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## Polish Consumer on the Market of Fair Trade Products

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### ABSTRACT

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Fair Trade is an organised social movement, a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect, whose strategy is to cooperate with marginalised producers and workers. The paper discusses selected results of empirical studies conducted in 2013 within the framework of research project Polish Market of Fair Trade Products financed from the NCN funds, concerning the Fair Trade idea and Polish consumer behaviour in the market of Fair Trade products. They demonstrated that Fair Trade idea is not a subject of interest to wider circles of Polish consumers. Polish consumers most willingly buy stimulants, tea, coffee, and food products. Many of them decide to buy such products influenced by ethical and environmental factors.

**Keywords:** Fair Trade, Fair Trade Products, Polish Consumers

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## 1. Introduction

Economic map of the world reveals profound differences in the level of economic and social development. Generally speaking, one might attribute this uneven distribution of development to differences in the course of economic processes, which provide practical explanation to the increase in inequality across the world<sup>1</sup>. The situation has been influenced by a variety of factors, such as, e.g. geographical conditions, technological changes, globalisation or types of pursued economic and social policy.

Nowadays, social inequality is one of the major civilisation problems while polarisation, – including huge gap between rich and poor countries or, more precisely, differences between the rich and the poor, – has become a characteristics typical of the 21st century. Against the background of contemporary understanding of economic welfare (measured with average per capita income in a given society), eliminating inequality and ensuring high standard of living to societies are the most acute problems to be solved in the contemporary world.

Poverty is the main reflection of these inequalities. Independently of whether we are dealing with the reduction of global inequalities or with their exacerbation, special attention must be paid to combating poverty so that all those who inhabit the planet Earth could satisfy at least their basic needs.

Reduction of poverty is addressed by the currently dominant concept of development, i.e. sustainable development, which responds to the problems that emerged with an unprecedented force in the mid-20th century, connected with environmental (environmental crisis), social (combating poverty), economic (resulting from globalisation), or political and legal (obligations undertaken by governments and international organisations) issues. The idea is a socially recommended, economically viable and environmentally desired development strategy. It strongly accentuates goals resulting from the social deal, in particular those connected with ensuring enhanced welfare to families, fostering their material independence and security.

Fair Trade movement<sup>2</sup> is one of the initiatives connected with cooperation aimed at combating poverty, promoting economic and social development, gradual limitation of the hegemony of states and multinational corporations from rich North, opening markets to partners from the South, and finally elimination of unfair trade practices, which, through classical exploitation, keep millions of people trapped in poverty.

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<sup>1</sup> See, inter alia, C. White, *Understanding Economic Development. A Global Transition from Poverty to Prosperity?*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., Cheltenham–Northampton 2011, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> J. Stiglitz, *Wizja sprawiedliwej globalizacji. Propozycje usprawnień*, Polish Scientific Publishers, Warsaw 2007, pp. 91–104.

This paper is intended to demonstrate to what extent Polish consumers are familiar with the idea of Fair Trade and what behaviour pattern they exhibit in the market of Fair Trade products. We discuss selected results of empirical studies conducted in 2013 within the framework of research project *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu w Polsce (Polish Market of Fair Trade Products)* financed from the funds of the National Science Centre (Polish: Narodowe Centrum Nauki)<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. Fair Trade Movement

Fair Trade is an organised social movement whose history began almost 60 years ago. Its outset, although presented in a variety of ways, is deeply rooted in the years following the World War II. In 1946 Edna Ruth Byler, an American and a member of the Mennonites community, upon her return from a travel to Puerto Rico with handmade embroidery pieces created by impoverished women, she started selling these products in Pennsylvania, USA. Shortly afterwards she expanded the volume of imported products, as well as the range of countries, from which they originated and her original project named SELFHELP Craft of the World developed into a phenomenon in its own right and in 1996 it earned itself a new name of Ten Thousand Villages. The first store to sell “Fair Trade” products opened in the United States in 1958<sup>4</sup>. The intention of these efforts was to assist poor people in little developed countries, especially those, who wanted to work and develop in order to be able to support their families and get sustainable income opportunities.

