisely the framework of the study and select the methodology to be used. I started my research with the notion of the conscious consumer and mastered the basic terms and definitions that are important in this field. I then proceeded to review the literature by exploring theories of conscious consumer behaviour. The models that describe the process of conscious behaviour aim to identify the elements that most influence behaviour. In this dissertation, the purchase of fair trade products is presented as a closer examination of intentional action.

In studying the development of behavioural models based on consumer attitudes, I came to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, which is the most widely used method for similar research activities. Later, I worked with the Theory of planned behaviour (AJZEN, 1991) model, whose different variants incorporate more and more factors influencing behaviour into the framework of analysis. Subsequently, I have only dealt with those model variants that consider fair trade as a possible practical implementation of conscious consumer action. I considered a number of different approaches, from which I finally selected the methodology of a Belgian author and author duo for further adaptation (DE PELSMACKER- JANSSENS, 2007). In the simplified model, in addition to initial knowledge, information about fair trade, individual attitudes towards fair trade and attitudes towards products with this rating appear as determinants of purchase.

I adapted the questionnaire used in the Belgian research according to the results of the focus group interviews in Pécs, Budapest and Debrecen and tried to adapt the content to the Hungarian context. I was assisted in this by contacting organisations and actors in Hungary who are involved in any aspect of fair trade in Hungary during the initial years of the research. During personal interviews I managed to get to know Zsolt Boda and György Újszászi, I visited the Association of Conscious Buyers, the University of Pécs, I spoke on the phone with the project manager of the Miskolc Town Hall and the manager of the only fair trade certified enterprise in Hungary, currently in Pécs.

Based on the literature, besides the factors that determine the most important purchasing actions, the consumer's individual value system and worldview also play a significant role,

so I thought it important to shed light on the topic from the psychological point of view. After reviewing the most important theories on the role of values and their systematisation, I found an example of a case where the values held by the public were examined within the context of fair trade. The human-centred approach to values research has attracted my attention and I intend to add interesting and valuable insights to my research. Therefore, as another pillar of my market research, I chose one of the most commonly used value models, Schwartz's (1992) concept of motivational value type, commonly used as the 21-statement Portrait Questionnaire (PVQ21).

By juxtaposing the two questionnaires, a composite set of questions was developed, which was used to survey the attitudes of Hungarian residents in a national market survey of 500 respondents, representative of the region, gender and age of the respondents.

After identifying descriptive and statistical and simpler correlations, I used the method of path analysis to model the purchase decision, trying to explore the relationship between the factors previously confirmed by principal component analysis.

Finally, I put the results obtained in Hungary into an international framework and compared them with the characteristics of fair trade in nearby European or neighbouring countries.

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

This chapter presents the main findings outlined in the primary and secondary research conducted in this thesis, as well as an evaluation of the objectives and hypotheses set at the beginning of the research.

Based on the literature reviewed and my own knowledge, the **basic hypothesis of the thesis** is the following: *the Hungarian population is basically unfamiliar with the concept and nature of fair trade, which is mainly due to the lack of information available on the topic. If they do have knowledge of fair trade, the financial situation of the buyer, the limited availability of products and the pursuit of other consumer preferences (e.g. support for other producer groups) are barriers to supporting the movement financially, i.e. to buying products produced in accordance with fair trade principles. In addition to socio-economic reasons for purchasing, the range of values that consumers consider important is of particular importance, and it can be assumed that an attitude towards the values of 'benevolence' and 'universality', which represent self-propagation, may be a predictor of the purchase of goods with a fair trade certification.*

I will assess the validity of my initial hypothesis by evaluating the research objectives and related hypotheses as follows.

**Objective O1: To understand fair trade as a conscious consumer behaviour and to present its conceptual framework**

Objective O1 does not have a hypothesis, but its achievement was essential for the further steps of the research. The framework for the study starts with an introduction to the issues of utilitarianism and business ethics (chapters 2.1, 2.2), followed by an introduction to the foundations of fairness theory and the model of responsible economic decision-making (chapter 2.3), and a clarification of the main concepts of informed consumer behaviour in chapter 2.4. In section 2.5, I introduce the fair trade movement, the focus of this thesis, which I interpret throughout the dissertation as a possible realisation of conscious consumer behaviour. Here I discuss the practical implementation of fair trade, and then critique fair trade, and gather some reflections on its vision for the future.

