

THE ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SUSTAINABLE INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS: MODERATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED CONSUMER EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract. This research focuses on the role of personal values and consumer social responsibility in shaping enduring involvement and purchase intention of fair trade products, taking into account the moderating effect of perceived consumer effectiveness. This study aims to examine how these psychological and behavioral factors interact to influence consumer decisions regarding fair trade, and to identify under which conditions involvement translates into actual purchase intention. A study was conducted with 593 Tunisian consumers. The results of this study highlight the complexity of the relationship between enduring involvement and purchase behavior, revealing the influence of factors such as personal values and perceived consumer effectiveness. The study also shows that altruistic values are crucial for enduring involvement but are not sufficient to trigger purchase behavior. Furthermore, stimulation, as an individualistic value, positively impacts purchase intention. It was also found that fair trade consumers prioritize international solidarity over the geographical origin of the products. This research contributes, among other things, to addressing the gap in research concerning fair trade.

Keywords: consumer social responsibility, enduring involvement, purchase intention, fair trade products, perceived consumer effectiveness, personal values.

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1. Introduction

An evolution in consumption patterns, aligned with a more ethical and sustainable approach, has been observed in recent years. Consumers now demonstrate increased awareness and sensitivity to social and environmental issues. Indeed, a noticeable trend towards sustainable production and consumption has been noted in recent years (De la Piedra-Vindrola et al., 2022; Trespeuch et al., 2021). Consequently, the strong demand for fair trade products and a 14% increase in sales reflect this heightened awareness of sustainability (Fairtrade Foundation¹, 2023). Fair trade is a social and economic movement aimed at promoting fairer and more sustainable trade relations. It is based on principles such as respect for human rights, fair payment

to producers, support for local development, and environmental protection (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Wang & Chou, 2020).

However, despite the growth of the fair trade market, fair trade products remain marginal compared to conventional products (Brunner, 2014; Schollenberg, 2012) and face challenges in attracting consumers, who are often poorly informed or less involved in this approach (Bezençon & Blili, 2011). Most research analyzing the determinants of purchase intentions for fair trade products is framed within the theory of planned behavior. These studies examine the role of subjective norms, perceived control, and attitudes (Wang & Chou, 2020; Ghali et al., 2024). Some have focused on the impact of fair trade knowledge on consumer attitudes (De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007; De la Piedra-Vindrola et al., 2022; Pavlovskaja & Kara, 2022). Other variables considered in research on

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such behavior include the role of personal values (Ma & Lee, 2012; Coppola et al., 2017), consumer social responsibility (Wang & Chou, 2020; Berki-Kiss & Menrad, 2022), and perceived consumer effectiveness (Lee et al., 2015). However, the effect of enduring involvement on the purchasing behavior of fair trade products has not attracted much interest from researchers, except for Bezençon and Blili (2011).

This lack of research on enduring involvement represents a gap in the literature, which this study seeks to address. In particular, this study aims to analyze how enduring involvement is shaped by personal values and consumer social responsibility, and how it influences purchase intention for fair trade products. It also examines the moderating role of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) in these relationships.

This research is original in two ways: first, it focuses on enduring involvement, a rarely studied variable in the context of fair trade; second, it highlights the moderating effect of perceived consumer effectiveness, providing a more nuanced understanding of ethical consumption mechanisms.

Therefore, the research question in this work is: What is the effect of personal values and consumer social responsibility on enduring involvement and the purchase intention of fair trade products, and how does perceived consumer effectiveness moderate these relationships? This question aims to explore the motivations and barriers of fair trade product consumers and evaluate the intensity of relationships between the different concepts that determine enduring involvement and fair trade product purchasing behavior.

The study and analysis of the relationship between personal values, consumer social responsibility, sustainable involvement, and the purchase intention of fair trade products allow us to develop a conceptual model in this work with perceived consumer effectiveness as a moderating variable.

This article is structured into four parts. The first part presents the theoretical framework of the research, including definitions of key concepts, theoretical foundations, and research hypotheses. The second part focuses on the methodological framework, describing the data collection and analysis process, as well as the steps taken to test our hypotheses and validate the model. The third part presents the results obtained, comparing them with existing literature. Finally, the fourth part concludes the document by identifying the theoretical and managerial contributions, limitations and future research directions.

2. Conceptual framework of the research

2.1. Consumer involvement: definitions, antecedents, and consequences

Involvement emerged in social psychology with Sherif and Cantril in 1947. Later, this concept was introduced into marketing by Krugman (1967). Since then, it has continued to

evolve in the field of marketing, becoming a cornerstone for understanding consumer behavior. Today, involvement is regarded as an important variable for understanding consumer behavior (Valette-Florence, 1989; Ben Miled, 2001; Bezençon & Blili, 2011; Reppmann et al., 2025).

According to Michaelidou and Dibb (2008), involvement is a rich and elusive concept characterized by the multiplicity of its definitions, its nature, dimensions, and measures. Over the years, researchers have attributed varied definitions of involvement depending on the orientation of their research. From a psychographic perspective, involvement is defined in relation to central personal values, goals, and self-image. Ben Miled (2001) describes involvement as the extent of the personal relevance of a purchase decision or product for an individual in terms of their core values, goals, and self-image. Valette-Florence (1989) aligns with this definition and views involvement as the result of the combination of an individual's psychological state, a product, and a purchasing situation.

Although a wide range of definitions exists, there appears to be a consensus around the definition proposed by Rothschild (1984), which states that involvement is an unobservable state of motivation, arousal, or interest. It is determined by external variables (situation, product, and communication) and internal variables (ego, central values).

