
Foreword

Individuals have a multitude of possibilities by means of their decisions to influence ecological, social and economic developments at the regional, national and global level. Purchasing products that meet ecological or social requirements or making donations are some examples of ethical consumer behaviour. However, what influences individuals to take into consideration ethical criteria when making a purchase decision and do these factors differ depending on the kind of product and product attributes? How may we explain that in surveys carried out in Germany and in many other countries, most of the respondents indicate that ethical aspects play a role in their purchase decision whereas this is not reflected in the corresponding behaviour of the respondents? Do those who make donations have a different motivation than those who integrate ethical criteria into their purchase decision?

In her dissertation, “Ethics in Consumer Choice – An Empirical Analysis based on the Example of Coffee” Dr. Langen addresses this question as well as other interesting and relevant issues regarding “ethics in consumer decisions”. Her dissertation investigates the question as to whether consumers in Germany differentiate between various forms of ethical behaviour. In the context of her analysis, the author considers not only the purchase of products certified by a Fair Trade label, an eco-label or a cause-related marketing label, but also donations as a form of ethical behaviour. The author first ascertains to what extent products and product attributes certified as ethical and sustainable are perceived to be relevant by consumers and which factors significantly influence the perception of these attributes and the purchase decision process. In addition, her dissertation aims to gain insights into whether the investigated forms of ethical behaviour can be classified as complementary or substitutional. The author examines whether the various consumer segments can be identified according to their different preferences for alternative forms of ethical behaviour. On the basis of a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis and a complex methodological mixture adapted to the individual surveys, interesting findings on the determinants of ethical behaviour are presented. These findings are highly relevant for future scientific studies in the field of consumer research as well as for decision makers in politics and industry whose goal is the promotion of ethical consumption.

The findings contained in this study are based on analyses carried out by Dr. Langen with a high degree of diligence and expertise. She offers the reader many new insights into the influence of ethical aspects on consumer behaviour with regard to food products. I hope

that the work of Dr. Langen receives the great recognition and broad resonance in research and practice that it certainly deserves.

Prof. Dr. Monika Hartmann

Ethics in Consumer Choice

An Empirical Analysis based on the Example of Coffee

Langen, N.

2013, XXIV, 344 p. 20 illus., 4 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-658-00758-4