

Attractiveness of Fairtrade Products Offered through SNS

1. Motives and Objectives of Research

An NPO, Fairtrade Label Japan, defines 'Fairtrade' as "a mechanism of international trade to aim for improving the living and independence of producers and workers in developing countries, by continuously purchasing their raw materials and products at appropriate prices"¹. Unfortunately, Fairtrade is not popular in Japan. In the market scale² of Fairtrade products in developed countries as of 2011, the transaction amount is 166.3 billion yen in the U.K., 114.4 billion yen in the U.S., 44.5 billion yen in Germany, and 2.2 billion yen in Japan. Converted to the annual purchase amount per capita³, these are equivalent to 2,681 yen in the U.K., 369 yen in the U.S., 540 yen in Germany, and 17 yen in Japan, showing Japan's extremely low amount. This figure is the lowest among the developed countries. So, we started research with an aim to popularize Fairtrade in Japan, improve the livelihoods of producers in developing countries, and encourage their self-reliance.

2. Method of Research

We think that one of the reasons for low dissemination of Fairtrade products in Japan is because people do not know what Fairtrade products are or cannot find out their attractiveness. Even if people buy Fairtrade goods as part of philanthropic activities, they would not continue to buy if they feel such products to be less attractive. To get a clue to the solution, we visited Fairtrade shop "Love&sense" in Osaka. The shop has been managed under a policy that products shall ideally be purchased by its own attractiveness not by the strong emphasis on them. Bearing this policy in mind, we set up a hypothesis that "an effective way to popularize Fairtrade products is to tell consumers how such products are attractive."

3. Detail of Research

In Toyonaka High School we have tested various methods under the theme, dissemination of Fairtrade, such as taking this issue in class, establishing a blog, selling actual goods, etc. Based on the advantages and disadvantages from the results, we have set up three conditions to introduce Fairtrade products: information to draw many people's attention, communication to be simple from the position of high school students, and result data to be obtained easily. Finally we decided to use SNS because it is easy to transmit, used by many people and meets the above conditions. To prove the correctness of our

¹ 「フェアトレードとは？」

<https://www.fairtrade-jp.org/> (2019年2月17日確認)

² 「各国のフェアトレード認証市場の推移」

http://fairtrade-jp.org/about_fairtrade/000018.html (2018年6月18日確認)

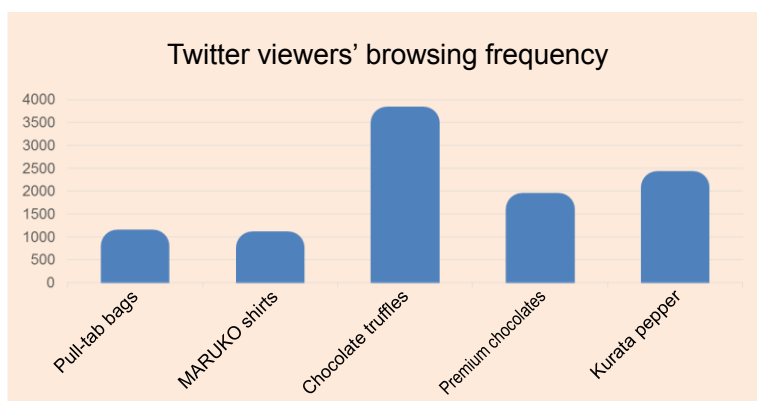
³ 数字を「世界の人口推計 2011年版」で割った値を示した。

<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm> (2018年6月18日確認)

hypotheses, we need to know how much we could tell the attractiveness of goods, and how much we could heighten consumers' purchase intention through our messages posted. We can use SNS to grasp such data from viewers' reactions. Actually we used two kinds of SNSs, Twitter and Instagram. Before posting on SNSs, we repeatedly visited Fairtrade shops "Love&Sense," "Darik" and "Pamoja" to get knowledge because it is important to convey producers' persistency and background stories for producing Fairtrade products to viewers. Based on the information, we have constructed the contents of our posts. They include five products, "Pull-tab bags," "MARUKO shirts," "Chocolate truffles," "Premium chocolates" and Kurata pepper." The images below show part of our posts. These images include product descriptions with the information gained through actual visits to shops and interviews to which we checked viewers' reactions.



