

DOES FAIR TRADE EXIST?

Results of a survey during the first Max Havelaar Lecture (November 2007)

Prof. Rob van Tulder, with inputs and support from students from the department of Business-Society Management.

Participants of the first Max Havelaar lecture were asked to respond to statements on the topic of 'fair' and 'free' trade. Of the 882 participants, 387 filled out the survey, a return rate of 44%. The respondents were divided into four categories 'general participants' and 'students', and 'male' and 'female'. The survey was handed-in after the lectures, which might have positively affected the general familiarity of the participants with the topic (and perhaps their opinion). Important or remarkable results of the survey are indicated by a shaded area.

General Results (N=387)				
Question	I agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total
1. Fair Trade exists	86,54%	7,65%	5,80%	100,00%
2. Fair Trade helps least developed countries	91,56%	2,90%	5,54%	100,00%
3. All companies should trade in a fair manner	75,99%	13,72%	10,29%	100,00%
4. Companies should better communicate whether their products are traded in a fair way	89,45%	7,39%	3,17%	100,00%
5. The issue of Fair Trade is difficult to manage because of the large number of Fair Trade labels and their often unclear meaning.	47,49%	33,25%	19,26%	100,00%
6. Fair Trade is the opposite of Free Trade	8,18%	82,59%	9,23%	100,00%
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
7. I am familiar with the Max Havelaar Fair Trade logo	78,36%	21,64%		100,00%
8. I understand what the Max Havelaar trade mark stands for	88,92%	11,08%		100,00%
9. When I shop, I always check whether I buy "fair trade" products.	8,44%	58,31%	33,25%	100,00%

Respondents strongly agree with the questions 1-4, which not only indicates that Fair Trade exists in the perception of the audience, but also that it needs to be further developed. Opinions

are divided on question 5, but indicate that Fair Trade is difficult to manage through labels. Interestingly, Fair Trade is not considered the opposite of Free Trade (question 6). Familiarity with the Max Havelaar Fair Trade logo and its meaning was big, whereas around 41% of the respondents stated that they check at least once in a while whether they buy Fair Trade products.

Male general participants (N=34)

Question	I agree	Disagree	I don't know	Total
1	32	1	1	34
2	30	1	3	34
3	28	3	3	34
4	29	2	3	34
5	16	11	7	34
6	3	30	1	34
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
7	29	5	0	34
8	32	2	0	34
9	10	12	12	34

Female general participants (N=32)

Question	I agree	Disagree	I don't know	Total
1	28	3	1	32
2	29	1	2	32
3	29	1	2	32
4	30	2	0	32
5	11	16	5	32
6	2	28	2	32
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
7	28	4	0	32
8	28	4	0	32
9	10	8	14	32

Male students (N=164)

Question	I agree	Disagree	I don't know	Total
1	136	21	7	164
2	150	7	7	164
3	112	31	21	164
4	139	18	7	164
5	86	54	24	164
6	11	141	12	164
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
7	121	43	0	164
8	146	18	0	164
9	6	106	52	164

Female students (N=149)

Question	I agree	Disagree	I don't know	Total
1	132	4	13	149
2	138	2	9	149
3	119	17	13	149
4	141	6	2	149
5	67	45	37	149
6	15	114	20	149
	Yes	No	Sometimes	
7	119	30	0	149
8	131	18	0	149
9	6	95	48	149

In distinguishing between male and female and general and student participants, male and female students do not much differ in their answers. Interestingly however is that although most students are aware of the Max Havelaar logo (male, 74% and female, 80%) and know the intentions of the Max Havelaar trade mark (male, 89% and female 88%) the majority of the students do not consider whether products are fair trade or not when shopping (male 65% and female 64%). Other – and older – participants at the lecture are not only aware of the Max Havelaar trade mark, but are also much more actively using this information to shop responsibly. So Max Havelaar still has a world to gain in stimulating in particular students to choose for Fair Trade products. Other research has shown that the perceived image of 'fair trade' products is of being more expensive, which might explain in particular for the relatively inactive attitude of students towards the Fair Trade logo. Part of the explanation for this result also lies in the inability of many students to distinguish between the wide variety of fair trade labels. Much more than for the general audience, students have difficulties in understanding the meaning of these labels. A communication challenge, therefore, for those who want to bring fair trade products also to younger people.