The first Fair Trade initiatives in Europe emerged in 1959 when a British organisation Oxfam began to sell handmade products created by Chinese refugees in its stores. Increasingly active Oxfam engagement led to the launching of the “*Bridge programme*” in 1964, which later has become Oxfam Trading, an initiative of alternative trade, which offered fair prices and new distribution channels to small manufacturers. Simultaneously, similar initiatives emerged in the Netherlands. In 1969 Oxfam and other humanitarian organisations in Europe opened the first store selling Fair Trade products “Third World Shop” (or Fair Trade Shop as they were called in other parts

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<sup>3</sup> *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu w Polsce (Polish Market of Fair Trade products)*, a research project No. 2011/03/B/HS4/03727 implemented in the years 2013–2014, financed by the National Science Centre. Within the framework of the project we conducted qualitative research, as well as quantitative studies on a representative sample of N=1002 Poles aged 15–74 in outlets where Fair Trade products are sold in five Polish cities: Kielce, Poznan, Warsaw, Wrocław and the Tri-City (N=400). See: *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu w Polsce*, ed. M. Radziukiewicz, PWE, Warsaw 2015.

<sup>4</sup> E. Fichtl, *The Fair Trade Movement in Historical Perspective*, [www.ericfichtl.org/.../Fichtl\\_Fair-TradeMovementHist](http://www.ericfichtl.org/.../Fichtl_Fair-TradeMovementHist) (March 2015).

of the world) in the Netherlands. These stores were crucial for the Fair Trade movement, not just as outlets for products but also as places where consumers' awareness was actively built<sup>5</sup>.

Fair Trade idea has also come to Poland. There are organised efforts that support fair trade going beyond a mere selling of Fair Trade products, such as the Polish Fair Trade Association called the "Third World and Us" (Polish: Polskie Stowarzyszenie Sprawiedliwego Handlu „Trzeci Świat i My”).

In accordance with the currently approved definition "*Fair Trade is a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers – especially in the South*<sup>6</sup>. *Fair Trade organisations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade*"<sup>7</sup>. Fair Trade's strategic intention is to cooperate with marginalized producers and workers to help them to move from a position of vulnerability to security and economic self-sufficiency, to foster the position of producers and workers as stakeholders in their respective organisations, and to achieve greater equality in international trade<sup>8</sup>.

As stressed in literature, Fair Trade is based on a holistic vision of trade that takes account of the impact of social and environmental factors on pricing decisions, as well as on the commitment to the philosophy of social justice and development. Fair Trade goals have been very well captured by Littrell and Dickson, according to whom they concern the "empowerment and improved quality of life of producers"<sup>9</sup>.

Many years of practical experience of Fair Trade organisations have produced basic principles, which reflect the diversity of relationships involved in such trade. The most relevant of these principles are fair trade specific and inherently linked with its developmental objectives.

These include:

- **Market access for marginalised producers:** Fair Trade helps producers realise the social benefit to their communities based on traditional forms of production,

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem. See also: *SIXTY Years of Fair Trade. A Brief History of the Fair Trade Movement*, November 2006, <http://www.european-fair-trade-association.org/efta/Doc/History.pdf> (November 2013).

<sup>6</sup> According to the Millennium Development Goals Report in 2010 the proportion of people living on less than \$ 1.25 a day was: 48% in sub-Saharan Africa, 30% in Southern Asia, 14% in South-East Asia, and 6% in Latin America and Caribbean, *The Millennium Development Goals Report – 2013*, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf> (June 2014).

<sup>7</sup> World Fair Trade Organization, [wfto.com/fair-trade/definition-fair-trade](http://wfto.com/fair-trade/definition-fair-trade) (November 2013).

<sup>8</sup> E. Fichtl, *The Fair...*, op.cit., p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> M.A. Littrell, M.A. Dickson, *Social Responsibility in the Global Market: Fair Trade of Cultural Products*, CA: Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, after: E. Fichtl, *The Fair...*, op.cit.

since many producers cannot get access to mainstream and high value-added markets or the access is granted via a lengthy and inefficient trading chain.