Valette-Florence (1989) states that most researchers agree that involvement is a theoretical concept that cannot be directly measured and whose intensity and nature can vary depending on individuals and circumstances. Houston and Rothschild (1977) distinguish between situational and enduring involvement, the latter being more stable over time and more relevant for ethical consumer choices.

Zaichkowsky (1994) and Michaelidou and Dibb (2008) emphasize that the more a product reflects personal values, the greater the involvement. This is particularly relevant for ethical products like fair trade, which appeal to deep-seated beliefs and long-term value orientations. They asserted that enduring involvement is shaped by the psychological relevance that a product holds for an individual, a relevance often rooted in their core values. The variables considered in our model are personal values, perceived consumer effectiveness, and the degree of consumer social responsibility. Our objective is to analyze how these variables interact with sustainable involvement, thereby providing an insightful perspective for understanding consumer behavior towards fair-trade products. Bezençon and Blili (2011) state that involvement with fair-trade products positively influences the proportion of fair product purchases, product consumption frequency, fair product information search, and distribution channel preference. Authors such as Rothschild (1984), Valette-Florence (1989), and Ben Miled (2001) consider involvement to be crucial in determining consumer behavioral responses, particularly in product search, information processing, and decision-making. It also influences the purchase intention of organic products (Rahman, 2018; Ghali-Zinoubi & Toukabri, 2019). These findings remain consistent in more recent research, where customer involvement significantly

enhances ethical purchase decisions (Reppmann et al., 2025). These theoretical findings lead us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H.1: Enduring involvement with fair-trade products positively influences the purchase intention of these products.

2.2. Personal values and responsible consumption

Schwartz (2017) considers values as essential motivational factors for behaviors and attitudes. He identified four types of values: altruism, self-enhancement, openness to change, and conservatism. Self-enhancement emphasizes pursuing one's own interests without regard for others, encompassing values of power and achievement. Altruism (or self-transcendence) relates to individuals' concern for the well-being and interests of others. It includes values of universalism and benevolence and opposes self-enhancement. Openness to change relates to independent actions, thoughts, feelings, and readiness for new experiences, encompassing values of self-direction and stimulation. Conservatism emphasizes order, self-restraint, and resistance to change, along with values of conformity, tradition, and security, opposing openness to change.

These four types of values are grouped into two overarching motivations: the first relates to individually oriented values (personal focus) (self-enhancement and openness to change), and the second pertains to socially oriented values (social focus) (altruism and conservatism).

Research consistently highlights the role of personal values in shaping consumer beliefs, attitudes and involvement in fair trade products (Bezençon & Blili, 2011; Ma & Lee, 2012). According to De Ferran and Grunert (2007), values provide a deep understanding of the motivations underlying consumer attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, socially oriented values such as universalism and benevolence are strongly linked to positive attitudes and behaviors toward fair-trade products. For instance, Ma and Lee (2012) found that these values significantly influence the formation of beliefs, attitudes, and purchase intentions regarding fair-trade non-food products. In contrast, individualistic values, such as self-respect, inner harmony, and achievement, are given less importance in shaping ethical consumption behaviors. Similarly, Doran (2010) highlights that values like benevolence and universalism underpin support for fair trade, particularly through motivations rooted in social justice and solidarity with marginalized groups. These findings align with more recent studies, such as those by Jasrotia et al. (2023), which indicate that Centennials are more guided by self-transcendence values, which drive them to consume responsibly and sustainably, while Millennials are more influenced by self-enhancement values, making them less sensitive to sustainability.

In contrast, individualistic values such as stimulation, power, and hedonism have been shown to be less predictive of meaningful involvement in responsible purchasing. A review by Slijepčević and Matanović (2015) confirms that these values are generally not aligned with strong ethical

commitment, thereby reducing consumer involvement with socially responsible products. For other research, the association between these values and attitude was found insignificant (Raza & Farrukh, 2023). De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) used the RVS scale to classify consumers according to their values and found that positive attitudes towards fair trade are strongly correlated with values such as security and tradition. Also, egoists, characterized by values of power and achievement, as well as hedonists, who generally have less favorable attitudes, make less frequent fair-trade purchases.

These insights lead us to propose the following hypotheses:

H.2: Socially oriented values (universalism (a), benevolence (b), tradition (c), and security (d)) positively influence enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.2.a: Universalism positively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.2.b: Benevolence positively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.2.c: Tradition positively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.2.d: Security positively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3: Individually oriented values (power (a), achievement (b), hedonism (c), stimulation (d), and self-direction (e)) negatively influence enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3.a: Power negatively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3.b: Achievement negatively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3.c: Hedonism negatively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3.d: Stimulation negatively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.3.e: Self-direction negatively influences enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

Values have also shown their importance in determining behaviors and purchase intention. Indeed, self-transcendence values are important factors in determining general ecological behavior (De Aragão & Alfinito, 2021) and predicting the intention to visit eco-friendly hotels (Raza & Farrukh, 2023).

In a more specific context concerning fair-trade products, the results of Ladhari and Tchegnà (2015) show that fair-trade consumers are motivated by universalism (social justice, environmental protection, harmony with nature, and world peace). Ghali et al. (2024) confirm that altruistic values, particularly universalism and benevolence, remain central motivators for fair trade consumption. Shaw et al. (2005) also highlight that equality, universalism, and social justice values

are crucial for ethical consumers when making decisions. This relevance of equality and social justice aligns with one of the major goals of fair trade, which is to promote greater equity in favor of social justice and human rights.

The study by Lappeman et al. (2019) reveals that fair-trade supporters exhibit relatively high levels of humanitarianism. The humanitarian dimension encompasses equality and freedom, both of which can be seen as socially oriented values, as they reflect consumers' concerns about environmental protection and human well-being rather than individual concerns.

