



Drivers of consumer's willingness to pay for fair trade food products: the role of positive and negative emotions

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Abstract

This paper proposes an explanatory model of the intention to pay for fair trade food products based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory. The research aims are to test the effects of general attitudes toward sustainable food products on the valuation of fair-trade food products, to study the effects of emotions on willingness to pay for fair trade food products and to analyse the mediating role of product evaluation and emotions. The proposed model was tested using an ordinary least squares estimation and an analysis combining the properties of parallel and serial mediation on a representative sample of 305 consumers in the Basque Country (Spain). Descriptive analyses indicate that respondents had a favourable attitude toward sustainable products and positively valued fair trade products. The willingness to pay was moderate. The results show the importance of emotions, especially pride, in transforming attitudes toward sustainable food products into a willingness to pay for fair trade food products. This study links the more general literature on sustainable products to that of fair-trade products, broadening the focus of the S-O-R theory. In addition, it helps fair trade organisations understand consumer behaviour influenced by positive emotions and attitudes towards sustainable products, including fair trade products.

Keywords *Sustainable products · Food · Fair trade · Emotions · Willingness to pay · S-O-R model*

1 Introduction

According to Fairtrade International (2022), over 1.9 million farmers and workers are involved in Fairtrade worldwide. In addition, about 2,000 organisations in 70 countries produced more than 37,000 products sold in 143 different countries in 2021.

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Fairtrade involves more than 1.5 billion euros in Fairtrade premiums earned by producers in the last decade. The benefits associated with Fairtrade are captured in what Fairtrade International calls “The key issues”: (1) fighting the root causes of child labour; (2) addressing climate change; (3) developing strategies that promote decent livelihoods; (4) protecting the environment; (5) fighting the root causes of labour abuses; (6) preventing gender inequality; (7) mitigating human rights harms; and (8) aligning indicators with the SDGs. Not all of these benefits have received the same attention from the scientific literature, nor are they the focus of this paper. However, it is worth highlighting the work of Krumbiegel et al. (2018), who found that Fairtrade certification contributed to worker satisfaction and improved the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards of employment on a large-scale pineapple plantation in Ghana.

For all these benefits to be possible, consumers must actively seek out these products and be willing to pay for them. For Bürgin and Wilken (2021), selling fair trade (FT) products can be problematic due to their high price compared to conventional products. To solve this problem, these authors propose “to make consumers aware of the benefits of fairtrade” through “partitioned pricing, which explicitly displays fairtrade as a separate price component,” which would increase consumers’ purchase intention. Therefore, it seems that the sale of fair-trade products has significant benefits, and the worldwide sales level is related to their price and willingness to pay for these products by consumers around the world. Both the premium price concept and the willingness to pay (WTP) variable have been the subject of interest in the literature on fair trade products (Fuller et al., 2022; Zerbini et al., 2019), but research on their antecedents is neither very abundant nor conclusive. There is a need to deepen the knowledge of the antecedent variables of WTP.

This research aims to address several research gaps. First, WTP studies are inconclusive on the existence of a reasonable premium. Specifically, in the context of fair trade-labelled products, several studies present conflicting evidence (Basu & Hicks, 2008) that can be attributed to several factors. Some papers suggest variables such as the credibility of the label itself (label transparency), the type of product in question, the heterogeneity of consumers (age, gender, education, income), and the quality of the labelled product (Maaya et al., 2018). A social desirability bias, consisting of socially desirable responses, has also been suggested (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005), which would create an attitude-behaviour gap (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Kossmann & Gomez-Suarez, 2019). Concerning FT products, other authors highlight that one reason for such a gap between favourable attitudes and actual behaviours may be that the willingness to pay is lower than the premium added to FT products (Cayón-Ruisánchez et al., 2016; Global, 2018). That is, the price may be a barrier to FT product consumption (if consumers, as much as they value ethical and responsible consumption, consider the premium too high). However, there is limited research on price premiums for ethical products (Arnot et al., 2006).

Second, the literature on sustainable products shows a wide disparity of results regarding willingness to pay depending on the analysed context/country. In Spain, in particular, there are very few studies on this subject. About fair trade products, to the best of our knowledge, there are no scientific articles that have studied the antecedents of the willingness to pay for these products. According to the Coordinadora Estatal de Comercio Justo—state fair trade organisation—(2020, p. 7), “more than

60% of the Spanish population would be willing to pay more to buy products to support the people who make them in developing countries (the European average is around 50%)...despite this, ethical and FT consumption in Europe in general and in Spain, in particular, remains a minority". The entity estimates that FT only represents 1.4% of the global market (Coordinadora Estatal de Comercio Justo, 2020).

The different organisations that operate in fair trade in Spain do so in one or more of these regions and find it challenging to know the consumers' behaviour in these regions. The reason is that the data at the level of the whole country is very scarce, and there is only a limited amount of information at a sub-national level. Therefore, it seems necessary to understand the willingness to pay for FT food products variable and its antecedents.

Third, the role of emotions in sustainable product purchase behaviour has been understudied. Onwezen et al.'s (2017) study, based on the responses of residents in six European countries (Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, and Slovenia), concluded that positive emotions, such as pride, had a more substantial effect than negative emotions, such as guilt, on consumers' intentions to purchase bio-based, agriculture-derived, and other renewable agricultural, marine, and forest-based products. Previous studies, however, have reached contradictory results regarding these emotions. Onwezen et al. (2014) found that anticipated guilt had a more substantial effect than anticipated pride on purchase intention for FT products. However, both effects were minor, and the differences were insignificant. This paper aims to explore the mediating role of emotions.

