Coffee Consumption and Industry Strategies in Brazil

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CHAPTER 5

Certifications for coffee cultivation: Characterizing personal values of producers and consumers

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5.1 Introduction

Certification systems for agribusiness have emerged from a new set of demands related to sustainability and food security, imposed on the agri-food sector. For Leme (2015), certificates are the link between consumers who want sustainable products and producers, and industries that change their production patterns to meet this demand. Saes and Spers (2006) argue that the growing demand of consumers for certified products represents an opportunity for farmers to adopt differentiation strategies such as identifying the origin and production method, and thus meet the demand of this market (Saes and Spers, 2006).

Leme (2015) states that the quality of special and certified coffees not only relates to the specific characteristics of the beverage, these coffees also have symbologies linked to the differentiation through their consumption. According to the author, consumers of certified coffees, such as those who attest to environmental and social aspects of production, not only seek a specific distinction in the quality of the beverage, but they also consume intangible aspects such as preservation of the environment, respect for workers, and incentive to family farming. In this sense, quality refers not only to intrinsic aspects of the product, such as nutritional content, health, and organoleptic characteristics, but to cultural and ethical qualities as well.

Because of the pressure from consumer markets, large roasters and corporations in the coffee sector have shown interest in expanding the presence of certified sustainable coffees in their product portfolios. However, the expansion of this market depends on the performance of the

productive sector. This scenario presents opportunities for Brazilian producers. Currently, Brazil is the world's largest supplier of certified sustainable coffee, and there is a perception by the foreign market that Brazil is the only producer country capable of expanding coffee production to meet its growing demand (Pereira, 2013).

The demand for certified coffee allowed the construction of new markets, creating opportunities for producers to adopt new strategies to market and add value to their product. Although many of these certifications bear some resemblance, because they address the social and environmental aspects of production and also the quality and safety of the product, each of them seek to meet a particular desire or interest of the consumer. For Leme (2015), the value added or price difference of these coffees is the result of the recognition and appreciation of the differences of the product by the consumer, as intangible as these values may be.

In the last years, the search for quality in agroindustrial products presented great growth due to changes in consumer preferences. Products that have some desired attributes are valued among consumers (Souza et al., 2000). The consumer profile has been going through changes, with the emergence of new values and principles related to the idea of sustainability, health, and greater perspective of life. The market has demanding consumers, who seek not only quality, in the sense of a minimum acceptable standard for the attributes of the product, but also symbolic qualities, which refer to the ethics of production.

Demographic, cultural, lifestyle changes, and the ease of access to information are some of the transformations responsible for changing consumer habits. Understanding the "new" consumers, what they want, and what they need has become not only a competitive advantage but also a necessity for survival. Successful strategies are a combination of consumer understanding, attributes, and benefits that they seek out in products as aspects of their own personality outsourced by the use of those same products (Barrenar et al., 2015).

For Schwartz (2012), analyzing personal values is a very effective way to characterize cultural groups and societies, and it also works to explain motivations of attitudes and behaviors; they work as an inner guide for individuals. According to the author, a characteristic of personal values relates to its lasting nature, that is, once a person internalizes them, they will hardly change. Due to this characteristic, they work as good predictors of behaviors.

From this perspective, it is important to analyze the perception of certified coffee producers to make the decision of certifying their production,

and that consumers understand the elements considered during the purchase-decision process.

The model of consumer behavior proposed by the means-end chain (MEC) addresses the needs of this chapter. Gutman (1982), one of the authors who introduced this model of analysis in the marketing field, states that associations between the "ends," consumer's desires, and the "means," actions adopted to achieve the ends, can represent the purchase decision, in this context, associated with the use of products.

The MEC model allows the relation of important personal values to the individual to the attributes perceived in a specific product. This model, applied through the laddering interview technique, enables the quantification of these relations and, therefore, to increase the knowledge about the consumer's cognitive structure (Gutman, 1982). In the context of this chapter, the MEC, combined with the technique of laddering interviews, makes it possible to characterize the values involved in the perception of coffee producers and consumers as to certifications for the product.