Conversely, individually oriented values show a negative correlation with ethical consumption. Individualistic and power values are inversely related to fair-trade purchases, with consumers prioritizing power or achievement demonstrating lower adherence to fair-trade products (Delistavrou & Tilikidou, 2009). Similarly, power and hedonism values are negatively correlated with moral norms and fair-trade purchase intention (Canova et al., 2022). The relationship proves more ambiguous for openness-to-change values (stimulation, self-direction): while these may stimulate fair-trade consumption among younger consumers seeking novel experiences and social engagement (Ma & Lee, 2012), they may also promote more self-centered behaviors depending on context.

Considering these insights, we can formulate the following hypotheses:

H.4: Socially oriented values (universalism (a), benevolence (b), tradition (c), and security (d)) positively influence the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.4.a: Universalism positively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.4.b: Benevolence positively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.4.c: Tradition positively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.4.d: Security positively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5: Individually oriented values (power (a), achievement (b), hedonism (c), stimulation (d), and self-direction (e)) negatively influence the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5.a: Power negatively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5.b: Achievement negatively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5.c: Hedonism negatively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5.d: Stimulation negatively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

H.5.e: Self-direction negatively influences the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

2.3. The role of consumer social responsibility in enduring involvement with fair-trade products

The first contribution to the literature on consumer social responsibility dates back to Webster (1975), who stated that the socially responsible consumer is one who "considers the public consequences of their private consumption or uses their purchasing power to effect social change." Thus, the goal of socially responsible consumption is to minimize risks and maximize long-term benefits for society (Prendergast & Tsang, 2019). Lecompte and Valette-Florence (2006) expand on this notion by viewing socially responsible consumption as a concrete expression of consumer social responsibility. Its measurement is based on actual behaviors rather than statements and attitudes to avoid social desirability bias.

Consumer social awareness plays a major role in the fair-trade movement. Studies have shown that consumer social responsibility directly influences personal attitudes towards fair-trade products, which in turn affects the purchase intention of these products (Wang & Chou, 2020; Berki-Kiss & Menrad, 2022; Al-Haddad et al., 2022; Mäncher et al., 2023). Moreover, socially engaged consumers are sensitive to environmental issues and the opportunities to purchase products related to these concerns. According to Subhani et al. (2024), CSR positively influences purchase intentions, particularly in emerging markets where social responsibility signals guide consumer decisions.

They are also sensitive to information regarding the social responsibility practices of the producing company and claim to be willing to buy and pay a premium for a product or service that includes certified elements related to sustainability and social justice. Most buyers of responsible products are driven by genuine sustainability concerns rather than mere fashion trends (Degli Esposti et al., 2021; Valenzuela et al., 2023). These socially responsible consumers place great importance on ethical and sustainable products, including fair-trade products, of course.

Thus, in light of these findings, we propose the following hypotheses:

H.6: Consumer social responsibility positively affects enduring involvement with fair-trade products.

H.7: Consumer social responsibility positively affects the purchase intention of fair-trade products.

2.4. The importance of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) in responsible behaviors

The concept of perceived effectiveness is quite old and has been adopted by research across various fields as it is considered one of the key factors influencing human reactions. According to Bandura and National Institute of Mental Health (1986), personal effectiveness refers to the judgments individuals make about their capacity to organize and execute sets of actions required to achieve expected performances.

Several studies have highlighted the crucial role of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) in determining responsible and ethical behaviors. To increase the connection between a consumer's positive attitudes and their purchasing actions, there must be a certain level of effectiveness and confidence in their ability to make socially responsible changes (Hanss & Doran, 2020).

Regarding the link between Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) and fair trade products, the work of De Pelsmacker et al. (2006) revealed that the most convinced consumers of the positive effects of consuming fair trade products were those who had a positive attitude towards fair trade and its products. A favorable attitude thus has a positive effect on purchase intention. Moreover, Lee et al. (2015) confirmed this relationship by highlighting that increased consumer involvement and motivation to buy fair trade products were driven by the desire to support just causes. These studies have shown that PCE plays a central role in the adoption of responsible behaviors, especially in the context of major crises such as climate change (Baldwin et al., 2022; Vieira et al., 2025). These findings clearly demonstrate that PCE is an essential driver of the formation of positive attitudes and interests in adopting responsible behaviors.

Although the role of PCE as a direct predictor of behavior has been the subject of extensive research, Berger and Corbin (1992) focused on the moderating role of PCE in the influence of attitude on responsible consumer behavior, in addition to its direct impact. These different approaches highlight the multiple roles that PCE can have in socially responsible consumer behavior.

Therefore, it is logical to assume that PCE can function as more than just a direct predictor of behavior, as it can also moderate the Attitude-Behavior (A-B) relationship in

the Value-Attitude-Behavior (VAB) model, which has been used in the context of ethical purchases and environmental protection. Sharma and Jha (2017) demonstrated that strong PCE increases the likelihood that consumers will act according to their attitudes. They also evaluated and justified the moderating impact of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness on the environmental attitude–sustainable consumption behavior relationship.

In light of these findings, we posit the following hypothesis:

H.8: Perceived Consumer Effectiveness positively moderates the link between enduring involvement with fair trade products and purchase intention.

Thus, the set of relationships that illustrate the connections between the different concepts and have allowed us to formulate our research hypotheses guide us towards the presentation of the following conceptual model (Figure 1):

3. Methodology and hypothesis testing

This study uses a quantitative design to test a conceptual model of fair trade consumption behavior. The analysis involved three steps: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using SPSS 26 to refine the measurement scales, then Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 24 to test the structural model and hypotheses.