Fourth, FT food products are also related to social sustainability, one of the least studied sustainability dimensions (Bangsa & Schlegelmilch, 2020). There appear to be no studies that relate the willingness to pay for FT food products to either general consumer attitudes toward sustainable food products or the positive and negative emotions that a purchase (current or anticipated) may generate.

Based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory, this paper aims to address the following research questions:

1. Is the valuation of FT food products a stimulus for greater willingness to pay?
2. Do consumer emotions mediate the relationship between the valuation of FT food products and willingness to pay for FT food products?
3. What role do general consumer attitudes toward sustainable food products play in the model, and how do they affect willingness to pay for FT food products?

The main contribution of this paper, and what differentiates it from previous studies, is that it focuses on analysing the relationship between general attitudes toward sustainable products and willingness to pay for FT products and testing the mediating effects of other relevant variables. In particular, it is found that the valuation of FT products and emotions (especially pride) are essential mediators of this relationship.

This paper is structured as follows: first, the results of previous studies are reviewed within the theoretical framework and under the guiding thread of the S-O-R model, followed by the hypotheses. Secondly, the methodology used to address the research questions and test the hypotheses is presented. Thirdly, the main results obtained are described. Fourth, the results are discussed, and the main theoretical and practi-

cal implications are presented. Finally, the conclusions section summarises the main contributions of the study.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 The S-O-R model

The S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) is a theoretical approach that posits that various elements of the environment act as stimuli (S) that affect the internal state or organism of the individual (O) and ultimately condition his or her behaviour or response (R).

This approach has received much less attention than others (e.g., the theory of planned behaviour or the theory of reasoned action) to explain consumer behaviour (Kossmann & Gomez-Suarez, 2019). However, the number of scientific articles that rely on the S-O-R model is increasing. Several recent studies take the model as a basis to explain compulsive buying (Moon et al., 2022), online purchases (Iranmanesh et al., 2022), or in the context of omnichannel retailing (Cheah et al., 2022). However, to the best of our knowledge, no study on fair trade products is based on this theory.

2.2 Stimulus-response: the effect of valuation of FT food products on willingness to pay

The “consumer willingness to pay” variable is frequently researched and analysed in the context of ethical consumption in general and FT in particular (Global, 2018). It is defined as the maximum price (or price range) a consumer is willing to pay for a product, be it a good or service (Stobierski, 2020). Willingness to pay is a measure of purchase intention and can be considered to some extent as a proxy variable for actual consumer behaviour (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005).

FT products are generally considered to be priced higher than conventional products due to the costs associated with fairer wages and more environmentally friendly practices (Konuk, 2019, p. 141), and they are less available (Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al., 2021). According to Zerbini et al. (2019), to ensure that organisations marketing FT products are profitable, consumers who choose FT-certified products must be willing to absorb these additional production costs and pay a premium price. By determining consumer willingness to pay, organisations can set prices that maximise profits and consumer satisfaction (Stobierski, 2020).

However, consumer willingness to pay may vary due to the extrinsic and intrinsic differences between the individuals who make up a target population or market (Stobierski, 2020). Among the former differences, observable sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, income level, or education level can be noticed (Yang et al., 2012). Among the latter, not directly observable, the level of risk tolerance or the desire to please others can be noted. On the other hand, depending on the context or the consumption situation (place, urgency, supply, availability, information, knowledge, confidence in a brand/label, competition, etc.), the same consumer may be willing to pay more or less for a product.

Although price is the main factor associated with willingness to pay, other variables such as packaging, labelling, or brand name, as well as awareness of responsible and ethical consumption, environmental concern, trust in FT labels, and the degree of consumer innovation, have also been associated with it (Stobierski, 2020). Numerous studies have indicated that a majority of consumers would pay a premium price for socially responsible products that meet specific ethical standards (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Kossmann & Gomez-Suarez, 2019; Tully & Winer, 2014; Vlaeminck et al., 2016) and, conversely, would penalise companies (by demanding a lower price) that are perceived as unethical (Trudel & Cotte, 2009). According to Trudel and Cotte (2009), the punishment imposed by consumers is greater than the premium they are willing to pay. That is, the adverse effects of unethical behaviour have a substantially more significant impact on consumer willingness to pay than the positive effects of ethical behaviour.

In Spain, the study by Pérez and García de los Salmones (2018) finds that consumers' perceptions of fair-trade products, including functional utilities such as product quality, have a direct and significant impact on consumer purchase intentions. However, they do not study the relationship with WTP. Fuller et al. (2022) also do not collect information on consumers' perceptions of fair-trade coffee but conclude, after conducting several non-hypothetical experimental auctions, that consumers are willing to pay a premium for fair trade coffee and that they react positively to information about label claims, increasing the premium by 72% for fair trade coffee.

Although previous research has barely explored the relationship between the valuation of FT products and WTP, we propose, based on the relationship between product valuation and purchase intentions, that there is a direct relationship between the valuation of FT products and willingness to pay a premium for these products, as stated in H1.

H1: The valuation of FT food products positively affects WTP for FT food products.