**Objective O2: Linking fair trade and behavioural models based on consumer attitudes and systematising them**

The achievement of objective O2 is also not associated with a hypothesis, which implies a further narrowing of the research topic. The objective is fulfilled by the literature review presented in chapter 2.6, which allowed me to define the research framework and select the methodology to be applied. In section 2.6.1, I have explored the development of behavioural models based on consumer attitudes, taking Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action as a starting point. The aim of models describing the process of conscious behaviour is to try to identify the elements that most influence behaviour. I have subsequently worked with the Theory of planned behaviour (AJZEN, 1991) model, whose different variants incorporate an increasing number of factors influencing behaviour into the framework of analysis. In subsection 2.6.2, I have dealt only with those model variants that consider fair trade as a possible practical implementation of informed consumer action. A number of different approaches were considered, from which I finally selected the methodology of a Belgian author and author duo for further adaptation (DE PELSMACKER- JANSSENS, 2007). *In the simplified model, in addition to initial knowledge, information about fair trade, individual attitudes towards fair trade and attitudes towards products with this rating appear as determinants of purchase.*

However, based on the literature reviewed, the *consumer's individual values and worldview may also have a significant influence on his/her purchasing behaviour*. In my general review of the role and classification of values, I have also found examples where the values held by the public have been assessed within the context of fair trade, which are described in section 2.6.3. The psychological approach to value surveys has attracted my attention, and I intend to contribute interesting and valuable additional information to my findings. Therefore, as another pillar of my market research, I chose one of the most commonly used value models, Schwartz's concept of motivational value type, commonly used as the 21-item Portrait Questionnaire (PVQ21). Thus, by achieving the O2 objective, the methodological framework of my study was finally put together.

*Objective 3: Mapping the history of fair trade in Hungary, collecting its Hungarian roots and preparing a summary of the findings*

My thesis deals with the phenomenon and the present of fair trade in Hungary, with a special focus on understanding domestic consumers. After a thorough review of the literature, I found that Hungarian literature is negligible next to international sources, which may be explained by the marginality of the phenomenon in Hungary. I also did not come across a comprehensive, synthesizing summary of Hungarian initiatives, and it was through meticulous and lengthy research that I was able to gather the 'crumbs' that make up the 'fair trade history' of Hungary. My secondary research was supplemented by personal contacts with experts in the field, during which I met and talked to the idea promoters of all Hungarian attempts that could be considered relevant to the subject, regardless of whether the project or enterprise they were running was still in operation. These Hungarian initiatives and the background to previous Hungarian research are presented in chapter 4.1.

Taking the Hungarian situation as a basis, it can be said that in the past twenty years several initiatives have been launched to promote and disseminate fair trade in Hungary. On both the demand and the supply side, there are attempts to raise awareness of the movement and introduce it to the Hungarian population. However, most of the attempts launched by NGOs, municipalities and individual businesses have not proved to be sustainable, and most of them have come to an end prematurely. On the supply side of the market, we can see that more and more Fair Trade certified products are appearing in the portfolios of a growing number of mostly German companies, which is also leading to an increase in the volume of purchases. According to the latest market research of the Association of Conscious Consumers, analysing the years 2019-2020, the turnover of fair trade products in Hungary exceeded HUF 6.9 billion in 2020, representing a 100-fold increase in the last little more than five years (TVE, 2022). The dynamic growth in demand is due to the low base value, which is confirmed by the fact that, despite the market penetration, the awareness of the movement's logo, the fair trade label, among our compatriots is still very low (EB, 2018). The lack of meaningful surveys in Hungary (presumably) means that no comprehensive research has been conducted so far among Hungarians on the topic, including the consumer

perception of fair trade. The study on which the present dissertation is based sought to fill this gap, and therefore the research can be considered a novelty in every respect.

**Objective O4: Identify the factors that influence fair trade purchasing**

I did not formulate a hypothesis for the O4 objective, its sole intention was to identify and identify the factors that I need to work on in the future as influencing purchasing. As an output of chapter 2.6, I already had the planned methodology, and with it the set of potential factors, so the next step was to test their validity and finalise their scope through focus group interviews. The group interviews conducted in Pécs, Budapest and Debrecen confirmed that the basic knowledge on the topic, the sympathy or dislike for the topic, the quality of information and information materials available and the attitudes towards Fair Trade certified products (price, convenience, likeability and interest in the product) provided a suitable framework for further investigations, thus I considered the objective to have been achieved.