3.1. Sampling and data collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed on social media platforms to minimize social desirability bias. Prior to dissemination, the questionnaire

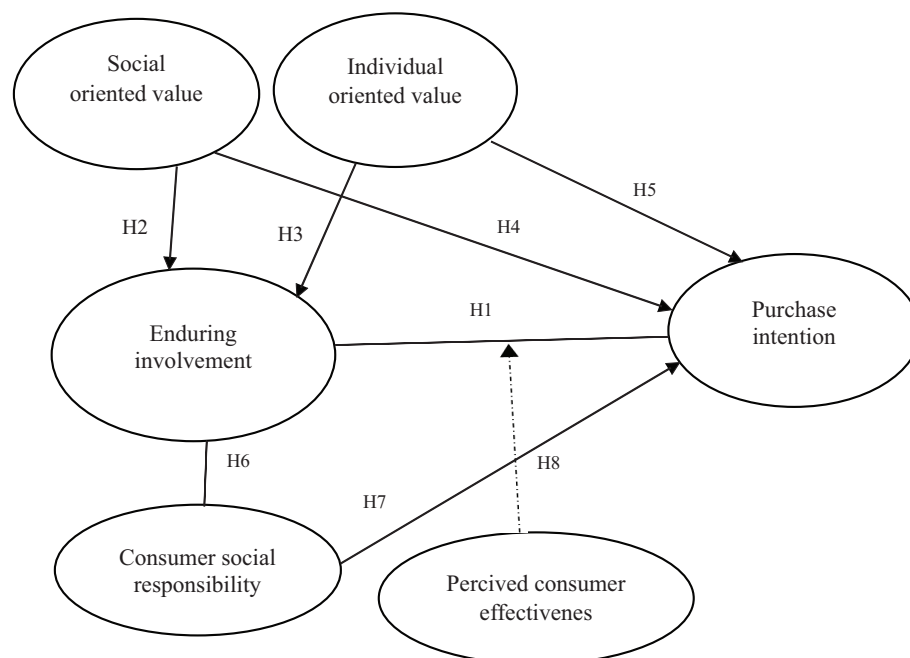


Figure 1. The conceptual model

was pre-tested with 20 participants to identify and correct potential ambiguities. A final sample of 593 Tunisian consumers aged 18 and above was obtained using non-probability convenience sampling. The sample reflects diversity in income, education, and gender (Table 1). Respondents provided informed consent before participation, and data anonymity was ensured throughout the study. Ethical considerations were prioritized to guarantee confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.2. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire divided into six sections, each representing a key construct in the theoretical model. All constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scales: (1) 'Not like me' to (5) 'Very much like me' for personal values, and (1) 'Strongly disagree' to (5) 'Strongly agree' for all other scales. Measurement scales were selected based on their relevance to prior studies and their reliability, as validated in published literature. To measure personal values, Schwartz (2021) developed the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ). These values are universal, as they have remained stable across diverse samples in terms of geographic location, language, culture, religion, age, gender, and profession.

Perceived consumer effectiveness was measured using the scale by Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) and Ellen et al. (1991). Consumer social responsibility was assessed with the scale developed by Lecompte and Valette-Florence (2006). For measuring enduring involvement, we opted for the unidimensional PIA scale (relevance-interest-attraction) by Strazzieri (1994). Lastly, for purchase intention, we used the scale by Pavlovskaja and Kara (2022). For detailed descriptions of the scales, refer to the Appendix, Table A1.

3.3. Assessment of construct validity

To ensure construct validity, the scales underwent rigorous testing. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed using SPSS 26 to refine the factor structure and eliminate poorly performing items. The results of EFA showed that the measures retained a certain factor stability. Each measure was kept with its original dimensions. However, during purification, poorly represented items (factor loading <0.5 and communalities <0.5) were removed. The KMO values and Bartlett's tests were acceptable.

Ultimately, each retained dimension met Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue >1) and an explained variance level >50%. Cronbach's alpha, which indicates the internal consistency

of the scales, was acceptable for all variables, being above 0.7; this suggests that the items were consistent with the constructs they were intended to measure.

Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 24 to validate the measurement model. To improve the model fit, a respecification procedure was implemented. The results, summarized in Appendix (Table A2), indicate that the items significantly contribute to the explanation of their respective dimensions ($t\text{-test} > 1.96$). The scale's reliability is excellent, as is its convergent validity ($pVC > 0.7$) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.5 also serve as new indicators confirming a high level of convergent validity (Ping, 2004).

Discriminant validity is ensured since the AVE for each dimension is significantly greater than the correlations between the factors. This condition is met for the ten factors when considered pairwise (Appendix, Table A3). The indices obtained related to the measurement model are acceptable and reveal that the proposed theoretical model adequately corresponds to the data. The results of these indices are as follows: [CMIN/DF (1.62), GFI (0.92), AGFI (0.90), NFI (0.922), TLI (0.961), CFI (0.968), RMR (0.028), and RMSEA (0.032)].

3.4. Hypothesis testing

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was employed to empirically test the research hypotheses. The fit indices of the structural model were tested and found to be within acceptable levels:

- [CMIN/DF (1.64), GFI (0.92), AGFI (0.903), NFI (0.918), TLI (0.961), CFI (0.966), RMR (0.032), and RMSEA (0.033)].

The structural model confirms that enduring involvement significantly predicts purchase intention for fair trade products ($H1$, $\beta = 0.124$; $p < 0.01$), confirming that consumers who are sustainably involved with fair trade are more likely to intend to purchase such products.

Concerning socially oriented values, $H2$ and $H4$ are partially supported. Universalism ($\beta = 0.186$ for EI; $\beta = 0.122$ for PI) and benevolence ($\beta = 0.166$ for EI; $\beta = 0.164$ for PI) positively influence both involvement and purchase intention. These findings highlight the central role of altruistic values in ethical consumption. Security influences only purchase intention ($\beta = 0.113$), while tradition is not significant.