This chapter aims to characterize the cognitive structure of the values involved in the perception of producers and consumers of coffee, as they relate to the existing certifications in this market, by identifying and quantifying the relationship among attribute, consequence, and value.

5.2 The empirical study

Gutman (1982) introduced the theory of the MEC in the marketing field, more specifically for the study of consumer behavior. The MEC model is an exploratory study that uses a qualitative approach. This type of study allows analyzing the cognitive structure of the consumer to understand their motivations, their attitudes, their buying behavior, and their decision processes. The studies of Gutman (1982, 1991); Walker and Olson (1991); Hofstede et al. (1998); Vriens and Hofstede (2000); Olson and Reynolds (2001); Lin (2002) consider the MEC model the main theoretical basis to reach such objectives.

According to Gutman (1982), the MEC technique allows the identification of links between attributes and benefits of products and personal values of the consumer. It is possible to understand MEC as a method to understand why consumers buy certain products or brands, working as a tool to meet marketing demands such as new product development, brand positioning, advertising strategies, and market segmentation.

Hofstede et al. (1998) states that the MEC theory has its basis in the work of psychologists (Tolman, 1932) and economists (Abbott, 1955), who

recognized that the consumer does not purchase products simply for what they are but because of what they can do for them. According to the author, the MEC theory postulates that consumer knowledge has a hierarchical organization through a structure that connects the product's attributes to the consequences of its use to consumers' personal values. These concepts are the "content" of the consumer's knowledge, whereas the links between the concepts are the "structure" of knowledge.

For Olson and Reynolds (2001), this is the most general formulation regarding MEC, which considers that the consumer has three levels of knowledge related to the consumption of products: (1) the attributes of the product; (2) the consequences or results from the use of the product; and (3) the expectations or values that can reach a satisfaction level by using the product. Combined, these levels of knowledge form a hierarchical chain of associations.

The set of associations receives the name of MEC because the consumer considers the products and their attributes as a means to an end, which is possible to translate as the satisfaction of relevant personal values and consequences. The chain is the set of connections between attributes, consequences, and values. A hierarchy that connects concepts at a concrete level (product attributes) to concepts at an abstract level (personal values) arranges these connections (Olson and Reynolds, 2001).

The MEC model sequentially connects the attributes of products (A) to consequences arising from the use of products (C), and consumer personal values (V). For Gutman (1982), the sequence formed by the A–C-V connections is the chain of means and ends.

The hierarchical value map (HVM) represents the set formed by the various chains, which indicates the relations between all attributes perceived in a specific product, the consequences, and personal values. The HVM is a graphic representation of the main A-C-V connections that consumers perceive about a particular product. Normally, the HVM chart illustrates how a small number of personal values can reduce a large set of attributes perceived in a product through the consequences of the action of use or consumption of the product.

One way of measuring personal values is Schwartz's Theory of Values. The values have a division of 10 dimensions, which reflect the individuals' central motivations. Schwartz (2012) states that these values are universal in nature because they are based on universal requirements of human existence, such as basic biological needs, requirements for orderly social coordination, and institutional demands for group survival and well-being.

According to Schwartz (2012), the basis of the value structure is the fact that actions aimed at reaching a value have consequences that conflict with some values but are congruent to others. In other words, these actions have practical, psychological, and social consequences. Choosing an action that promotes a certain value may transgress a competing value.

Therefore, the theory defines a circular structure of the relations among the 10 dimensions of value, from their compatibility or opposition of objectives. Schwartz (2012) states that the circular structure depicts the total pattern of conflict and congruence relations between values. The circular structure represents continuous motivation. The closer two values are in any direction around the circle, the more similarities there are among their motivations, and analogously, the further away, the more antagonistic their motivations are.

In this chapter, Schwartz's Theory of Values will serve as the basis for the analysis of the identified values.

5.3 Results

In this section, the presentation of the data obtained in the research takes place. First, the characterization of the respondents takes place with the description of the sample, and then the content analysis, the construction of HVMs, and the determination of the dominant perceptions guidelines.