2.3 Stimulus- organism-response: the mediating effect of positive and negative emotions

Emotions can considerably influence consumer behaviour; nevertheless, exploration of connections between emotions and pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour is low, and there are inconsistent results (see Adams et al., 2020 for a review). Particularly moral emotions, understood as “the emotions that respond to moral violations or that motivate moral behaviour” (Haidt, 2003, p. 853), are essential in influencing a person's ethical attitudes and behaviours. These emotions can promote greater engagement in behaviours that directly or indirectly influence, protect, or enhance others. This subset of emotions includes pride and guilt. Both are self-conscious emotions that individuals experience when they feel personally responsible for the consequences of their actions (Soscia, 2007), which is related to individual standards of right and wrong (Tracy & Robins, 2007) and a process of self-evaluation or self-reflection. They are two emotions of opposite valence yet share common characteristics; individuals can experience either [emotion] in response to the same event. Despite the growing number of papers in the last few years, pride and guilt have

received less attention than other self-conscious emotions (Kim & Huang, 2021) and still need further study (Antonetti & Baines, 2015; Kayal et al., 2018).

Pride arises from a pleasant feeling, as Mascolo and Fischer (1995, p. 66) indicated, “[it is] generated by appraisals that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person.” In this sense, according to Higgins et al. (2001), individuals can experience pride as either “promotion pride,” which can be triggered when they do something [meritorious/commendable] (e.g., Paramita et al., 2020), or “prevention pride,” which is experienced when they fulfil their responsibilities and sense of duty. In the latter case, pride strengthens pro-environmental or pro-social behaviours after individuals feel responsible for a positive consequence; that is, by satisfied “doing the right thing,” they feel that their actions will contribute to someone else’s welfare (Paramita et al., 2020; Tracy & Robins, 2007).

On the other hand, guilt is “the dysphoric feeling associated with the recognition that one has violated a personally relevant moral or social standard” (Kugler & Jones, 1992, p. 318); it is a negative emotion that creates a sense of remorse over and concern about the consequences of a previous action (Onwezen et al., 2014). Guilt also arises as a consequence of actual actions and also as a result of inactions (Cotte et al., 2005). In other words, guilt and existentialism can be anticipatory or reactive (Kayal et al., 2017). Kayal et al. (2018) recognized in their work that guilt could be caused under three circumstances: situations associated with oneself, others, and/or societal standards.

Both pride and guilt guide behaviour as per individuals’ personal and social standards and have a significant influence on consumers’ attitudes (Boudewyns et al., 2013) and behaviours (Antonetti & Baines, 2015; Pham & Sun, 2020). People generally endeavour to retain pride and evade and let go of guilt. Individuals experience pride when they engage in positive and socially desirable behaviour (Gifford, 2014), and the lack of commitment to good behaviours and opportunities results in guilt. Both emotions result from individuals’ evaluations, and they have an instant positive or negative influence on individuals’ attitudes/behaviour (Escadas et al., 2019).

Berki-Kiss and Menrad (2022) studied the effect of emotions on the intention of German flower buyers. However, only one of the indicators of the variable “emotions”, the commitment item, was related to pride or guilt: “I feel guilt/proud when I decide to purchase Fairtrade roses.” This study focuses on preventing pride and guilt due to inaction predictors of consumer willingness to pay concerning fair trade products generated by personal beliefs or perceptions about those kinds of products. There does not appear to be any research on the connections between consumers’ valuation of FT food products, their pride or guilt, or their willingness to behave in a certain way about FT products. However, consumers can feel pride (or less guilt) when they contribute to the well-being of FT producers and the communities in which they operate and when they pay a price premium. By committing to the purchase of FT products, even if they must pay a price premium, consumers could feel proud (or less guilty) that they are paying a fair price for someone’s labour, reducing poverty, consuming fewer processed products, increasing a community’s wealth, fostering more sustainable consumption, reducing gender inequalities, etc.

The current study also differs from past research by considering anticipated emotions in the case of pride for non-consumers of FT products and guilt for consumers.

Persons predict how they will feel regarding upcoming outcomes and use these forecasts to manage their choices (Mellers & McGraw, 2001). This proposition considers that consumers' anticipation of the upcoming emotional effects of acts yet to be taken affects current choices (Schneider et al., 2017). In this sense, this study tries to demonstrate whether consumers of FT products would be willing to pay more for those products to avoid feelings of guilt and whether non-consumers of FT products would be inclined to pay extra money to experience a positive emotion (in this case, pride).

Preceding research has provided evidence to test this hypothesis. For example, Becker (2021) demonstrated that individuals feel more pride (and less guilt) when they opt for an ethical consumer choice. Antonetti and Maklan (2014) proved that feelings of pride or guilt would influence pro-environmental behaviour positively, which in turn influences consumers' intention to buy sustainable products; there is also evidence of a relationship between consumers' valuation of organic food, pride, and guilt, and consumers' intention to buy those products (Onwezen et al., 2014).

However, significant differences are found in estimating consumer willingness to pay for products from ethical organisations. Among the studies that find a positive consumer willingness to pay, there are differences in the amount of the price premium. Subrahmanyam (2004) noted that it would range between 10% and 25% over comparable alternatives, whereas Global CAD (2018) observed that it would be between 3% and 20%. The price differential to be paid also varies depending on the product types, the characteristics of consumers and the countries in which they reside, product certification seals, the information provided (for example, whether the donated amount is known), or the surcharge (when the surcharge increases, the preference for a product decreases). However, some authors conclude that the willingness to pay an extra price for this type of product may be zero (e.g., Barone et al., 2000; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Cone, 2004).