For individually oriented values, $H3$ and $H5$ are largely rejected. Most values (power, achievement, hedonism, self-direction) show no significant effects. However, stimulation surprisingly exerts a strong positive impact on purchase

Table 1. Description of the sample

Age				Genre		Income				Education level			
[18–29]	[30–39]	[40–49]	[50–59]	Male	Femel	>2000	[2000–1500]	[1500–800]	<800	Secondary's level	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD
137	236	117	103	298	295	138	167	180	108	181	227	134	51
23.1%	39.8%	19.7%	17.4%	50.3%	49.7%	23.3%	28.2%	30.4%	18.2%	30.5%	38.3%	22.6%	8.6%

Table 2. The structural model path coefficients

Hypothesized path				Std Beta	t-value	Results
H.1	EI	→	PI	.124 **	2.66	Supported
H.2.a	UN	→	EI	.186 ***	4.36	Supported
H.2.b	BE	→	EI	.166 ***	3.49	Supported
H.2.c	TR	→	EI	-.005	-0.301	Not Supported
H.2.d	SE	→	EI	.026	.562	Not Supported
H.3.a	PO	→	EI	-.028	-.648	Not Supported
H.3.b	AC	→	EI	-.028	-.608	Not Supported
H.3.c	HE	→	EI	.023	-.516	Not Supported
H.3.d	ST	→	EI	.022	.481	Not Supported
H.3. e	SD	→	EI	-.016	-.385	Not Supported
H.4.a	UN	→	PI	.122 **	2,778	Supported
H.4.b	BE	→	PI	.164 **	3,344	Supported
H.4.c	TR	→	PI	-.047	-1,027	Not Supported
H.4.d	SE	→	PI	0.113*	2,391	Supported
H.5.a	PO	→	PI	.002	.052	Not Supported
H.5.b	AC	→	PI	-.051	-1,099	Not Supported
H.5.c	HE	→	PI	.039	.878	Not Supported
H.5.d	ST	→	PI	.337 ***	6,696	Supported
H.5.e	SD	→	PI	.019	.441	Not Supported
H6	Cr	→	EI	.156 ***	3,587	Supported
	DSB	→	EI	.166 ***	3,741	Supported
	PCRP	→	EI	.195 ***	4,483	Supported
	CV	→	EI	.109 *	2,481	Supported
	GO	→	EI	-.056	-1,218	Not Supported
H7	CV	→	PI	.118 **	2,635	Supported
	Cr	→	PI	.190 ***	4,266	Supported
	DSB	→	PI	.136 **	3,02	Supported
	PCRP	→	PI	.111 *	2.5	Supported
	GO	→	PI	-.075	-1.59	Not Supported

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ / ** $p < 0.01$ / * $p < 0.05$.

intention ($\beta = 0.337$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that novelty-seeking may also drive ethical choices.

Regarding consumer social responsibility, H.6 and H.7 are not confirmed. However, all dimensions positively influence both Ei and PI except for the “geographic origin” factor, which has no significant effect (see Table 2 for detailed structural path coefficients).

Mediating effects

Using Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach and bootstrapping, we tested whether enduring involvement (EI) mediates the relationship between personal/social values and purchase intention (PI).

Universalism and benevolence significantly influence PI both directly and via EI, indicating partial mediation ($UN \rightarrow EI \rightarrow PI$: $\beta = 0.023$, $p < 0.01$; $BE \rightarrow EI \rightarrow PI$: $\beta = 0.021$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, security and stimulation influence PI only directly suggesting that their motivational power operates independently of sustained involvement. Other values have no significant effects.

Regarding consumer social responsibility, all dimensions exert significant indirect effects through EI ($\beta = 0.014$ to 0.024 , $p < 0.05$) except Geographic origin remains non-significant. Indirect effect results are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Indirect effects

Indirect Path	Standardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value
UN → EI → PI	0.023**	0.007	0.035	0.009
SE → EI → PI	0.003	-0.004	0.012	0.445
BE → EI → PI	0.021**	0.005	0.028	0.007
ST → EI → PI	0.003	-0.004	0.012	0.513
Cr → EI → PI	0.019*	0.005	0.032	0.011
DSB → EI → PI	0.021**	0.006	0.034	0.009
CV → EI → PI	0.014*	0.003	0.027	0.014
PCRP → EI → PI	0.024**	0.009	0.043	0.008
GO → EI → PI	-0.007	-0.019	0.002	0.190

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ / ** $p < 0.01$ / * $p < 0.05$.

Testing the moderating effect of PCE (perceived consumer effectiveness)

To assess the moderating effect of PCE, a multi-group analysis was performed by splitting the sample into high-PCE ($n = 230$) and low-PCE ($n = 363$) groups using K-means clustering. As shown in Table 4, a significant difference in model fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 31$; $\Delta df = 5$; $p < 0.001$) indicates that the relationship between enduring involvement (EI) and purchase intention (PI) varies by PCE level.

Structural coefficients show that EI strongly predicts PI for high-PCE individuals ($\beta = 0.499$; $p < 0.001$), while the effect is much weaker for the low-PCE group ($\beta = 0.127$; $p < 0.05$). This supports H.8, confirming that PCE enhances the influence of involvement on ethical purchasing.

Table 4. Moderating role of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE)

Hypotheses	High-PCE		Low-PCE	
	Std Beta	t-value	Std Beta	t-value
EI → PI	0.499***	7.481	0.127*	1.985

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ / * $p < 0.05$.