**Objective O5: To examine the consumer behaviour of domestic consumers towards fair trade products**

Two hypotheses are linked to objective O5, namely:

- **Hypothesis H1:** The quantity and quality of information material available on fair trade in our country is insufficient, which negatively influences the purchase of such products.
- **Hypothesis H2:** The willingness of Hungarian residents to buy Fair Trade products is low

In each case, I drew on the Hungarian past experience as described in chapter 4.1 and on the additional information from the focus group interviews described in chapter 4.2 to formulate and confirm the hypotheses. The results of the focus group discussions confirmed the assumption from the literature and the focus group interviews that the awareness of the movement in Hungary is low. According to the 'pop-up' question of the market research (section 4.3.1), almost 90 per cent of the respondents are not or rather not aware of the phenomenon and would welcome information materials on the topic. This is clearly due to the lack of information available on the issue, as neither the government, nor the civil

society, nor the business sector feel the importance of supporting the initiative and launching a massive communication campaign on the issue. Furthermore, the road analysis has proved that the "information gap" inhibits and negatively influences the purchase of fair label products. thus, I consider **hypothesis H1 to be confirmed** by my secondary and primary research. The following statement can be formulated in relation to hypothesis H1:

***Thesis 1:** Consumers in our country are under-informed about what fair trade is. This is because the amount and quality of information material available is inadequate. The inadequacy of public information is due to the lack of a movement in Hungary that could launch a comprehensive communication campaign on the issue, and the lack of a sense of urgency from government and business to take up the issue. These factors naturally have a negative impact on the domestic purchase of such products.*

In the primary research I was looking for the factors that most influence the purchase of fair trade products in Hungary today. From the responses received (chapters 4.2, 4.3), it is clear that the Hungarian population is still typically price sensitive, i.e. their product choice is mostly driven by the desire to buy at a lower price. However, if they do want to consciously support a producer group through their purchases, the aim is to help local producers, where personal contacts and familiarity are important, while the fate of farmers in remote areas of the world is of little concern.

Fair trade products, according to the interview responses (Chapter 4.2), are bought by wealthy middle-aged urban dwellers, typically women, for themselves or their families. Participants in the group discussions agreed that, although small in number, there is a consumer segment that is becoming more aware of what they are buying. This requires that there is an ethical alternative between the products available and that the price difference is still acceptable - at the same time, fair trade products should be fashionable and trendy.

The existence of low propensity to buy explained by consumer price sensitivity was confirmed by both secondary and primary research. An interesting phenomenon revealed by the market research (section 4.3) is that while respondents seem to easily "identify" with fair

trade and agree with the highest proportion of the question on willingness to buy (i.e. the principle of fair trade is supported), the trend is reversed for higher price intention and respondents are most likely to distance themselves from such purchases. Nearly 30 per cent of respondents can imagine a premium of up to 10 per cent that they would pay in exchange for a rating, while less than 10 per cent can imagine a premium of up to one-fifth of a price for their purchases. However, the low spending intention of our fellow citizens is confirmed by the fact that almost two thirds (60 percent) would not spend any more money at all on goods from this source. Based on all this, therefore I consider **hypothesis H2 to be confirmed**. The hypothesis H2 results in the following thesis:

*Thesis 2: Although there is a narrow group of Hungarian consumers who are becoming more and more price-conscious (health, place of origin, ethical label, etc.), the population as a whole is still price-sensitive. The fair trade target system is basically acceptable to domestic consumers, but the propensity to buy trademarked products at higher prices (compared to substitute goods) is low. Almost a third of respondents would consider a mark-up of up to 10% to be acceptable, while 60% would not pay more for fair trade products at all.*