In the particular case of FT products, there is also evidence of a positive willingness to pay (e.g., Andorfer and Liebe, 2012; Arnot et al., 2006; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Loureiro and Lotade, 2005; McCluskey and Loureiro, 2003; Obermiller et al., 2009; Vlaeminck et al., 2016). It has been observed that the price premium for FT labels is higher than for organic product labels (Loureiro & Lotade, 2005), with significant differences across countries, product categories, FT seals and certificates, and consumers' sociodemographic characteristics (Global, 2018; Ramos-García & Reverón-Rodríguez, 2018; Vlaeminck et al., 2016). Similar results to those obtained for ethical products are observed in the case of FT products, finding premium price ranges between 5% and 15% (Galarraga & Markandya, 2004) or between 3% and 20% (Global, 2018).

Although, again, previous research does not allow us to have evidence of the mediating role of emotions in the relationship between FT product valuation and WTP, we propose that emotions are the organism that helps to transfer the effects of the stimulus to the response; that is, we propose that part of the effects of fair-trade product valuation on willingness to pay are produced through positive and negative emotions.

H2a: Pride has a mediating effect on the relationship between the valuation of FT food products and WTP for FT food products.

H2b: Guilt has a mediating effect on the relationship between the valuation of FT food products and WTP for FT food products.

2.4 An extension of the S-O-R model: the role of general attitudes toward sustainable products

The literature highlights some consumers' growing interest in food products that are produced and marketed alternatively to that of the large global supply chains. According to Calvo-Turrientes and Fernández-Ferrín (2019), the consumers' growing interest would be a consequence of these people's opposition to food globalisation as well as the feelings of identity and belonging that are evoked by this type of product purchase.

Sustainable products have been defined as “products with positive social and/or environmental attributes” (Luchs et al., 2010, p. 19) that are difficult for consumers to assess before or even after purchase (Bangsa & Schlegelmich, 2020); they are manifested through sustainability labels (e.g., organic, FT or non-genetically modified organisms), narrative claims or a specific physical appearance (e.g., biodegradable packaging) (Berry et al., 2017; Del Giudice et al., 2018; Herbes et al., 2018) that seek to provide reassurance about the products' sustainable character.

For Hyland et al. (2015), the current context is marked by the hegemony of a global supply chain in which homogeneous products are obtained through standardised and phytosanitary-intensive methods. According to Birch et al. (2018), this chain generates negative externalities, consisting of the disconnection between production and consumption, the increase in greenhouse gases, and the loss of biodiversity, traditional methods, or cultural identity.

Mistrust in the global supply chain has led some consumers to be interested in food origin, to seek to improve the welfare of rural communities and local producers and to preserve the environment (Dragon & Albergaria, 2012). Some recent studies indicate that consumers buy sustainable products in their places of residence and actively seek to taste and buy typical local gastronomy when travelling for tourism. These activities not only relate positively to their satisfaction, the creation of memorable experiences, and the perception of a good standard of living (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2020) but also to the support of local agriculture and livestock (Ballina et al., 2021) and pro-environmental behaviours (Bordian et al., 2021).

Opposition to food globalisation has led to a search for alternatives or food models grouped in so-called alternative food networks (AFNs). AFNs refer to food flows, processes, and relationships (Wiskerke, 2009). Most AFNs are characterised by shortening food chains through short food supply chains, which aim to reduce the production-consumption distance and the number of intermediaries, resocialize food production and generate more direct connections and relationships, with particular emphasis on the construction of value and meaning. This creates transparent chains in which products reach the consumer with a high degree of value-laden information about their origin, quality, and production methods. The information transfer must be done clearly so consumers can establish relationships with products' places of origin and differentiate them from anonymous products (Marsden et al., 2000; Renting et al., 2003).

Sustainable products have been considered environmentally friendly, healthier, produced with fewer chemicals, and of better quality (Sánchez-Bravo et al., 2021). In Spain, several studies have highlighted consumers' growing interest in food produced by traditional methods by companies with transparent production processes and which market their products through short or direct channels (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2018; 2019). Sánchez-Bravo et al. (2021) analysed 3,600 consumer responses in six countries regarding their attitudes toward various agricultural product production aspects. They found substantial differences between countries. Spanish consumers considered small farms essential to ensure sustainable production; they valued the social aspects of food production, such as fair trade and workers' social rights, and generally considered organic or more sustainable products worth paying a price premium. More than 60% of respondents were willing to pay 5% more for most food product categories if they were sustainably produced.

To Yang et al. (2020), consumers do not always find objective differences between sustainable products and conventional alternatives. However, extrinsic information, such as sustainable product features, can change consumers' emotional responses, leading to more positive feelings toward sustainable alternatives.

FT is a product certification and labelling system that seeks consumer recognition through quality labels and private or public certifications (Renard, 2005, cited in Ruggeri et al., 2019). The information on the certifications and labels influences consumer willingness to pay for these products because they are ethically made in better working conditions (Krumbiegel et al., 2018, cited in Ruggeri et al., 2019).