- **Sustainable and equitable trading relationships:** economic dimension of these relationships takes account of direct and indirect costs of production, including the protection of natural resources and meeting future investment needs. Trading terms offered by Fair Trade buyers enable the producers and workers to maintain a sustainable livelihood.
- **Capacity building and empowerment:** Fair Trade relationships help organisations of producers understand market conditions and trends, as well as develop knowledge and skills to better control their lives.
- **Consumer awareness raising and advocacy:** consumer support enables FT organisations advocate and campaign for wider reforms of international trading framework to achieve the goal, which is fair trade.
- **Fair Trade as a “social contract”:** Buyers, including final consumers, agree to pay more than conventional markets would require (e.g. fair price), while producers will use the benefits to improve their living conditions, especially amongst the most disadvantaged members of their organisation.

Additional Fair Trade dimension concerns decent working conditions. Fair Trade favours and actively promotes organisations of producers and workers as integral parts of Fair Trade developmental objectives. By ensuring transparent trading terms it enables and supports decent working conditions. Workers are supported in improving health and safety conditions. The rights of children are also respected as the involvement of children in family-based production units may not take place at the cost of their well-being, security, educational opportunities and the need for play.

Fair Trade’s vision and goal is to support small producers and workers at the margins of benefits resulting from trade. It strives to create the world where all small-scale producers and workers would be able to benefit from secure and sustainable subsistence, use their potential, and decide about their future. The vision is identified through the following long-term goals:

**Goal 1: Make trade fair** – by creating conditions, in which small-scale producers may develop their businesses, workers may exercise their rights to freedom and decent pay, consumers are informed and expect (demand) fair trading practices, while public and private sectors support and enable arriving at economic, social and environmental sustainability in trade. More just trading terms are supposed to contribute to the accomplishment of other goals and the ultimate goal of a fair and sustainable trading system, to which Fair Trade aspires.

**Goal 2: Empower small producers and workers** – by improving their negotiating position vis-a-vis buyers/employers, making joint investments and increasing their

collective impact, as well as supporting them in building independent democratic organisations.

**Goal 3: Foster sustainable livelihoods** – by enabling (via producer and worker organisations) improvements in income, decent working conditions, improved living conditions, and sustainable ecosystems<sup>10</sup>.

The above-listed Fair Trade' goals are clearly linked and inter-dependent in as much as they lead to the achievement of sustainable livelihoods.

Fair Trade is the most important and the fastest developing market mechanism designed to improve the standard of living of producers in developing countries. Its objective is to offer them more equitable trading relations, including guaranteed minimum price higher than world prices and development aid.

Fair Trade is also criticised. It is perceived as a form of interventionism, which may bear positive fruits in a short-term rather than in a long-term perspective. On top of that, critics claim that its mechanism invites corruption, artificially increases supplies of Fair Trade products, and introduces out-of-the market regulations. High certification costs are also highlighted together with negative impact upon small-scale producers remaining outside of its framework.

### 3. What Do Polish Consumers Know About Fair Trade

Results of a study conducted in 2013 for the research project *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu (Polish Market of Fair Trade products)* revealed that Fair Trade idea is not very much appealing to wider groups of Polish consumers. The question: *FT is a concept connected with ensuring decent pay for work and the shortening of distance between producers and consumers. Are you interested in the idea?* was positively answered by slightly more than 1/3 rd of respondents (out of who 30% were rather not interested), the rest were not interested at all (Figure 1).

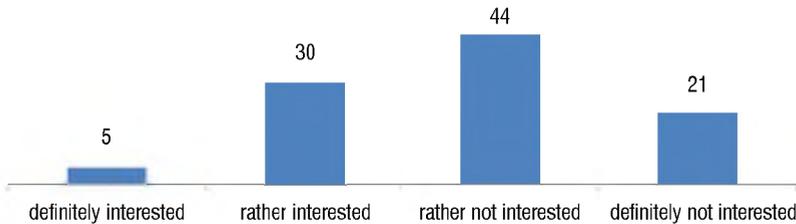
The interest in Fair Trade increases with age, although educational background, income and domicile also have an impact. The idea appeals mainly to women, not men, people from the age group 50–59, not younger (below 39) or older (above 60), living in big cities with more than 500 k inhabitants, not in towns of the population between 100–500 k (statistically significant relationships), with net income exceeding PLN 2,500 rather than below PLN 1,500 (statistically significant relationship), and with net income per household higher than PLN 5,000, rather than in the PLN 2,001–3,000

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<sup>10</sup> *Fairtrade Theory of Change*, Fairtrade International December 2013, [www.fairtrade.net/.../140112\\_Theory\\_of\\_Change\\_an](http://www.fairtrade.net/.../140112_Theory_of_Change_an) (June 2014).

range (statistically significant relationships). We must bear in mind that Fair Trade products are normally sold at a higher price, they are also much more easily available in big cities, which surely effects consumer awareness and buying habits.