The other half of the primary research (section 4.3.1.3) sought to answer the question of which factors influence actual purchases, to what extent and in what direction. The results obtained can also be compared with the above findings. Three pathways can be observed in relation to the path analysis: the first pathway leads from initial knowledge of and sympathy for the movement to liking fair trade products, which obviously has a positive effect on the propensity to buy (knowledge → caring → products' likability → buying). The other two pathways are counterproductive. On the one hand, the buyer may have doubts about the subject based on their initial knowledge, which leads to a lack of interest in the qualified goods, which in turn inhibits purchase (knowledge → scepticism → disinterest in products → purchase). Finally, in the third case, the lack of persuasive knowledge could motivate the consumer to consume the information available on the market, but the lack of information does not lead to a relevant purchase intention (lack of information → scepticism →

disinterest in products → purchase). The three traces suggest that initial knowledge and the information available play a decisive role, but that human factors are equally important, as sympathy or aversion to a given topic also has a strong influence on the purchase process.

The path model proved that there are more factors against than in favour of buying fair trade products, which can be paralleled with the consumer price sensitivity, low spending and poor willingness to pay found at several points in the research. While a lack of information and a lack of interest in the products discourage purchases, interest in fair trade products stimulates them. The interesting thing about the results obtained is that the strength/value of all three factors influencing purchasing is almost the same, and we cannot single out any of them. At the same time, the results also show that a knowledge-rooted interest in the subject matter, in this case sympathy for fair products, is the strongest element of the process that can lead to an actual purchase action. However, it can be concluded that the strong cohesion between the factors that support the purchase is not fully realised in the purchase, the potential being captured at the level of sympathy and care.

The availability of Fair Trade certified products was also identified as a problematic factor in the literature and during the focus groups and primary research. The limited availability of such goods (perceived or real) may also hinder the growth of awareness of the movement and the intensity of purchasing. However, as the results of the road study show, the perception of shopping convenience (as opposed to assumptions) is not yet of primary importance in consumer decision-making, i.e. the personal interest mentioned above can overcome the inconvenience of any research or search.

**Objective O6: Recognise the trend-like relationship between fair trade and the values held by the Hungarian population**

Objective C6 can be compared with hypothesis H3.

- **Hypothesis H3:** A pattern can be identified among the Hungarian population, which suggests that higher scores on universal human values related to self-promotion predict the propensity to purchase Fair Trade products.

To better understand the human traits mentioned above, the Schwartz values survey (chapter 4.3.2) was used in this thesis. The aim of the values survey was to understand consumer behaviour. I wanted to see whether there was a correlation between attitudes towards certain human values, in particular the values of 'benevolence' and 'universality', which represent self-progression, and the purchase of fair trade products. The conclusion of the value measurement is that there is no demonstrable link between the values held by the population and the purchase of fair trade products. The independence of the factors is explained by the high rate of non-execution, which exceeded 80 percent, and did not allow for further in-depth and more precise analyses. At the end of this research, I can conclude that the attitude of the population towards the purchase of fair products (i.e. whether they spend on them or not) is not statistically related to their value priorities, so I can neither confirm nor refute the previous relationships found in the literature. Therefore, given the research limitations, **I reject hypothesis H3** and make the following claim.

*Thesis 3: Although the values held by consumers are a determinant of their purchasing decisions, this relationship is not evident for the domestic purchase of fair trade products. The value of human values in valuing fair trade purchases cannot be examined due to the high response to non-spending, which was over 80%. Thus, identification with the values of 'benevolence' and 'universality' associated with self-promotion does not predict the purchase of goods with a fairness rating.*

#### **Objective O7: International comparison of the fair trade situation in Hungary**

Under objective O7, I will place the situation in Hungary in an international context and compare it with the situation in neighbouring countries. The last hypothesis can be assigned to this objective.

- **Hypothesis H4:** International comparisons of fair trade show that the characteristics and trends of the movement in Hungary are similar to those in Central and Eastern European countries.

During the years of my research, I was able to visit several countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, England) and personally examine the situation of fair trade. Based

on the in-depth interviews and practical experiences during my study visits abroad, as well as the international examples presented in chapter 2.7, it can be said that the perception of fair trade among consumers in the nearby EU Member States is similar. In general, a community of farmers producing local products is considered to be the more preferred producer group. In the countries analysed, the awareness of the movement is also low, the lack of information campaigns, the difficult availability of goods and, even when they are available, their higher prices are problematic. The legacy of the historical past may be an underestimation of social utility and consumer power.