The analysis has two stages: the analysis of data from certified coffee producers and then coffee consumers who know at least one of the certifications for coffee production. It is worth noting the difficulty of interviewing coffee consumers who consider certification at the time of purchase decision. For this reason, for the representation of the cognitive structure of values of this group, the focus was on interviewing consumers who only knew some of the certification systems.

Ten rural producers of certified coffee participated on interviews for this research. These producers are associated with APAS, and have the certifications Certifica Minas, designed by the Government of the State of Minas Gerais through the Company of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (EMATER), and Fair trade.

Table 5.1 shows the main characteristics of the producers and their respective properties. Most respondents are male, and the average age of the sample of producers is 47.3 years.

Another characteristic described is the level of schooling of the participants; most of the producers have a complete higher education (40%),

Table 5.1 Farmer's profile.

Respondent	Gender	Age	Education level	Hobby	Beginning
P1	M	24	Higher education	Motorcycles	2009
P2	M	46	Higher education	Farming	1996
P3	M	39	Secondary education	Production of honey	1994
P4	M	53	Higher education (graduate)	Play tennis	1996
P5	F	37	Secondary education	Nature	2002
P6	F	60	Higher education (graduate)	Read	2013
P7	M	59	Higher education	Play tennis	1992
P8	F	44	Incomplete primary education	Cook	1992
P9	F	52	Higher education	Cycling	2000
P10	M	59	Higher education (graduate)	Fishing	2007

followed by respondents with graduate degrees (30%), secondary education (20%), and only one respondent had incomplete primary education (Table 5.2).

Regarding the characteristics of the properties, all producers have the Certifica Minas and Fair trade certifications. It is interesting to highlight that two respondents also belong to the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA), a collaborative network of women involved in the entire coffee chain (IWCA, 2016). All respondents have their properties located in cities near São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, where the APAS is located. In addition to this association, producers also belong to the Agricultural Cooperative of Vale do Sapucai (Coopervass), which provides all the storage structure and processing of coffee to the cooperative producers.

The average size of the coffee plantations of respondents is 47.7 ha; however, there is some variability in the sample containing medium producers with plantations of 90 and 100 ha and approximately 15 permanent employees in their properties, and small producers with areas from 8 to 15 ha and none or at most 2 permanent employees.

Table 5.2 Farm's profile.

Respondent	Certifications	Coffee plantation (ha)	Employees	County
P1	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	55	2	S.G. do Sapucaí
P2	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	45	3	S.G. do Sapucaí
P3	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	19	2	S.G. do Sapucaí
P4	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	35	6	Careaçu
P5	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	15	3	S.G. do Sapucaí
P6	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	90	15	Careaçu
P7	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	75	15	Turvolândia
P8	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	8	0	Campanha
P9	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	35	2	S.G. do Sapucaí
P10	Cert. Minas/ Fairtrade	100	10	Heliodora

When it comes to consumers, those who stated to know at least one of the mentioned certifications and verifications systems (Fair trade, Rainforest Alliance, Utz, Organic, Global Coffee Platform, Certifica Minas, BSCA, and ABIC) were interviewed.

Eight consumers responded to the interview. Four of them took place in two coffee shops in São Paulo, Coffee Lab and Isto é Café. Two other participants responded to the interview in a coffee shop located in Varginha, Minas Gerais, Ouro of Kaffa; and the other two in the city of São Gonçalo do Sapucaí (Table 5.3).

Again, the majority of respondents in this group are men, and the average age is 31.8 years. Regarding education levels, five respondents stated to have graduate degrees, one master's degree, and two with higher education.

All respondents stated they know about some of the certifications or verifications; however, they stated that they did not consider the certification seal as a determining attribute for their purchase decision. After the characterization of the sample, the analysis of the ladders identified from the interviews took place.

5.4 Content analysis and coding of elements

Considering the laddering procedure discussed in the section about method of research, each element, or synonym, identified in the interviews had a classification of attribute, consequence, or value. The analysis has three parts:

Table 5.3 Consumer's profile.