According to Andorfer and Liebe (2012), some consumers buy FT products not just to do the right thing but also to project their own identity and prove they are morally good. Consumers more concerned about the conventional purchasing system may link ethics and consumption by including FT products in their daily shopping. Ruggeri et al. (2019) raised the need to overcome the dualistic narrative between radical and pragmatic consumers, recognizing the enormous heterogeneity of consumers.

In this research, an additional variable has been added to the S-O-R model: general attitudes toward sustainable food products. Some studies in Spain indicate that consumers value products that combine several sustainable characteristics very positively. For example, Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2018) found that food products that simultaneously combined local, regional, and traditional product attributes were highly valued by consumers. Similarly, Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2019) indicated that attitudes toward proximity, tradition, and ethnicity of food products positively influenced both the willingness to purchase and the actual purchase of food products with protected geographical indication. Fuller et al. (2022) found, when analysing the price that coffee consumers would be willing to pay, that when the coffee, in addition to being organic, is fair trade, the price premium increases substantially. Based on the above, we believe that general attitudes toward a combination of features associated with sustainable products may thus affect specific products' valuations within the broad spectrum of what is now considered sustainable products: organic, local, regional, traditional, or FT products, among others.

It is proposed that these general attitudes impact the willingness to pay extra for FT food products through three mediating variables: consumers' valuation of these products and the positive and negative emotions associated with their purchase (in

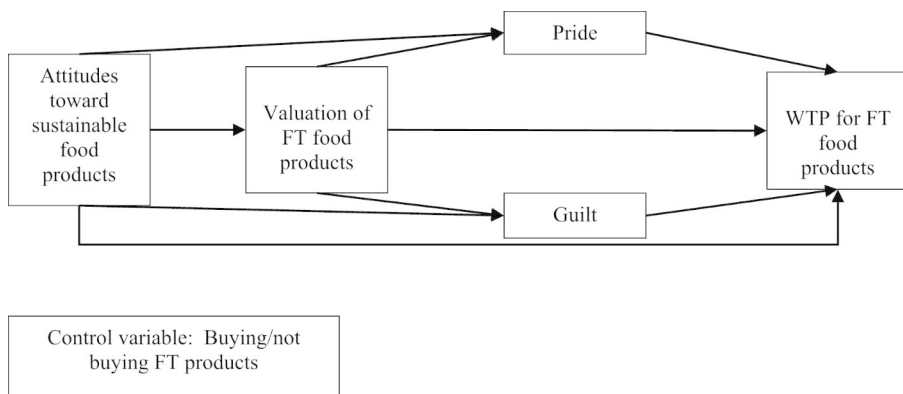


Fig. 1 Proposed model

the case of current non-buyers, these are anticipated emotions), combining parallel and serial mediation (see Fig. 1). Collectively these three variables are proposed as mediators in the relationship between attitudes and willingness to pay, as stated in hypothesis 3.

H3: Attitudes toward sustainable food products have a positive effect on consumer willingness to pay for FT food products through (a) the valuation of FT food products, (b) pride, and (c) guilt.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample

As indicated previously, there is a need to increase research on FT products in Spain. According to the report conducted by Global CAD for Fairtrade International, “current annual spending per capita for Fairtrade labelled products increases constantly over time, yet differs largely between European countries, from less than 1 Euro in Spain to almost 60 Euros in Ireland” (Global, 2019, p. 12). It seems interesting to analyse the antecedents of the variable willingness to pay in a country where the consumption of fair-trade products is among the lowest in Europe. In addition, the report carried out by the Coordinadora Estatal de Comercio Justo (2020) includes estimates of spending per person in the different regions of Spain, with significant differences between them. The different organisations that operate in Fair Trade in Spain do so in one or more of these regions and find it challenging to know the consumers’ behaviour in these regions since the data at the level of the whole country is very scarce and there is only a limited amount of information at a sub-national level. In line with previous work (Cayón-Ruisánchez et al., 2016; Knöbldorfer et al., 2021; Pérez et al., 2018; Ruggeri et al., 2021; Sellare, 2022; Yang et al., 2012), this study focuses on a specific geographic context. Namely, a region of Northern Spain, the Basque Country.

Table 1 Characteristics of the survey sample

Consumer profile	Categories	Percentage
Gender	Men	48.2
	Women	51.8
Age	18–35	22.0
	36–50	27.2
	51–65	25.9
	+65	24.9
Educational level	No schooling	0.7
	Primary education	19.0
	Secondary education	41.6
	Higher education	38.7
Occupation	Student	6.6
	Employed person	48.9
	Self-employed person	4.9
	Retired	30.9
	Unemployed	7.5
	Homemakers	1.0
Family income (€)	< 1,000	10.4
	1,000–2,000	57.3
	> 2,000	32.3

A specialist market research company collected the data utilising a personal survey. All respondents were required to have a minimum knowledge of FT and FT products, with approximately half being FT buyers and the other half non-buyers.

The population to be analysed was the general population over 18 years of age throughout the Basque Country, and the type of sampling used was stratified. The sample was designed to be representative of the population (assuming a sampling error of 5.66% for a confidence level of 99% and assuming the maximum variability of the population $p=q=0.5$) and to reflect each province's relative weights, as well as the proportions of age and gender (data from the Basque Institute of Statistics (Eustat) for 2019 was used as a reference). Considering these segments (quotas), individuals from each segment were selected randomly. As the percentage of the population that knows what an FT product is and the proportion of people who have purchased any FT product in the last year is unknown, the representative sample was based on the Basque Country's population. We consider that the sampling method used is consistent with the objectives proposed, resulting in a sample similar to the population to be studied but guaranteeing a significant presence of buyers of FT products.