It is a fact, however, that in neighbouring countries there has been an official marketing organisation promoting Fair Trade for many years and that there is a broad social coalition to raise awareness of the movement. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, for example, the professional body Fairtrade Česko a Slovensko provides information to consumers, while in Poland a national marketing organisation (Fairtrade Polska) has been set up and run by NGOs from several municipalities (Krakow, Warsaw, Gdansk). In both cases, the German influence and mentoring of the professional bodies is very characteristic and facilitates the initial steps. In contrast, Fairtrade Austria is an independent and experienced body within the overseas departments, which is not only responsible for marketing activities and the promotion of fair trade, but is also entitled to award the Fairtrade mark (i.e. it also acts as a certification body).

In the light of the conclusions of this sub-chapter, **hypothesis H4 has been confirmed** and the following lessons have been drawn.

***Thesis 4:** While in Western Europe fair trade is the best known ethical trademark, the situation is different in the Central and Eastern countries of the continent. After an international comparison of domestic trends, it can be concluded that Hungarian trends can be compared with international trends in the region in terms of awareness, consumer support, factors influencing product purchasing decisions and the willingness of the population to pay.*

A summary of the evaluation of my hypotheses is presented in Table 3.

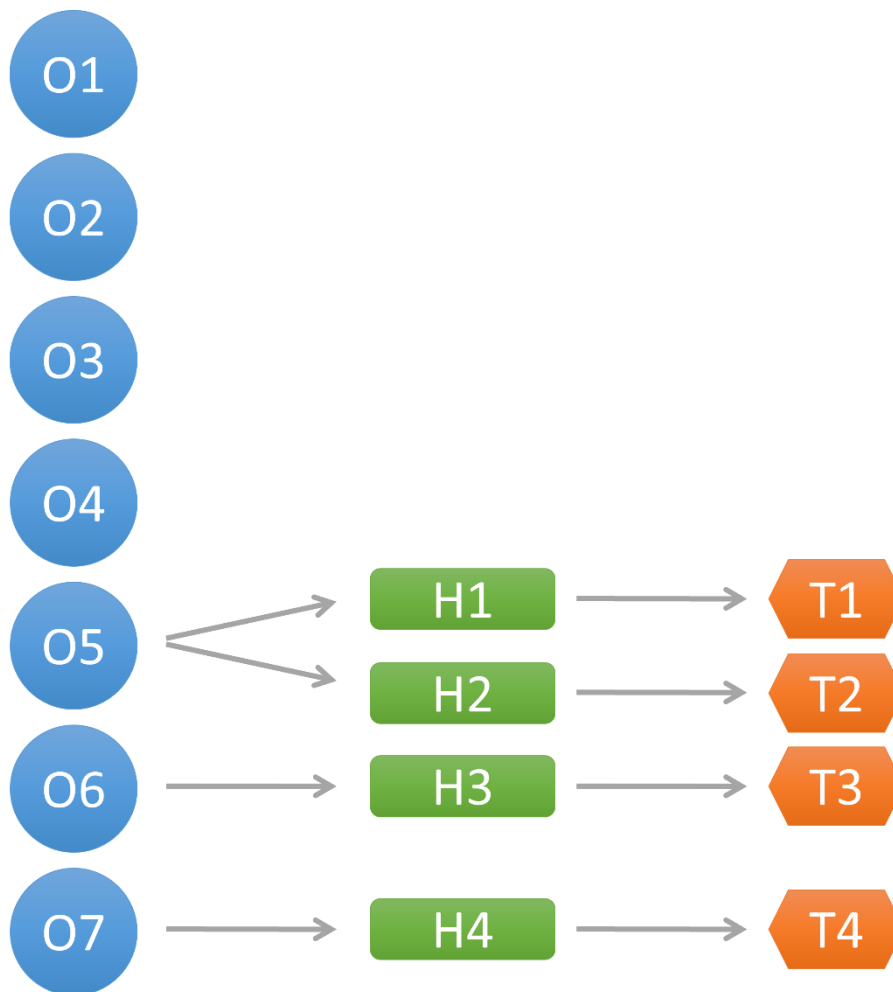
**Table 3: Evaluation of the hypotheses of the dissertation**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Hypotesis</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
H1	The quantity and quality of information material available on fair trade in our country is insufficient, which negatively affects the purchase of such products.	approved
H2	Hungarian residents' willingness to buy fair trade products is low.	approved
H3	Among the Hungarian population, a pattern emerges that higher scores on basic human values related to self-promotion predict the propensity to buy fair trade products.	rejected
H4	An international comparison of fair trade shows that the characteristics and trends of the movement in Hungary are similar to those in Central and Eastern European countries.	approved