**Figure 1. Polish Consumers’ Interest in Fair Trade**



Source: Report from the study: *Polacy o Sprawiedliwym Handlu (Fair Trade according to Poles)*, conducted on a representative sample for Poland (N=1002 aged 15–74), authors’ own study, 2013.

Among reasons why Fair Trade idea does not appeal to them, respondents mentioned first of all lack of faith in the efficiency of such efforts. This was followed, – the difference being 7 percentage points, – by major doubts as to whether consumer choices can make a real difference and improve living conditions in developing countries. Respondents also invoked their trust in the free market, unwillingness to change their habits, lack of faith into the idea itself, as well as fear of being misunderstood by their friends (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Reasons for the Lack of Interest in FT (% of Answers)**



Source: see Figure 1.

Polish equivalent of Fair Trade, “Sprawiedliwy Handel”, is little recognised by Polish consumers. The original term Fair Trade is more familiar as it is associated with products originating from Africa, Asia or South America and the Fairtrade certificate known from packaging. Most respondents associated Fair Trade with *Fairtrade* certified products.

We need to note that Fairtrade is one of the best recognisable certification marks. In the European Union, 36% of respondents were familiar with Fairtrade logo in 2012. However, its recognition varies significantly across Member States. More than half of the respondents in 17 out of 27 EU Member States declared they recognise it and recognition rate in the “old” Member States was much higher (43%) than in others where it was only 6%. Fairtrade logo is the most recognisable in the United Kingdom (81%) and the least recognisable in Spain (only 3%); in Poland it was recognised by 5% of the respondents<sup>11</sup>.

The study conducted by GlobeScan in March 2011<sup>12</sup> demonstrated that 25% of Polish consumers covered by the study (it was the first time when Poland was included in a study that has been conducted regularly since 2008) associated the logo, and 44% declared they trust it, which gave Poland a place in the bottom five among 24 Member States included in the study. Fairtrade logo was the most trusted in the UK (90%), and the least trusted in Italy (21%).

The trust has rather solid foundations as certified products must comply with specific standards connected with fair pricing, improved working and living conditions of farming communities and promoting farming practices that do no harm to people and are environmentally-friendly<sup>13</sup>. Almost every second person who recognised the Fairtrade mark was able to list some benefits that the system brings to small producers in the Third World countries, such as, e.g. higher income, ban on child labour or environmental protection.

As demonstrated in the discussion during qualitative studies<sup>14</sup>, Fair Trade is understood in two ways. Firstly, it is believed to be an aid scheme and its impact

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<sup>11</sup> *Europeans' Attitudes Towards food Security, Food Quality and the Countryside*, Special Eurobarometer 389, July 2012, pp. 27–28 (12.06.2014). The study was conducted in the 27EU Member States in March 2012 among people aged 15+ on a representative sample of 1000 consumers in Poland.

<sup>12</sup> *Fairtrade Recognition – GlobeScan Survey 2011*, [http://www.fairtrade.org.pl/a153\\_rozpoznawalnosc\\_fairtrade\\_badanie\\_globescan\\_2011.html](http://www.fairtrade.org.pl/a153_rozpoznawalnosc_fairtrade_badanie_globescan_2011.html) (April 2014). The survey was conducted online on a representative sample of 506 consumers.

<sup>13</sup> *What is Fair Trade* – Organic Consumers Association, <https://www.organicconsumers.org/.../What%20is%20...> (November 2013).