4. Discussion of results

Consistent with our findings, research has shown that sustained involvement with organic and fair trade products positively influences purchase intention (Bezençon & Blili, 2011; Ghali-Zinoubi & Toukabri, 2019). More recent experimental evidence confirms that consumer involvement significantly predicts ethical purchase behaviors (Reppmann et al., 2025). We observed that this relationship improves when consumers have a positive perception of their ability to change their behavior. Although the role of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) as a direct predictor of behavior has been extensively studied, we were also able to demonstrate that it could play, among other things, a positive moderating role in the influence of involvement on purchase intention. This finding aligns with previous studies by Berger and Corbin (1992), Lee and Holden (1999), Kim (2002), and Sharma and Jha (2017). It also echoes recent meta-analytic findings by Vieira et al. (2025), who demonstrated that PCE significantly increases the predictive power of green consumer behavior across cultural settings. Therefore, this variable is considered highly important in responsible consumption in general, and in the purchase of fair trade products in particular.

This study reveals, in line with the literature, that altruistic considerations (universalism and benevolence) simultaneously predicted involvement and purchase intention for fair trade products. Indeed, individuals interested in fair trade products were concerned with establishing equality (fraternity, equal opportunities for all, equality in exchanges), social justice (reducing injustice, helping the poor), harmony with nature (environmental protection), and peace (conflict resolution, sustainable relationships, etc.). The relevance of equality and social justice aligns

with one of the major objectives of fair trade, namely: to encourage greater equity by promoting social justice and protecting the rights of the vulnerable (Shaw et al., 2005; Ladhari & Tchegnna, 2015). These are significant and stable guiding principles for responsible behaviors, regardless of context (Shaw et al., 2005). This relation is highlighted by recent research showing strong associations between altruistic values, particularly universalism and benevolence, and purchase intentions across diverse demographics (Ghali et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the values of stimulation and security exerted a positive influence only on purchase intention. This suggests that these values are activated when the consumer considers translating their feelings and beliefs into an actual purchase or consumption act. Stimulation values were linked to the need for variety, excitement, novelty, and challenge. Through these values, individuals could be encouraged to learn more about organic and fair trade products as new products. The tendency to make exploratory purchases is well observed among consumers (Chinnici et al., 2002; Fotopoulos & Krystallis, 2002). For consumers, fair trade itself could be a novel concept, offering a unique and innovative consumption experience. The purchase of fair trade products was closely related to the pursuit of creativity, novelty, and excitement among consumers. Thus, fair trade consumers sought uniqueness, authenticity, and the ethnic and cultural characteristics of fair trade products (Ma & Lee, 2012). These findings are consistent with existing literature on the positive relationship between these elements of stimulation and the purchase of fair trade products (Ma & Lee, 2012; Coppola et al., 2017).

Consumer social responsibility is composed of five dimensions. All factors of this variable, except for geographic origin, show a positive and significant effect on enduring involvement and the intention to purchase fair trade products. Additionally, these factors explained the intention to purchase fair trade products both directly and through the mediation of sustainable involvement. Indeed, these factors reflected a certain consistency with the principles of fair trade, such as concern for business practices, the purchase of cause-related products, support for small businesses, and consumption volume. Consequently, they indicate sensitivity to issues of social justice, international solidarity, support for local actors, and the reduction of the ecological footprint. This aligns with evidence showing that ethical and philanthropic aspects of consumer social responsibility directly foster purchase intention in emerging markets, reinforcing its role as an antecedent to ethical consumption (Subhani et al., 2024). Therefore, consumers interested in fair trade products recognized the importance of choosing companies that cared about their staff, employees, and the environment, while avoiding those with disrespectful practices. This result aligns with several studies that have shown that concern for business practices is an important determinant of ethical product purchasing (Berki-Kiss & Menrad, 2022; Al-Haddad et al., 2022; Mäncher et al., 2023).

Moreover, the purchase of cause-related products and support for small businesses positively influenced involvement and purchase intention. In fact, support for small businesses was the foundation on which fair trade was built. For this reason, consumers who valued relationships with neighborhood small businesses and supported small enterprises demonstrated stable involvement with fair trade products and expressed a willingness to purchase them. These findings were already confirmed by Le-compte and Valette-Florence (2006). Consumers engaged in reducing consumption are more inclined to choose fair trade products because they perceive these products as sustainable and ethical, aligning with a more thoughtful consumption approach (Shaw & Moraes, 2009; Anderson, 2018). In contrast, the geographic origin of the products does not impact enduring involvement and the intention to purchase fair trade products, as consumers sensitive to equity in trade are not concerned with the nationality or region of the products but rather their contribution to the well-being of producers and environmental preservation.

5. Conclusions

This research focuses on the role of personal values and consumer social responsibility in enduring involvement and the purchase intention of fair trade products. These products are increasingly present in the market, but they still face challenges in attracting consumers, who are often poorly informed or not very engaged in the purchase and consumption of such products.

Theoretical implications

The study offers several theoretical contributions to the field of ethical and societal marketing. By considering various psychological and behavioral factors, this research highlights their impact on enduring involvement and purchase intention of fair trade products, which is considered a significant theoretical contribution. Indeed, despite the general interest in fair trade, few studies have examined personal values and consumer social responsibility simultaneously. The moderating role of perceived consumer effectiveness, a variable rarely studied in the context of fair trade, has also been verified and confirmed. This allows us to achieve a better understanding of the conditions under which enduring involvement effectively leads to increased purchase intention, depending on the degree of perceived effectiveness. The results showed that individuals are more likely to adopt fair trade purchasing behavior when they strongly believe in their ability to positively contribute to sustainability by choosing these products.