*Source: own editing, 2023*

The research model of dissertation can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The research model of dissertation<sup>1</sup>**



*Source: own editing, 2013*

---

<sup>1</sup> O – objectives, H- hypotheses, T-thesis

#### **4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION**

1, In my secondary research, I conducted an exploratory study of domestic fair trade initiatives and a synthesis of previous sporadic activities in Hungary. I found that, after the first, less successful initiatives in the early 2000s, there is a lack of social will to establish the movement in Hungary today. Nowadays, fair trade products are mainly offered by German companies, and as a result, there has been a significant increase in sales in Hungary in the last few years.

2, Using three focus group interviews and my secondary sources, I carried out a Hungarian adaptation of the Theory of planned behaviour (AJZEN, 1991) as revised by De Pelsmacker - Janssens (2007). In the new model, knowledge about fair trade, available information on the topic, attitudes towards the movement (interest or scepticism) and attitudes towards the characteristics of the trademarked products (price, product "likeability", shopping convenience, interest in the product) were used as factors influencing consumer behaviour.

3, Based on the questionnaire developed as a result of the adaptation, a representative national survey of 500 respondents (in terms of region, age and gender) was carried out to explore the consumer perception of fair trade among the Hungarian population. In the light of the results, the Hungarian population is typically price-sensitive and, being less concerned with the welfare of "third world" producers, has a low propensity to buy fair trade products in higher price ranges.

4, I conducted a path analysis to investigate the factors influencing the purchase of fair trade products by the domestic population and explored their relationship. I found that three factors have the most influential role: lack of information and disinterest in the goods hinder purchases, while liking the products facilitates them. There is a balanced relationship between the three factors, they have the same 'leverage', but the strongest relationship in the model is product sympathy, which is driven by interest in the subject - even if in reality this potential is not fully exploited.

5, Using Shalom H. Schwartz's theory of core human values, I used a questionnaire known as the Portrait Questionnaire (PVQ21) to explore the relationship between the values held by the Hungarian population and the purchase of fair trade products. As a result of the value measurement, no trend-like relationship between responses to universal human values and the purchase of fair trade goods can be established in Hungary.

6, Taking into account my primary and secondary research results, I have put the situation of Fair Trade in Hungary into an international comparison. While Hungary is lagging behind Western European countries in terms of domestic fair trade, it shares similar characteristics with the countries of the Central and Eastern European region, although it is in a more disadvantaged position in terms of social cohesion and professional institutions.

## 5. PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS

Fair trade offers a novel alternative to mainstream international trade, although its actual global volume is still small. Yet Fair Trade is one of the best-known ethical trademarks in several European countries (GlobeScan, 2019), despite the fact that the movement is still in its infancy in our country.

The international literature on the phenomenon is considerable, and the subject is covered by a number of disciplines, so its embeddedness in academic life is well established. Although it is largely unknown to the Hungarian public, its circulation has increased 100-fold in the last 5 years. As there is a negligible number of Hungarian studies on this dynamically developing movement in Hungary, I found it worth investigating.

The usefulness of the research can be justified by the following argument. Companies committed to social goals should engage in responsible economic activities that will bring them competitive advantages. By doing so, companies can gain the desired social reputation, which can be a lifesaver in times of crisis (Castaldo et al, 2009). However, in order to increase the effectiveness of cooperation between market actors, it is necessary to (better) understand the expectations of customers regarding socially responsible production (Dragusanu et al, 2014). As in our country the turnover of products labelled as Fair Trade has been growing by leaps and bounds in recent years (TVE, 2018a; TVE, 2022), meeting growing consumer demands and thus gaining competitive advantages, as well as serving social goals and the common good, can be a strong motivation for companies, which in turn can attract more easily engaged employees committed to these issues and gain stronger commitment to the company. Understanding the habits of an expanding consumer segment with ethical purchasing habits, and thus fair trade, can thus become a key issue for businesses, especially in less predictable economic circumstances. This process is complicated by the fact that, although popular internationally, the phenomenon is little researched and even less known in our country, so that exploring fair trade can also have a social utility.