Respondent	Gender	Age	Education level	Occupation
C1	M	28	Higher education (graduate)	Agronomic engineer
C2	M	27	Higher education	Economist
C3	F	30	Higher education (graduate)	Commercial manager
C4	M	24	Higher education (graduate)	Professor
C5	F	24	Higher education	Student
C6	F	32	Higher education (graduate)	Advertising person
C7	M	31	Higher education (graduate)	Entrepreneur
C8	M	59	Higher education (graduate)	Entrepreneur

the results of interviews with certified producers, the results obtained from the consumers, and the discussions and comparisons.

It was possible to identify 12 elements, classified in 4 attributes, 5 consequences, and 3 values. These elements are codes of grouping of consumer perceptions about the attributes of coffee certifications and their relation to their personal values. Table 5.4 presents the coding for the results obtained from interviews with coffee producers.

Attribute 1 (marketing instrument) represents the producers' perception of the certification's ability to differentiate and position their product. Attribute 2 (sustainability) relates both to the perception the producer expects the consumer to have about the certification, and to the rules imposed by the program. The producers pointed to the certification of agricultural production as a trend (attribute 3), as well as the marketing of certified products. They believe that this market will become more robust internally in the future. Finally, attribute 4 (union) corresponds to the perception on the performance of the association. They affirm that, after the creation of this organization, producers became more collaborative; in addition, they emphasize the importance of the association's performance in the community, mainly in relation to the improvements negotiated with the municipal government, such as a post office and an outpost service of the Bank of Brazil.

As for the consequences, the cooperation and valorization of group action (consequences 5 and 8) are due to the association's performance. Consequence 6 (market access) represents opportunities for exporting coffee. Attention to the production method (consequence 7) relates to the standards established by the certification. Producers say they have adopted better production practices after their ownership certification. Consequence 9 (transparency) represents the willingness of producers to be more transparent about the production practices adopted.

Table 5.4 Numbering of attributes, consequences, and values for producers.

Attributes	Consequences	Values
1. Market instrument	5. Cooperation	10. Universalism
2. Sustainability	6. Access to markets	11. Achievement
3. Trend	7. Attention to the production method	12. Security
4. Union	8. Valorization of group action	
	9. Transparency	

Regarding values, universalism (value 10) represents the concern of producers to meet the demands of consumers, and to preserve the people and nature of their communities. Achievement (value 11) is the personal fulfillment and the work invested to meet certification standards. Value 12 (security) means the stability acquired through the improvements and organization of production, as many of the producers interviewed have their coffee production as the main source of income.

To structure a value chain, it was important to use the MECanalyst, in which was possible to insert the obtained attributes and consequences, and then associated with their respective values. Fig. 5.1 presents the HVM.

The HVM comprises six chains. Attributes are in the lighter color rectangles; the consequences, in medium color; and values, in a darker tone. Table 5.5 presents the sequence analysis, which brings in the first column the initial attribute of each sequence; in the second column, the sequence formed with consequences and values; and, in the last column, the interpretation of the sequence.

Attribute 1 (investment) relates to the perception that the producer has to invest in the property to suit certification standards. Attribute 2
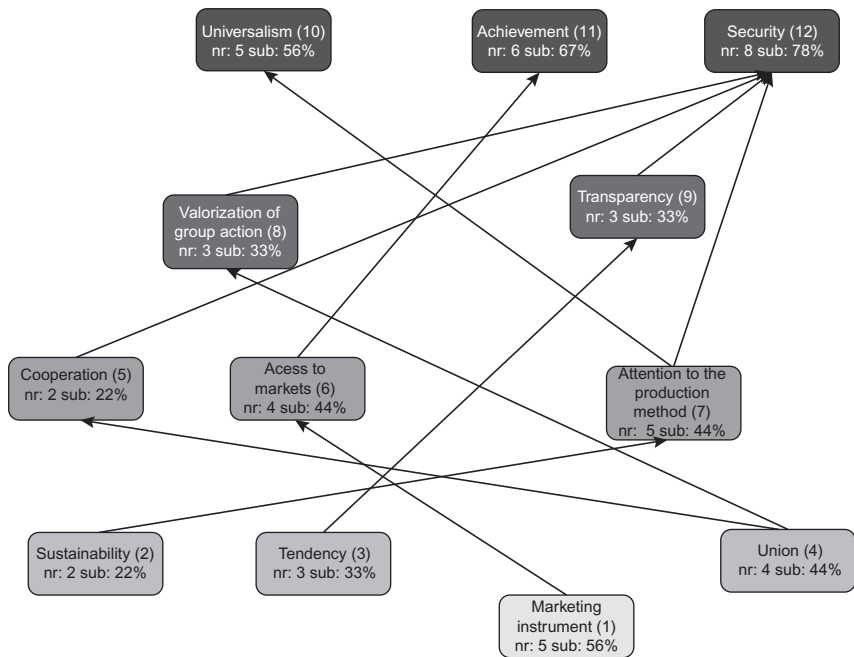