Furthermore, our research explored the effect of personal values on the affective and behavioral responses of consumers, a relationship that has been underdeveloped in the literature. Previous studies often reduced consumer reactions towards responsible products, especially fair trade products, to simple motivations tied solely to ethical considerations and altruistic values, such as universalism and

benevolence. Our findings enrich and complement these works by demonstrating that stimulation, as an individualistic value, positively affects purchase intention. Thus, altruistic values are necessary to form enduring involvement but are not sufficient to translate into purchase behavior. This highlights the complexity of the link between enduring involvement and actual purchasing behavior, emphasizing that additional factors, such as individual values and perceived effectiveness, play a role in transforming interests and feelings into concrete actions.

Another advancement from this research lies in the deeper understanding of the role of consumer social responsibility dimensions in motivating enduring involvement and purchase intention. Finally, it is well known that most consumption studies on fair trade have focused on Northern countries, given that fair trade products have only recently been introduced in emerging markets with different cultural, economic, and social characteristics. This research, however, focuses on one of these emerging markets, providing new insights into the motivations and barriers faced by consumers in these markets.

Managerial implications

This research also presents managerial implications for stakeholders involved in the promotion and distribution of fair trade products. It guides them towards implementing communication and segmentation strategies that take into account consumers' personal values and social responsibility. Advertising messages should provide transparent and verifiable information about production conditions, quality criteria, labels and certifications, as well as the social and environmental impacts of fair trade products. It was also found that consumers of fair trade products are not strictly attached to the geographical origin of the products. This information offers managers greater flexibility in sourcing choices while emphasizing ethical, social, and environmental aspects. The results show that buyers of fair trade products value health, uniqueness, authenticity, and the ethnic and cultural characteristics of fair trade products, as well as the innovative and creative aspects of the product.

Initiatives aimed at enhancing the perception of personal effectiveness can also be integrated into marketing strategies. It is recommended to strengthen perceived consumer effectiveness by raising awareness of their power to act and their role in the fair trade chain. Providing positive feedback on the outcomes of their purchases, such as showing the concrete and tangible benefits to producers, communities, and the planet, would also be useful.

Limitations and future research directions

This research presents certain limitations that should be taken into account. Firstly, the generalization of the results to other contexts and countries must be done with caution, as ethical consumption behaviors can vary significantly depending on culture and economic context, which shape beliefs and values. Indeed, culture reflects the norms that guide people toward socially acceptable behavior. Therefore, it would be valuable for future studies

to consider the norms, cultural values, and economic context of the country under study. Additionally, to confirm the robustness of this model, it should be tested in different socio-economic and cultural contexts, particularly in developed countries.

Secondly, it would have been preferable to focus on a specific product category, as consumer motivations may differ depending on the type of product. For example, when consumers make quick purchasing decisions, they are likely to choose a product primarily based on trust, familiarity, and brand attachment, rather than their personal values. Consequently, the predictive power of personal values may be weak, indicating a potential gap between values and consumer reactions.

Finally, an in-depth study on consumer segmentation in the field of fair trade would provide a better understanding of the different consumer profiles, allowing for the adaptation of the most appropriate marketing strategies.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Constructs and associated statements used in the questionnaire

Variables	Factors and Associated Items
Personal Values – Schwartz et al., 2021	Self-Direction SD1: Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way. SD2: It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and not depend on others.
	Stimulation ST1: He likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. ST2: He looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He wants to have an exciting life.
	Hedonism HE1: Having a good time is important to him. He likes to “spoil” himself. HE2: He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.
	Achievement AC1: It's important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does AC2: Being very successful is important to him. He hopes people will recognize his achievements.
	Power PO1: It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things. PO2: It is important to him to get respect from others. He wants people to do what he says.
	Security SE1: It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety. SE2: It is important to him that the government insure his safety against all threats. He wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.
	Conformity CO1: He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching. CO2: It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.
	Tradition TR1: It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself. TR2: Tradition is important to him. He tries to follow the customs handed down by his religion or his family.

End of Table A1

Variables	Factors and Associated Items
	Benevolence BE1: It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being. BE2: It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him. Universalism UN1: He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life. UN2: It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them. UN3: He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) – Ellen et al., 1991; Freestone and McGoldrick, 2008 Consumer Social Responsibility (CSR) – Lecompte and Valette-Florence, 2006	Unidimensional PCE1: One person's demanding big businesses to carry fair-trade can help the big picture. PCE2: I feel more responsible if I favor products that address fair-trade laws. PCE3: I feel better about myself if I take some form of action against retailers that violate fair-trade laws. PCE4: It would help the issue if people bought fair-trade products. Corporate Responsibility CR1: Not buying from companies or merchants who have close ties with organizations such as the mafia or cults. CR2: Not buying products made by companies that employ child labor. CR3: Not buying from companies that have disrespectful practices toward their employees. CR4: Not buying from companies or merchants who have close ties with political parties I condemn. CR5: Not buying from companies that heavily pollute. Purchasing Cause-Related Products (PCRP) PCRP1: Buying products where a portion of the price goes to a humanitarian cause. PCRP2: Buying products whose profits go to developing countries. PCRP3: Buying products where a portion of the price is donated to a good cause. PCRP4: Buying products from fair trade (a system that guarantees a decent living wage to small producers in the Global South). Defense of Small Businesses (DSB) DSB1: Avoiding doing all my shopping at large supermarkets. DSB2: Buying as often as possible from small shops (bakeries, butchers, bookstores, etc.). DSB3: Supporting local merchants through my purchases. DSB4: Going to the local market to support small fruit and vegetable producers. Geographic Origin (GO) GO1: Preferring to buy French-made products GO2: Buying products made in my own region. GO3: Buying fruits and vegetables produced in France. GO4: When I have the choice between a European product and one made elsewhere in the world, I choose the European product. Consumption Volume (CV) CV1: Limiting my consumption to only what I really need. CV2: In general, not consuming too much. CV3: Not buying products I can make myself.
Enduring Involvement – Strazzeri, 1994	Unidimensional EI1: This product really matters a lot to me. EI2: This product is of particular importance to me. EI3: I particularly enjoy talking about this product. EI4: You could say this product interests me. EI5: I feel particularly attracted to this product. EI6: Just gathering information to buy it is a pleasure.
Purchase Intentions – Pavlovskaja and Kara, 2022	Unidimensional PI1: I intend to buy fair trade products in the future. PI2: Next time I buy a product, it will be a fair trade product (if it is available in that category of the products). PI3: If I have a choice between a fair trade product and a non-fair trade product, I will choose a fair trade product. PI4: I am willing to pay more for fair trade products.