## 6. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

### Articles, studies

1. Vereb, Zsófia Dorka, Tóth, Eszter: A helyi méltányos kereskedelmi minősítések Franciaországban = The domestic fair trade certifications in France GAZDÁLKODÁSTUDOMÁNYI KÖZLEMÉNYEK: pp. 81-90., (2021)
2. Tóth, Eszter: A méltányos kereskedelem hazai kutatási előzményei és magyarországi helyzete COMPETITIO 17 : 1-2 pp. 54-68.,
3. Tóth, Eszter: Az etika (újbóli) térnyerése az üzleti folyamatokban: A haszonelvűségtől a tudatos fogyasztóig (irodalmi áttekintés) INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES / MŰSZAKI ÉS MENEDZSMENT TUDOMÁNYI KÖZLEMÉNYEK 4 : 3 pp. 94-107.
4. Tóth, Eszter, Csapóné, Riskó Tünde: Keresztény szempontú menedzsment gyakorlatok INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES / MŰSZAKI ÉS MENEDZSMENT TUDOMÁNYI KÖZLEMÉNYEK 3 : 3 pp. 14-30., 17 p. (2018)
5. Csapóné, Riskó Tünde; Tóth, Eszter: Vállalati felelősség, felelős foglalkoztatás In: Dajnoki, Krisztina; Berde, Csaba (szerk.) A globalizáció és a változás hatása az emberi erőforrás menedzsment funkcióira Debrecen, Magyarország : Debreceni Egyetem Gazdaságtudományi Kar, (2017) pp. 22-22.
6. Csapóné, Riskó Tünde, Tóth, Eszter: Vállalati felelősség: alkalmazottakat célzó belső CSR programok In: Pappné, Sziládi Katalin; Kovács, Klaudia (szerk.) Műszaki, technológiai és gazdasági kihívások a 21. században : Nemzetközi magyar nyelvű konferenciasorozat : Program és absztrakt kötet Szeged, Magyarország : Szegedi Tudományegyetem Mérnöki Kar (2017) pp. E7- E7.
7. Csapóné, Riskó Tünde, Tóth, Eszter: Vállalati felelősség: alkalmazottakat célzó belső CSR programok JELENKORI TÁRSADALMI ÉS GAZDASÁGI FOLYAMATOK 12 : 4 pp. 207-218. , 12 p. (2017)
8. Tóth, Eszter, Csapóné, Riskó Tünde: Az üzleti kapcsolatok erkölcsi újjáépítése - menedzsment szemlélet keresztény nézőpontból METSZETEK - TÁRSADALOMTUDOMÁNYI FOLYÓIRAT 6 : 4 pp. 71-90.
9. Tóth, Eszter: A méltányos kereskedelem mozgalmának áttekintő bemutatása TÁPLÁLKOZÁSMARKETING 2: 1 pp. 35-43. , 9 p. (2015)

10. Tóth, Eszter: Sikeres válasz a globalizáció kihívásaira? In: Dajnoki, Krisztina; Szöllősi, László (szerk.) Interdiszciplináris tudományos konferencia : Kari Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia és "A jövő tudósai" - PhD (doktori) konferencia : rezümé kötet Debrecen, Magyarország : Debreceni Egyetem Gazdaságtudományi Kar (2014) p. 76

11. Tóth, Eszter: Sikeres válasz a globalizáció kihívásaira? - A Fair Trade mozgalomban rejlő lehetőségek és veszélyek In: Csiszár, Imre; Kőmíves, Péter Miklós (szerk.) Tavaszi Szél 2014 Konferencia = Spring Wind 2014: Konferenciakötet I. Debrecen, Magyarország: Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége (DOSZ) (2014) 614 p. pp. 505-512. ,

### **Books/ bookchapters**

12. Tóth, Eszter: Introducing the Fair trade movement in Poland: a case study In: Gazdecki, Michał; Goryńska-Goldmann, Elżbieta (szerk.) Relationships on Food Markets – Consumers' Perspectives Poznan, Lengyelország : Poznan University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (2018) pp. 66-75.