Fig. 5.1 Value chain: coffee farm's image of the certifications.

Table 5.5 Relation between elements of each sequence of the value chain for the farmers.

Market instrument	1–6–11	Certification is a way of differentiating all the production and allows access to more demanding markets, thus valuing all the efforts of the producer.
Sustainability	2–7–12	To meet the standards of the certification program, the producer must improve its production method, promoting sustainability. The product becomes differentiated and attractive to the market, ensuring its income.
	2–7–10	The promotion of sustainability also indicates the producer's commitment to environmental, social and product health issues, invigorating the image of agriculture.
Trend	3–9–12	Producers believe that consumers will demand more transparency on productions methods of the products they consume, especially food.
Union	4–5–12	The union promoted by the certification (because they receive the certification through the association) promotes cooperation between producers, ensuring greater stability for the community.
	4–8–12	Producers value union. Individual performance lost space to the association.

(valorization) refers to the valorization of the product; certified coffee is usually marketed at a higher price. Consumers also believe that access to certified products is a trend (attribute 3). Finally, attribute 4 (consciousness) refers to the consumption of products in which the production methods reduce socioenvironmental impact (Table 5.6).

Regarding the consequences, consumers pointed out the payment of fairer prices to producers (consequence 5). They believe there will be an increase in the supply of certified products (consequence 6). Consumers also pointed out that the production methods for certified products re-spect some quality standards (consequence 7); and these quality standards promote sustainability (consequence 8) and appreciation of the producer's work (consequence 9). In addition, consumers stated that the certification works as a subsidy for purchasing decisions, because the product brings

Table 5.6 Numbering of attributes, consequences, and values for consumers.

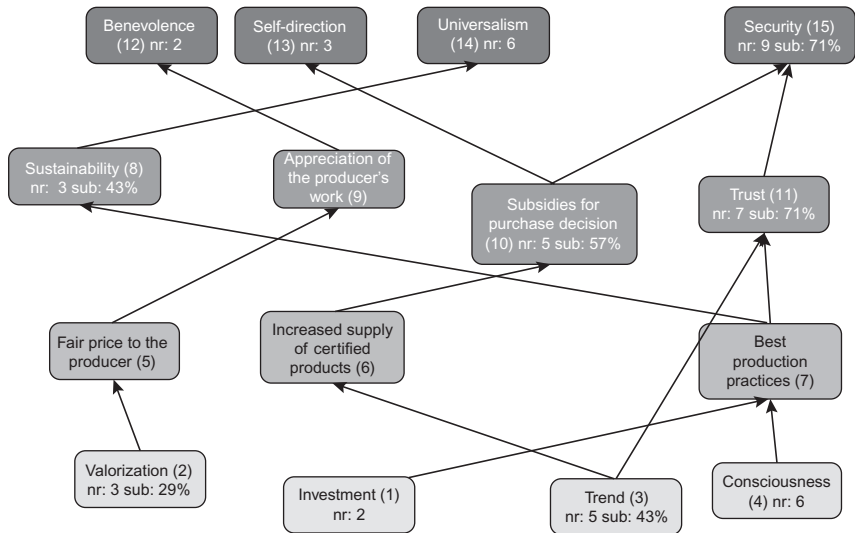| Attributes	Consequences	Values
1. Investment	5. Fair prices to the producer	12. Benevolence
2. Valorization	6. Increased supply of certified products	13. Self-direction
3. Trend	7. Best production practices	14. Universalism
4. Consciousness	8. Sustainability	15. Security
	9. Valorization of the producer	
	10. Subsidies for purchase decision	
	11. Trust	

more information that the consumer may or may not consider relevant to make their decision (consequence 10). Consumers also stated that certified products create more trust, once there is a process to attest that a product meets a certain quality standard (consequence 11).