The personal surveys were conducted using a structured questionnaire between September 23 and 29, 2020, following a pretest on September 11, 2020. A total of eleven sampling points were used in the region's main towns.

The data are duly stored in a private repository. They would be transferred on demand, provided there is a justification of the need, purpose of use, and prior authorization from the project coordinator. Namely, the dataset was stored in an SPSS file, a commercial tool widely used by the scientific community and, therefore, would ensure data interoperability if necessary. In addition, in this study, the data were processed with the same tool and the PROCESS software, which is added directly as a patch to SPSS.

The final sample comprised 305 consumers, 51.8% of whom were women. The characteristics of the survey sample are included in Table 1.

Table 2 Descriptives and correlation matrix

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Attitudes toward sustainable food products (1)	6.23	0.84					
Valuation of FT food products (2)	5.29	1.19	0.51**				
Pride (3)	5.35	1.49	0.47**	0.73**			
Guilt (4)	2.02	1.44	0.13*	0.20**	0.21**		
WTP for FT products (5)	4.92	1.95	0.27**	0.36**	0.42**	0.28**	
Control: buying/not buying FT products (6)	0.50	0.50	-0.12	-0.34**	-0.25**	-0.09	-0.34**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire was developed following a literature review, and most of the presented questions reflect variables and measures previously validated in empirical studies. The scales generally have seven items, the extremes being 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree), or 1 (not at all important) and 7 (very important).

The Attitude toward sustainable food products variable is an adaptation of that used by Fernández-Ferrín et al. (2019). It has six indicators that measure how essential product aspects are for consumers, such as that product has been produced by a company that is transparent about the product's manufacturing process or by a socially responsible company. Sarabia-Andreu et al. (2020) highlighted the difficulty of applying the same measure of attitudes toward a particular type of sustainable products (ecological products) in different geographical contexts, so this research has used a previous scale validated in Spain which refers to sustainable products. To measure the Valuation of the FT food products variable, a seven-point scale validated by Pérez and García de los Salmones (2018) was used to collect product aspects, such as taste or product quality.

The scales that measured pride (two indicators) and guilt (three indicators) are an adaptation of the Wang and Wu (2016) scales. Examples of former and latter items are "When I buy FT products, I feel proud" and "I would feel irresponsible if I did not buy FT products."

Finally, consumer willingness to pay for FT products was measured with the indicator "I am willing to pay 10% more for an FT food product compared to a conventional one". A dichotomous variable indicating whether a respondent had purchased an FT product in the last year was included in the model as a control variable.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive analyses

Descriptive analyses of the variables (see Table 2) indicate that respondents have a very favourable attitude toward sustainable food products (Mean=6.23, SD=0.84) and value FT food products positively (Mean=6.23, SD=0.84). In terms of emotions associated with purchasing FT products, pride in a purchase (Mean=5.35, SD=1.49) is more clearly manifested than guilt associated with not purchasing this type of

product (Mean=2.02, SD=1.44, $t=31.58$, $p<.01$). Willingness to pay for FT food products scores moderately low (Mean=4.92, SD = 1.95).

4.2 Measurement model

The properties of the model's multi-item measurement scales were assessed with a confirmatory factor analysis using the IBM SPSS Amos 26 program. The Cronbach's alpha values were calculated using the IBM SPSS Statistics 26 package. The fit of the measurement model is satisfactory ($\chi^2=223.78$, $df=121$, $p<.001$, CFI=0.97, IFI=0.97, TLI=0.97, RMSEA=0.05).

Regarding the measures' reliability, both Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.80 (Cronbach, 1951), and the comparative fit index (CFI), with values above 0.89, indicate high reliability of the scales.

Concerning convergent validity, all factor loadings are significant ($p<.01$), although the factor loadings of one indicator of the Attitudes toward sustainable food products variable and another of the Valuation of FT products variable present values below 0.5. They have been retained as they represent important aspects of the two variables. The conducted analyses also support the measures' discriminant validity, both when using the AVE-SV comparison (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the hetero-trait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio and a cut-off level of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015; Kline, 2011). These two methods are the most suitable for assessing discriminant validity in multi-item measurement scales (Voorhees et al., 2016).

4.3 Hypothesis testing

Considering that all the constructs are measured using the exact source of information, there is a risk of common method variance (CMV). In order to assess if CMV is a problematic issue, we conducted Harman's One Factor Test, the most commonly used approach to managing CMV (Fuller et al., 2016). The exploratory factor analysis showed that CMV was not problematic in our study (the first factor accounted for less than 50% of the variance among variables).

Variance Inflation factors (VIF) were calculated to check for multicollinearity. All VIF values (ranging from 1.08 to 2.14) were lower than the conservative threshold of 2.5 (Johnston et al., 2018). Thus, multicollinearity was not a concern in the analysis.