Table A2. Measurement model

CONSTRUCTS	Standardized estimates		Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Universalism (UN)	UN1	0.877***	0.919	0.92	0.793
	UN2	0.928***			
	UN3	0.865***			
Security (SE)	SE2	0.779***	0.803	0.803	0.671
	SE1	0.861***			
Power (PO)	PO2	0.69***	0.780	0.789	0.655
	PO1	0.927***			
Accomplishment (AC)	AC1	0.866***	0.788	0.794	0.66
	AC2	0.754***			
Stimulation (ST)	ST1	0.868***	0.804	0.804	0.672
	ST2	0.775***			
Hedonism (HE)	HE2	0.935***	0.831	0.845	0.735
	HE1	0.759***			
Self-Direction (SD)	SD1	0.939***	0.874	0.877	0.781
	SD2	0.827***			
Benevolence (BE)	BE1	0.749***	0.793	0.8	0.667
	BE2	0.881***			
Conformity (CO)	CO1	0.814***	0.830	0.839	0.725
	CO2	0.872***			
Tradition (TR)	TR1	0.808***	0.818	0.819	0.693
	TR2	0.857***			
Corporate Responsibility (CR)	CR1	0.981***	0.878	0.887	0.726
	CR3	0.753***			
	CR2	0.806***			
Defense of Small Businesses (DSB)	DSB1	0.978***	0.923	0.927	0.809
	DSB3	0.835***			
	DSB4	0.879***			
Consumption Volume (CV)	CV1	0.951***	0.922	0.924	0.802
	CV2	0.845***			
	CV3	0.886***			
Purchasing Cause-Related Products (PCRP)	PCRP1	0.970***	0.877	0.887	0.725
	PCRP3	0.816***			
	PCRP4	0.753***			
Geographic Origin (GO)	GO1	0.890***	0.911	0.911	0.774
	GO2	0.890***			
	GO3	0.858***			
Enduring Involvement (EI)	EI1	0.782***	0.930	0.931	0.731
	EI2	0.892***			
	EI3	0.844***			
	EI5	0.883***			
	EI6	0.869***			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.817***	0.859	0.860	0.671
	PI2	0.824***			
	PI3	0.817***			
Percived Cusumer Effectivenes (PCE)	PCE1	0.928***	0.942	0.942	0.843
	PCE2	0.922***			
	PCE4	0.905***			

Note: *** p < 0.001.

Table A3. Discriminant validity

	UN	SE	PO	AC	ST	HE	SD	BE	CO	TR	Cr	DSB	CV	PCR	GO	EI	PI	PCE
UN	0.890																	
SE	0.159**	0.819																
PO	-0.159**	-0.158**	0.809															
AC	-0.148**	-0.144**	0.135*	0.812														
ST	0.000	0.001	0.171**	0.220***	0.820													
HE	-0.175***	-0.214***	0.103*	0.043	-0.107*	0.857												
SD	-0.172***	-0.102*	0.151**	-0.002	0.090	0.084	0.884											
BE	0.200***	0.071	-0.130*	-0.154**	-0.084	-0.082	-0.213***	0.817										
CO	0.079	0.253***	-0.086	0.054	0.165**	-0.304***	-0.149**	0.130**	0.845									
TR	0.124*	0.232***	-0.004	-0.111*	0.079	-0.141**	-0.066	0.202***	0.201***	0.833								
Cr	0.022	-0.070	-0.026	0.035	0.033	-0.001	-0.008	-0.012	-0.009	-0.013	0.852							
DSB	0.020	0.011	0.061	-0.022	0.098*	0.026	0.037	-0.009	-0.004	0.054	0.389***	0.900						
CV	-0.050	0.019	0.008	-0.106*	0.018	0.015	-0.001	0.056	0.019	0.067	0.209***	0.266***	0.895					
PCR	0.053	0.002	0.000	-0.016	-0.037	0.053	0.010	0.049	0.006	0.057	0.255***	0.225***	0.274***	0.852				
GO	0.012	-0.025	-0.017	0.039	0.003	0.095*	0.002	0.013	-0.050	-0.016	0.263***	0.321***	0.385***	0.320***	0.880			
EI	0.238***	0.052	-0.077	-0.095*	0.005	-0.016	-0.076	0.217***	0.019	0.070	0.279***	0.283***	0.218***	0.299***	0.147**	0.855		
PI	0.198***	0.125*	-0.003	-0.052	0.320***	-0.043	-0.016	0.188***	0.080	0.076	0.311***	0.305***	0.230***	0.238***	0.120*	0.332***	0.819	
PCE	0.034	-0.202***	-0.031	0.023	0.045	0.051	0.118**	0.079	0.012	-0.005	0.040	0.085*	0.030	-0.027	-0.025	0.046	0.261***	0.918