<sup>14</sup> *Sprawiedliwy Handel w Polsce (Fair Trade in Poland)*, Report from qualitative study conducted for the needs of the research project *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu w Polsce*, IBRKiK, Warsaw 2013. For more see: *Rynek produktów...*, op.cit.

upon individual farmers was strongly accentuated. Thus the Fair Trade concept was narrowed to assistance activities.

Aid-related nature of Fair Trade was stressed mainly by respondents, who relatively rarely buy Fair Trade products. Their interest in the problems of Global South was occasional, often resulting from media reports on accidents resulting from in-compliance with safety standards (e.g. the Bangladesh disaster). Fair Trade was presented as a way of subsidising farmers from poor countries of Asia, Africa, and South America. We may say that buying a Fairtrade certified product was considered an act of charity. In this case stress was put on direct flow of funds from a buyer to a given farmer.

The second approach to Fair Trade was based on associations with conscious consumption and was represented by people interested in this theme<sup>15</sup>. These were mainly people who before buying a product carefully study its composition, origin or environmental impact. To these people Fair Trade meant not only purchasing products with Fairtrade certificate. To those consumers borderlines between Fair Trade and buying local products, minimising one's consumption needs and recycling or interest in environmentally-friendly products and food production that does no harm to the environment were rather thin.

Consumers who declared interest in the idea associated Fair Trade predominantly with respect to other human beings, their dignity and needs (31% of responses; respondents could choose three answers) and caring for consumers (28%) but also with what people do for other people (23%), and taking care of the environment (22%).

Consumers decided their knowledge about problems of developing countries, sustainable development or Fair Trade was very limited. Knowledge connected with Fair Trade movement/idea scored the highest as 12% of respondents stated they knew a lot and 44% that they knew much about it; the highest proportion of respondents, however, declared they knew a lot about problems faced by developing countries (14%). Respondents, who knew much about Fair Trade (a lot and much) were women (61%) aged 30–34 (55%) with higher education (59%), and income ranging from PLN 3.001 to 4.000 (59%).

As social problems addressed by Fair Trade most respondents (the highest proportion of responses) enumerated: combating poverty (29%), dissent to child labour (28%), equal opportunities (24%), and observing human rights, which were most often listed first. "Allocating funds to relevant social goals that meet the needs of the majority" and "allocating funds for education" were the least appreciated (below 5%) among social issues to be sorted out by Fair Trade.

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<sup>15</sup> Conscious consumption is often understood as taking informed consumer decisions considering their economic, social, environmental, and political consequences.

## 4. Fair Trade Products

Fair Trade is currently a global movement. It brings together (2013) 1210 producer organisations from all over the world, including 624 organisations from Latin America and Caribbean, 404 from Africa and the Middle East, 182 from Asia and Oceania, which is by 5% more than in 2012 and over 1.4 m farmers and workers in 74 countries across the globe. Fair Trade products are sold in 125 countries and in 2012 consumers spent more than EUR 4.8 bn on them. In 2013 Fairtrade product buyers spent EUR 5.5 bn, which was almost 15% more than in 2012. Further increases in Fairtrade products buys were reported in all European markets with the strongest increases in new markets, such as the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, and the USA. In 2011 Polish consumers spent EUR 1.2 m, by 10% more than in 2010.

Fair Trade products include mainly: coffee, tea, cane sugar, cocoa, tropical fruit, spices, nuts, rice, wine, cotton, as well as handmade products and gold.

**Table 1. Global Sales of Fairtrade Products in Selected Years**

Product	2004	2009	2010	2012	2013	Change 2013/2004 (in %)
Banana (MT)	80,641	311,465	286,598	331,980	372,708	462.2
Cocoa (beans; MT)	4,201	13,898	35,179	42,714	54,485	1,297.0
Coffee (green bean; MT)	24,222	73,781	87,576	77,429	83,709	345.6
Tea (MT)	1,965	11,524	12,356	11,649	11,375	578.9
Cotton (MT)	–	–	–	9,005	7,817	86.8
Dried fruit (MT)	238	541	673	1,507	1,430	600.8
Flowers (1,000 stems)	13,008.85	335,893	325,210	536,669	623,907	4,796.0
Fresh fruit (MT)	5,157	20,091	17,307	12,094	13,329	258.5
Fruit juice (1,000 litres)	–	–	–	37,166	42,577	114.6
Gold (grams)	–	–	–	–	7,562	–
Herbs and spices (MT)	–	578	407	637	1,795	310.6
Honey (MT)	1,239	2,065	2,038	1,319	1,808	145.9
Quinoa (MT)	–	556	1,288	590	658	118.3
Rice (MT)	1,384	5,052	5,036	5,623	5,482	396.1
Sports balls (pcs.)	–	–	–	152	108	71.1
Sugar (MT)	1,960	73,781	87,576	158,986	193,829	9,889.2
Vegetables (MT)	–	–	–	436	706	161.9
Wine (1,000 litres)	617.7	11,908	32,527	16,432	20,934	127.4