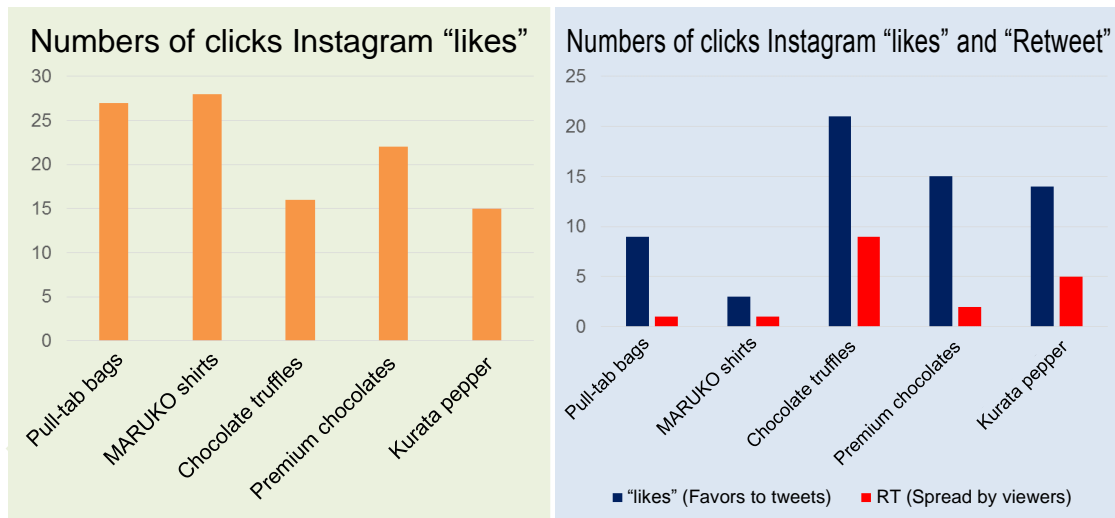
4. Results and Challenges of Research



What we noticed are the following data showing Twitter viewers' browsing frequency in a graph: every product has been browsed more than 1,000 times, sometimes more than 3,500 times. The figures are far larger than the number of about 40 students

viewing once in each class under the theme of "How to tell Fairtrade in class" conducted before in Toyonaka High School.

Next, what we noticed are the data in next page. The graphs at left and right show the numbers of clicks "likes" in Instagram, and "likes" and "Retweet" in Twitter, respectively. We paid attention to the fact



that the graphs revealed a large difference in viewers’ reactions between two kinds of SNSs. In Instagram, fashion-based “Pull-tab bags” and “MARUKO shirts” were popular, while in Twitter, food-based chocolates and pepper were popular.

From these data we can find that SNS users have different tastes and preferences individually, and accordingly we can write posts to appeal to them. With those above taken together, writing posts suited to their preferences on high-impact SNSs will be more effective to spread Fairtrade.

However, some challenges have emerged from these results. One is whether consumer appetite has really been raised. Maybe the attractiveness of Fairtrade goods might have been conveyed, but the data were insufficient to prove that consumers’ buying intention has actually increased. The other is, it is unclear whether those who are not interested in or do not know Fairtrade have reacted to our posts. Probably those who reacted to our posts might already have been interested in Fairtrade. Therefore, we need to step up our research from telling people the attractiveness of Fairtrade goods to making them buy such goods. As a specific means, it may be effective to attach a webpage-URL to our SNS-postings so that people can buy Fairtrade products, and to confirm the number of accesses to the website.

5. References

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- 2) D・ランサム 『フェア・トレードとは何か』 (2004 青土社)
- 3) 藤原 千尋 『フェアトレード@Lifeーお買い物でイイことしよう』 (2007 春秋社)
- 4) 地球市民村事務局 『私にできることは、なんだろう』 (2006 アスコム)
- 5) 『フェアトレード・ラベル・ジャパン』

<https://www.fairtrade-jp.org/> (2019年 2月 18日確認)

- 6) 『WAKACHIAI PROJECT』

http://www.wakachiai.com/information/2012/2012_10.11.html (2019年 2月 18日確認)