

## A Study on Determination of Life Style Effects on Sustainable Consumption Behavior

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### Extensive Summary

#### 1. Introduction

The environmental problems caused by human activities are manifesting themselves as an increasing problem. At the same time, both goods and services production and consumption are causing great negative environmental impacts. Governments which adopt the concept of sustainable development are developing strategies in order to promote more sustainable consumer behavior to eliminate these negativities. In order for these strategies to be effective, it is necessary to know how consumer behaviors are realized and how they are affected. Sustainable consumer behavior is multi-directional and influenced by many internal and external factors. One of these factors is the life style. Sustainability in life styles is a broad concept and includes activities such as interpersonal relationships, leisure activities, sports and education, as well as material consumption. Life styles are based on past and present consumption and production models and intertwine with people's daily preferences and behaviors (Rakic and Rakic, 2015, p. 894 ). The concept of life style consists of components that cover the whole range of daily life, such as the values of the individual, what they do, where they live, what they eat and drink.

Sustainable life styles are the patterns of action and consumption that people use to distinguish themselves from others. These are to provide a better life quality, to use resources properly, not to risk the needs of next generations and to minimize the harm of wastes / pollutants on the life cycle (CSD, 2004, p. 48 ). The adoption of these actions in the life style and consumption behaviors of the individuals forming society is important for the future of both individuals and societies.

There are several ways in which the behaviors of consumers can be more sustainable. More efficient use of energy by individuals and households, less energy consumption or using environmentally friendly products instead of products which can damage the environment are examples of sustainable consumption behaviors. To minimize the consumption of households does not mean a lower life quality or poverty.

Therefore, while strategies are being developed for more sustainable consumer behavior, it is necessary to handle socio-political issues related to social inequality and poverty (Kraemer, 2002, p.61 ). This is one of the more obvious issues that need to be handled while trying to find a consensus on the integration of environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability.

When we look at the consumption habits of people and societies, it is possible to say that the present age is the age of consumption. Hence, people's welfare levels and happiness become measured by the amount of products they consume. What is important for man is the quantity of consumed thing rather than the qualitative value of it and human being has turned into a consuming entity (<https://gaiadergi.com>). This causes many problems such as more energy use, increased waste, environmental pollution, unconscious use of resources, more and unnecessary consumption. Even without adopting a certain lifestyle, it is impossible to prevent these problems and leave a more livable and sustainable future to next generations.

In this research, it is aimed to reveal the effects of life styles preferred by people on sustainable consumption behavior. For this purpose; first of all relevant literature is examined, in the second part information about the research methods, models and hypotheses is given and in the last part, findings and conclusions are included.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This research is made to measure the effects of individuals' life style living in the province of Sivas on sustainable consumption behaviors. The total population of Sivas province is 621.301. As the research is carried out only in the province center, the population is 372.300. In the scope of this research, first pilot study is conducted on 40 selected persons by easy sampling method and after necessary corrections are made, the questionnaire is preformed. The sample size of research is found as 384 with a 95% confidence bounds and 5% tolerance (Altunışık and Dig, 2005, p.127 ). Considering the rate of return, 400 face to face surveys are conducted between the dates of 15.04–15.05.2018 in Sivas province center with the participants determined according to easy sampling method. When missing and incorrect ones are excluded, 366 questionnaires are analyzed. The questionnaire consists of three parts. In the first part, scales developed by Sanchez and Dig ( 1998 ) and Walker and Hill-Polerecky ( 1996 ) are used to measure the life style of the consumers living in Sivas province. The scale developed by Sanchez et al ( 1998 ) and based on specific life styles, includes dimensions consistent with sustainable consumption behaviors such as balanced life, healthy nutrition and ecological structure. "Healthy Life Style Scale" developed by Walker and Hill-Polerecky ( 1996 ) is adapted to Turkey with the reserach made by Bahar and Dig. ( 2008 ). "Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale" takes part in the second part of the questionnaire. In preparing this scale it's also benefited from the studies carried out by Sener and Hazer ( 2007 ), Fraj and Martinez ( 2006 ), Dogan, Bulut and Kokalan Cımrın ( 2015 ). Questions about demographic characteristics have taken part.in the third and final part of the questionnaire.

"Explanatory Factor Analysis" has been applied in order to group, classify and transform the expressions that measure life style and sustainable consumption behavior. Independent sample t-test and one-way variance analysis ( ANOVA ) are conducted to determine whether there is a difference between demographic characteristics and life style and sustainable consumption behaviors. Besides, multiple linear regression

analysis is performed to measure the effect of life style on sustainable consumption behavior.

### 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this research which is conducted to measure the effects of individuals' life style living in Sivas province on their sustainable consumption behaviors, the following results are achieved:

- According to the result of explanatory factor analysis, life styles of respondents participating in the research are divided into four factors: "communication and positivity", "spiritual improvement", "healthy nutrition" and "consciousness".
- According to the result of explanatory factor analysis, participants' sustainable consumption behaviors are also gathered in four dimensions. These are respectively named as "environmental sensitivity", "saving", "out of necessity purchasing" and "reusability".
- In order to test the H1 hypothesis: "Life style varies significantly according to demographic characteristics", t test and ANOVA analysis are performed. According to the results of analysis: "Communication and positivity" factor varies according to "gender, age, education, income and occupation" variables; whereas "healthy nutrition" factor varies according to "marital status" variable and "spiritual development" factor varies according to "education and occupation" variables.
- According to the results of t-test and ANOVA analysis which performed to test the H3 hypothesis : "Sustainable consumption behavior varies significantly according to demographic characteristics": "Environmental sensitivity" factor varies according to "gender" variable; "reusability" factor varies according to "gender, age, education, income and occupation" variables; "saving" factor varies according to "age" variable.
- According to the results of multiple regression analysis which performed to determine the effects of life style on sustainable consumption behavior: It's concluded that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between the subdimensions of "healthy nutrition" and "consciousness" and "environmental sensitivity" behavior; between the dimensions of "communication and positivity", "spiritual improvement" and "healthy nutrition" and "saving" behavior; between the dimension of "consciousness" and "reusability" behavior; however there is no meaningful relationship between life style and "out of necessity purchasing" behavior.

Therefore, in the direction of findings obtained, it's determined that the life style which people prefer has an effect on sustainable consumption behavior. It is important that people adopt sustainable consumption behaviors as a life style and produce / consume according to this; in order that their family and loved ones live in a healthier world and at the same time leave a healthier world to next generations. In this context, the following suggestions can be made for further adoption of a sustainable life style:

- Sustainability; must be put forward as a new understanding which contains concerted actions of all social actors, including government, business, NGO, media and education and also behavioral changes.

- Cultural, social, environmental and economical levels need to be changed by using strategies that raise awareness and improve new values and visions for sustainable societies.
- Projects supported by NGOs or organized by people should be improved. For example, schools and universities should be support activities such as eco-schools movement, green campus movement, green conferences and tree planting.
- As consumers, awareness programs should be carried out for increasing conscious levels in using resources in order that individuals can raise and protect their standard of living by meeting their needs.

This research is conducted in order to determine the life style effects of people living in Sivas province on sustainable consumption behavior. Because of time and cost constraints, the research is restricted only to the city center of Sivas. It should be noted that the survey contains a small sample and does not reflect the country as a whole in terms of easy sample selection. For this reason, it will be meaningful to compare the results of the research on the basis of a larger sample. Despite this, the research is suggestive about the subject. Accordingly, the life styles of consumers contribute into understanding of sustainable consumption behaviors.