Mt – Megaton (1MT = 1,000,000 tonnes), l – litre, pcs – pieces.

Source: based on: *Strong Producers, Strong Future*, Annual Reports 2013–2014, [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net) (March 2015); *Rynek produktów...*, op.cit.

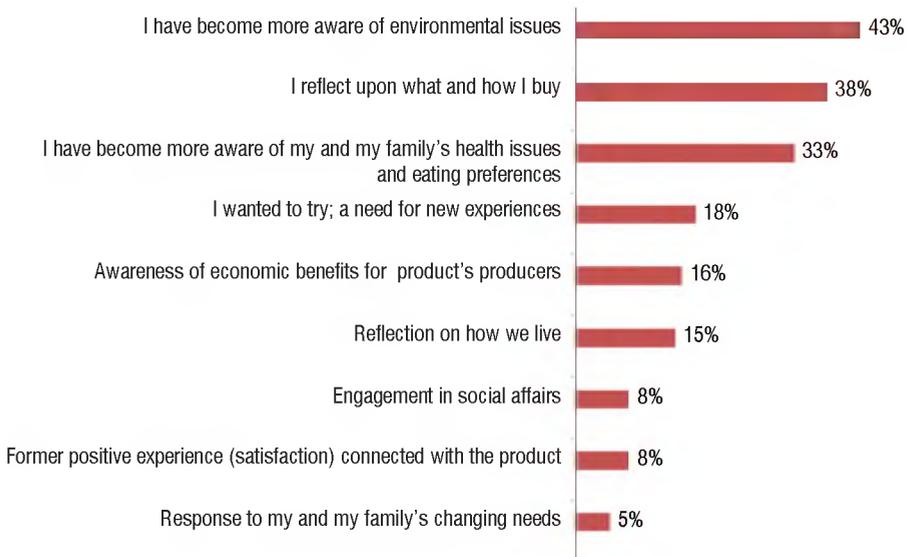
Changes that took place over the period 2004–2013 – or shorter depending on the availability of data – in the value of sales are presented in Table 1.

Sales of most Fair Trade products listed in the table exhibits an increasing trend. The highest growth dynamics in the years 2004–2013 was reported for sugar, flowers and cocoa. Sales of some products, such as tea, cotton, dried fruits, and rice dropped in 2013 compared to 2012. However, taking account of sales in previous years, it is difficult to predict if the trend will continue.

## 5. Polish Consumer's Behaviour Pattern

The main reason, and the most often selected first answer explaining why Polish people buy Fair Trade products was higher awareness of environmental issues followed by the reflection over what and how we buy and higher awareness of health aspects and eating preferences of respondents and their families (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Main Reasons Why Polish Consumers Buy Fair Trade Products\***



\* People who shop in Fair Trade products outlets.

Source: Report from quantitative survey *Rynek produktów Sprawiedliwego Handlu w Polsce*, IBRKiK, Warsaw 2013.