To test the first hypotheses, which stated that the Valuation of FT product has a positive effect on WTP (H1) and that the emotions pride and guilt mediate this relationship (H2a and H2b), a mediation model was proposed using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (model 4) (Hayes, 2022). The results, shown in Table 3, indicate that concerning a total effect model, the variable Valuation of FT products is a significant predictor of WTP ($b=0.53$, $p<.01$). The model presents an excellent fit to the data ($R^2=0.18$, $F(2,302)=34.02$, $p<.01$). When emotions pride and guilt enter the model as mediating variables, both have a significant effect on WTP ($b=0.41$, $p<.01$ and $b=0.26$, $p<.01$, respectively) and fully transmit the effect of FT product valuation on WTP. As can also be seen in Table 3, the direct effect Valuation \rightarrow WTP is not significant, and its confidence interval includes the value zero. However, the two indirect effects Valuation \rightarrow pride \rightarrow WTP and Valuation \rightarrow guilt \rightarrow WTP have bootstrap

Table 3 Coefficients of the total effect model and the mediation model

	Total effect model			Mediation model					
	Valuation → WTP			Valuation → emotions → WTP					
	WTP for FT products			Pride		Guilt		WTP for FT products	
	Coef.	SE	P	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Constant	2.57	0.37	<0.01	-0.23	0.35	0.66	0.49	2.49	0.58
Valuation of FT products	0.53	0.11	<0.01	1.06	0.06	0.26	0.08	0.03	0.14
Pride								0.41	0.09
Guilt								0.26	0.07
Buying/not buying FT products	-0.58	0.10	<0.01	-0.00	0.12	-0.08	0.17	-0.92	0.20
Fit indexes	$R^2=0.18$			$R^2=0.53$		$R^2=0.04$		$R^2=0.27$	
	$F(2, 302)=34.02$			$F(2, 302)=170.60$		$F(2, 302)=6.39$		$F(4, 300)=27.99$	
	$P<.01$			$P<.01$		$P<.01$		$P<.01$	
Total effect	Effect	0.53		SE		P		[LLCI,ULCI]	
Direct effect	Effect	0.03		0.11		<0.01		[0.33,0.74]	
Indirect effects	Effect			0.14		0.82		[-0.25,0.31]	
				BootSE		BootLLCI		BootULCI	
Valuation → Pride → WTP(1)		0.43		0.12		0.19		0.66	
Valuation → Guilt → WTP(2)		0.07		0.03		0.03		0.12	
Indirect effect contrast: (1) minus (2)		0.37		0.13		0.11		0.61	

confidence intervals (5,000 subsamples) that are positive and entirely above zero (Effect_{Valuation → pride → WTP} = 0.43 and Effect_{Valuation → guilt → WTP} = 0.07), although the effect of positive emotion pride is significantly stronger than the effect of negative emotion guilt, as supported by the indirect effect difference test (Effect_{pride minus guilt} = 0.37, bootLLCI=0.11, bootULCI=0.61). These results support hypotheses H1, H2a, and H2a and suggest that the valuation of FT products influences WTP and does so through the emotions of pride and guilt. These emotions transmit, albeit with different intensity (the effect of positive emotion is much stronger), the positive effect of product valuation.

To test hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c, the PROCESS macro for SPSS (model 81) was used again (Hayes, 2022). Model 81 has three mediators (M1, M2, and M3), which combine the properties of the parallel and serial mediation models; only M1 has a “path of influence to the other mediators, M2 and M3” (Hayes, 2022, p. 194). The indirect and direct effects of X on Y can be tested using regression analysis and four equations, one for each of the three mediating variables and one for the dependent variable Y. This model also has five specific indirect effects which are related to all the paths that can be traced between X and Y and that pass through at least one mediating variable. The total effect is the sum of all these indirect effects plus the direct effect and can also be estimated by regressing Y on X.

The mediation analysis results shown in Table 4 indicate that the Attitudes toward purchasing sustainable food products variable is related to the Valuation of FT products variable ($b=0.59$, $p < .01$); this variable, in turn, is related to pride ($b=0.96$, $p < .01$) and guilt ($b=0.23$, $p=.02$); these two emotions, in turn, are positively and significantly related to consumer willingness to pay for FT food products ($b=0.39$, $p < .01$; $b=0.26$, $p < .01$, respectively). The control variable measuring whether a respondent has bought/not bought an FT product in the last year is also related to the Valuation of these products and the willingness to pay for FT products. This indicates that people who consume FT products not only value these products more ($b = -0.58$, $p < .01$) but also express a higher intention to pay for them ($b = -0.94$, $p < .01$).

These results provide initial support for the model. Additionally, the estimation of the indirect, direct, and total effects (see Table 4) indicates that attitudes toward sustainable food products influence the willingness to pay for FT products and that they do so in an indirect way through a higher valuation of FT products (thus supporting Hypothesis 3a), a positive emotion (pride) and a negative emotion (guilt), as stated by H3b and H3c, respectively. The direct effect is not significant. However, pride emotions have a greater capacity to transfer these attitudes to a higher willingness to pay for FT food products.

One indirect effect, with a confidence interval above zero and one mediating variable, is the Attitude → Pride → Willingness to pay effect (effect=0.09, bootLLCI=0.02, bootULCI=0.19). Two other indirect effects can also be considered nonzero because their confidence intervals are entirely above that value; both involve two mediating variables. One of them is associated with pride, giving rise to the chain Attitude → Valuation → Pride → Willingness to pay (effect=0.22, bootLLCI=0.09, bootULCI=0.35) and the other with guilt, supporting the path Attitude → Valuation → Guilt → Willingness to pay (effect=0.03, bootLLCI=0.01, bootULCI=0.07).