In terms of values, benevolence (value 12) refers to the improvement of the living conditions of the producer, both in relation to the return on investment and knowledge, and adoption of safety measures in the work environment. Self-direction (value 13) relates to the consumer's knowledge to aggregate implicit information in a certification seal to make their decision in the moment of purchase. Universalism (value 14) refers to the consumer's concern with environmental and social issues, and the life quality of the farmer. Finally, value 15 (safety) relates to the reduction of an internal conflict in the moment of consumption, because certified products, according to the interviewees, reduce the uncertainties regarding sanity and quality of the product (Fig. 5.2).

It was possible to identify seven value chains, starting from one concrete attribute (investment) and three abstract attributes (value, trend, and consciousness). Table 5.7 presents the relations among the attributes, consequences, and values for the consumer.

5.5 Final considerations

The objective of this chapter was to characterize the cognitive structure of the values involved in the perception of producers and consumers regarding coffee certifications, considering the gap in the literature when it comes to the characterization of these groups and the identification of the motivators for the adoption of certifications for coffee production, and the consumption of certified coffees.

Fig. 5.2 Value chain: image of the certification for the coffee consumer.

From a general perspective, the survey identified that both producers and consumers believe that certifications are a trend for the coffee market. Both relate this fact to the demand for more transparent transactions, reducing, in this way, uncertainties and conflicts at the time of purchase regarding the origin and quality of the product.

Another aspect that was possible to identify from the research was the concern with sustainability. Producers and consumers consider certifications as a way to promote best production practices, dealing with both a current issue and also ensuring the permanence of production, in the view of producers, and improving the quality and safety of the product, in the view of consumers.

This chapter has as a limitation the fact that it has not identified consumers who consider certifications as an attribute to guide their purchasing decision. Most of the interviewed consumers only knew, in different degrees, some of the certifications for coffee. Some have argued that the supply of certified coffee in the domestic market is still very restrictive, and there is a lack of consumer education regarding the meanings and objectives of the certifications.

As a suggestion for future work, it is relevant to recommend the extension and stratification of the sample of producers according to the size of the property or type of certification. The certifications present in the coffee market range from family production to large producers, and the stratified analysis of these groups will allow the identification and comparison of the different motivations for the adoption of certifications.

Table 5.7 Relation between elements of each sequence of the value chain for the consumer.

Investment	1–7–8–14	The investments made to meet the standards of the certification authority, promote the adoption of best production practices, usually associated with sustainability.
	1–7–11–15	In addition to promoting the sustainability of the property, the investments made to adopt a set of good practices reduce the uncertainties of the consumer regarding the quality and sanity of the product.
Valorization	2–5–9–12	Respondents consider the certification a way to value the producer's work. Some consumers said they believe that agriculture has a high degree of difficulty and that obtaining a certification is a possibility of the coffee producer to get fairer prices for their product and thus obtain means to improve their living conditions.
Trend	3–6–10–13	Consumers stated that increasing the supply of products with some form of sustainable appeal is a trend. However, they claim that the certification is able to communicate what is actually making a particular product sustainable, and this way, it provides subsidies for a more conscious buying decision.
	3–11–15	The trend pointed out by consumers also concerns the demand for more transparent information about the product.
Consciousness	4–7–8–14	Producers consider the certification of the production as an indicative of producers' awareness. Consumers have stated that through certification and adoption of best production practices, the producer promotes sustainability, showing concern for a contemporary issue.
	4–7–11–15	In addition to promoting sustainability, consumers said they believe in the coffee certification, and the consequent adoption of best practices, indicates that the producer is concerned about the health of their product.

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