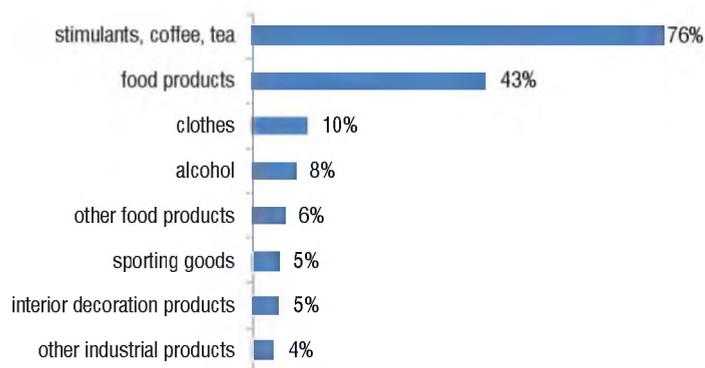
Respondents more aware of environmental issues buy Fair Trade products once a month or more frequently (statistically significant relationship). Moreover, they are people aged 45 and more (the highest rate of responses), who live in Kielce. Consumers

aware of what they buy live in Warsaw, they have strong views and beliefs about Fair Trade idea. Those driven by their own or family's health and eating preferences are aged 45 and more, with at least one child and net income per household up to PLN 3,000; they buy Fair Trade products at least once a month.

Food products from poor countries can be bought in restaurants, coffee shops, hyper- and supermarkets, as well as in the Internet stores. Only in Europe these products are available in more than 75,000 supermarkets. The biggest number – 800 – stores with Fair Trade products can be found in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands<sup>16</sup>.

In Poland Fair Trade products are distributed predominantly by specialist food stores, the Internet and delicatessen chains. At the start these products were sold by small retailers, healthy food products and online stores. However, today coffee, tea, sugar, honey or spices originating from Fair Trade and labelled with its logo can increasingly often be found on shelves of big retail chains, such as Tesco, Carrefour or Marks & Spencer. Online stores also play their more and more important role.

**Figure 4. Fair Trade Products Most Often Bought in Poland**



Source: see Figure 3.

Stimulants, tea, and coffee were the most often purchased Fair Trade products. Food products were also a popular category purchased by 43% people. Every tenth respondent would buy FT clothes (Figure 4). Stimulants, tea, and coffee were purchased by the biggest number of people (the highest rate in answers) aged between 30–34, with no children, living in Wrocław (statistically significant relationship). People, who buy food products, and whose responses show statistically significant relationships, are also from the age group 30–34, employed, their household income

<sup>16</sup> M. Kosicka-Gębska, A. Tul-Krzyszczuk, J. Gębski, *Handel detaliczny żywnością w Polsce*, ed. II, SGGW, Warsaw 2011, pp. 177–178.

does not exceed PLN 3,000, they live in Warsaw and purchase Fair Trade products once a month or more frequently.

Although the Fair Trade offer of handmade crafts includes a wide range of products from all over the world, such as baskets, sculptures, jewellery (pendants and necklaces), musical instruments, toys, textiles (towels, table cloth), interior decorations, ceramics they appear not to be very much appealing to consumers. Smaller interest is also surely due to little attractive offer: both when it comes to the assortment and the arrangement of outlets. Store owners claim that by limiting themselves to handmade crafts only they would quickly go bankrupt. Stores that sell only this line of FT products are usually treated as an additional source of income to its owners or as a hobby.

However, little diversified product offer and little availability of products in ordinary stores are the aspects noticed only by those who have come across Fair Trade products during their stays abroad or those who invested some effort in finding information about them in the Internet. Our respondents in Poland told us that FT certified fresh fruit is unavailable (banana, pineapples), fruit juice or soya milk are also hard to find. Nevertheless, the range of products available in Poland and abroad is assessed as comparable. Our respondents complained, however, about limited number of products within one category when in the best case scenario they can choose between one or two types of certified coffee, while abroad they can choose from a range of products of different brands sold at different prices. According to people covered by the study, the selection of products other than food – shoes, clothing made of certified cotton, handmade crafts or cosmetics – is bigger abroad while in Poland they are rarely available (respondents noted that products that can be purchased in Poland come almost exclusively with environmental not Fairtrade certificates). In Poland respondents have not come across Fairtrade certified flowers or furniture although they saw such products abroad.

The frequency of buying Fair Trade products varies. They are bought once a week by only 6%, 1/5th buy them once a month, almost one in four respondents do it several times a month. Most answers, however, did not specify the frequency of such purchases and selected option “from time to time”.