In conclusion, from the analysed data, it is possible to rule out the nullity of three of the five indirect effects and support the importance of emotions, especially pride, by shifting the effects of attitudes toward sustainable food products to a willingness to pay for FT products. Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c are thus supported, with the three mediating variables demonstrating their ability to shift the effects of attitudes toward sustainable food products to an increased willingness to pay for FT products.

5 Discussion

This study responds to a call for research by Bangsa and Schlegelmilch (2020), who, after conducting a systematic review of the attributes of sustainable products and the consumer decision process, concluded that most published works on this topic assume a rational decision-making process that is focused on environmental sustainability, with social sustainability being comparatively neglected.

The posited model suggests that the Valuation of FT food products and positive and negative emotions (pride and guilt) connect consumers' general attitudes toward sustainable consumer products with a willingness to pay for FT products, a particular type of sustainable products closely related to social sustainability.

The data gathered from 305 consumers support this approach, allowing us to address the research questions and respond to several research gaps. First, the results provide evidence of the willingness to pay for FT products in a country that has been noted at the European level for its low level of consumption of these products. The sample analysed includes both buyers and non-buyers of these products. The results conclude that the willingness to pay in the analysed territory is moderately high.

Secondly, some relevant antecedents of willingness to pay for FT products have been identified. Notably, the valuation of these products is a variable, which to the best of our knowledge, has not been directly related in previous literature to WTP.

Third, contrary to Onwezen et al. (2014), this research finds that the emotion of pride is much more potent than guilt in influencing WTP. Besides, it is more capable of transmitting the effects of other antecedents, such as the valuation of FT products and general attitudes towards sustainable products. Consistent with Escadas et al.'s (2019) work, which found that both emotions were the result of consumer evaluations, this study's results indicate that FT product valuations are related to anticipated emotions of pride if a purchase occurs and guilt if it does not.

Forth, a strong relationship is observed between general attitudes toward sustainable food products and willingness to pay for FT products. These results are consistent with those observed for purchase behaviours of other sustainable food products (Fernández-Ferrín et al., 2019). The main contribution of this research is not only to analyse this understudied relationship but also to test the mediating effects of other relevant variables. In particular, it is found that positive (pride) and negative (guilt) emotions shift the effect of general attitudes toward sustainable products and the valuation of FT products to the willingness to pay a price premium. However, the impact of pride and its role in shifting the effect of attitudes is of a greater magnitude than that observed for guilt. These results followed the same line as Onwezen et al.

(2017) when they studied purchase intentions for bio-based products, but they contradict those of Onwezen et al. (2014), which referred to the purchase of FT products.

6 Conclusion

This research conducted in the context of low consumption of FT products yields interesting results. First, it supports a relationship between consumers' valuation of these products and their willingness to pay. This relationship is not direct but is mediated by emotions. Pride and guilt, to a lesser extent, drive the effects of higher product valuation on willingness to pay. Second, this work is novel in that it uses as its basis the S-O-R model, which is widely used to explain consumer behaviour in other contexts but not in the purchase of FT products. This model is not only used to connect the stimulus (the Valuation of FT products), the organism (positive and negative emotions), and the response (willingness to pay) but is extended to include an antecedent related to general attitudes towards sustainable products. Thus, this work helps not only to increase the knowledge about the purchase behaviour of FT products in low-consumption environments, such as in Spain but also to understand the mechanisms by which a general attitude toward sustainable food products is transferred to a greater willingness to pay a premium for specific types of sustainable products: FT products.

The valuation of these products and then (in parallel) pride and, to a lesser extent, guilt transfer this effect and highlight both the importance of product valuation and positive and negative emotions in consumers' purchasing behaviour. It would be interesting to deepen the analysis of the variables that influence attitudes in the field of social marketing (Galiano, 2022), particularly towards sustainable production. Future studies could complete the proposed model with antecedent variables of attitudes.

These results have important theoretical implications. On the one hand, they contribute to research on the antecedents of WTP by finding support for a complex model of parallel and serial mediator effects supported by the data in the context of even shallow consumption of these products. On the other hand, this research demonstrates that the S-O-R model is a solid theoretical basis for advancing research on the purchase behaviour of FT products. It would be interesting for other researchers to replicate the model in contexts of higher consumption.

In terms of practical implications, this research, we believe, is of use to the many organisations operating in fair trade, which face significant limitations and lack of information on what consumers in the territories in which they operate are like and how they behave, their willingness to pay, and the antecedents of this variable. We also believe that an essential implication of these results is that for consumers, valuation and willingness to buy FT products are not independent of more general attitudes towards sustainability and sustainable products. The product attributes of FT products are not independent of other attributes that consumers associate with sustainability. We recommend that organisations that commercialise FT products highlight in their communication all the sustainable attributes of the products they distribute, because consumers value products that come from small companies, that are artisanal or eco-friendly, and that are produced through transparent processes.

As noted above, it would be convenient to test whether the model is supported in higher-consumption contexts. Secondly, two emotions have been considered (one negative and one positive). However, it would be interesting to check whether other emotions, such as consumer pleasure, can transfer the stimulus effects (Valuation) to the response (WTP). Thirdly, it would also be helpful to study responses other than WTP, such as purchasing fair trade products. Fourthly, considering other product categories, not just food, would be interesting. Finally, it would also be convenient to study moderating effects in the model, such as some barriers to purchasing FT products.

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Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

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