Most people usually buy one or two Fair Trade products at a time. Almost ¼th of the respondents buy several different categories of Fair Trade products and the least answers suggested they buy them only in times of sales or at reduced prices. Respondents who buy 1–2 Fair Trade products at a time are usually (the highest rate of answers) men, aged 45 and more with income per household above PLN 4,000. This group of consumers includes also people living in Wroclaw and Tri-City who most often do shopping in organic food stores (statistically significant relationship). Those, who buy several FT products each time are mainly women, reassured about

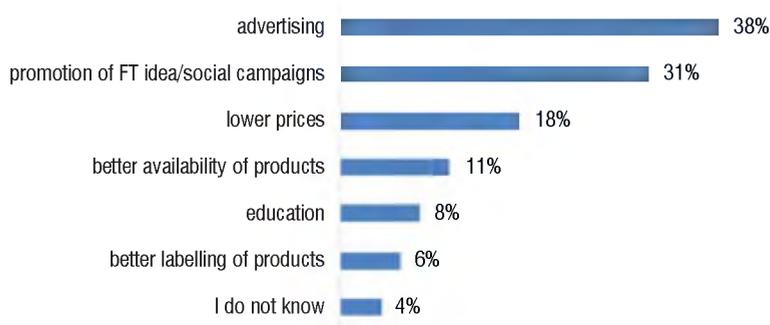
what they know about Fair Trade idea and doing shopping at least once a month. Respondents who buy FT products in the times of sales or at reduced prices do it more rarely than once a month.

In most cases respondents buy a Fair Trade product placed on the market rather quickly although they give it some consideration. Every eleventh person likes being the first to have such a product. Ca. ¼th buy after their friends have already tested a particular product. People, who relatively quickly decide to buy a product are predominantly working women with university background, living in the Tri-City, reassured and aware of the Fair Trade idea.

Like any store, Fair Trade outlets need marketing effort. It has already been demonstrated on multiple occasions that the way products are arranged on display and shelves impacts sales and consumer interest. Merchandising exerts an impact upon consumer behaviour by interior decorations in the point-of-sale (e.g. Fairtrade logo) and the presentation of products (e.g. their descriptions together with the presentation of Fair Trade idea) and by that boosts sales, customer interest, as well as subjective value of product in consumers' eyes.

Vast majority of people (73%) believe Fair Trade products are not properly presented, which no doubt translates into demand and interest in them. Only 16% of respondents were of different opinion. The rest were unable to come with an unambiguous answer. We need to note that among those, who purchase Fair Trade products more rarely than once a month the ratio increased to 78% (statistically significant relationship); similar result was scored with respect to those who are less reassured of their Fair Trade idea awareness<sup>17</sup>.

**Figure 5. Possible Incentives for Buying Fair Trade Products**



Source: see Figure 3.

<sup>17</sup> For more see: Survey conducted in Fair Trade outlets, N=400, scope: Kielce, Poznan, Warsaw, Wrocław, Tri-City, August 2013. See: *Rynek produktów...*, op.cit.

According to buyers of Fair Trade products, Poles' buying decisions concerning these products could be influenced the most by advertising (38% of answers) and the promotion of the FT idea/social campaigns (31% of answers) (Figure 5).

It is quite likely that the increasing of the awareness of Polish consumers through, inter alia, educational activities and well prepared promotional campaigns in the points-of-sale could translate into higher dynamics of sales of Fair Trade products.

## 6. Conclusion

Fair Trade is based on the concept of responsible consumption and production. It is a social and economic model of development for firms and families, which enables meeting basic needs, development and improved living conditions. The goal is to fairly treat the producers in developing countries and help them receive fair prices for their products. That should contribute to the reduction of poverty, as well as ensure ethical treatment of workers and farmers.

Fair Trade products may face difficulties in competing with other products because of their price. However, many consumers decide to buy them taking account of ethical and environmental aspects. Increased interest in Fair Trade products is confirmed by data on their sales, which are increasing value-wise globally, in Europe, and in Poland.

In Poland the best-selling products include stimulants, tea, coffee, and food products. Other products are less popular. The range of Fair Trade products on offer available in Poland is still less impressive than in other countries. Nevertheless, we might expect that with adequate educational and marketing efforts interest in FT products could increase.

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