A Research on Class Teachers Related to Determining the Effects of Consumers’ Personal Values on Sustainable Consumption Behavior

Rıdvan KARALAR
Yaşar Üniversitesi
ridvan.karalar@yasar.edu.tr

Hakan KİRACI
Dumlupınar Üniversitesi
hkiraci@dumlupinar.edu.tr

Introduction

The world’s sources about to running out have been realised as a result of that population increase and economic development to be lived in the twentieth century have caused the transformation from the notion of unlimited economic development to sustainable development notion. Sustainable development is a model that predicts existing generation satisfies their needs without that next generation’s satisfy their need. The target of sustainable development notion in regard of consumption is to be accepted sustainable consumption behavior. To comprehend sustainable consumption behavior, it requires inquiring factors affecting behavior such as values, attitudes, life style, social groups, cultural characteristics. In the study, it was analysed that personal values effects on sustainable consumption behavior by using Schwartz’s Value Scale.

There are a lot of value scale in order to measure values of people including Rokeach Value System (RVS), Values and Life Style System (VALS), Kahle’s Values List (LOV), Stern’s Value Based Theory (VBT) and Schwartz’s Values List (SVS), but the last one (SVS) was selected in the study. The purpose for selecting the Schwartz value survey are that the SVS has been widely used to assess value hierarchies of individuals and groups and that most widely used as an instrument for measuring personal values and for analysing the relationship between values and sustainable consumption behavior in a great number of study (Grunert and Juhl, 1995; Karp, 1996; Thogersen and Grunert-Beckmann, 1997; Thogersen and Ölander, 2002; Schultz et.al., 2005; Poortinga et.al., 2004; Dietz et.al., 2002; Nordlund and Garvill, 2003; Stern et.al., 1999; Şener and Hazer, 2007; Alnıaçık and Yılmaz, 2008)

Schwartz distinguishes values by the type of motivational goal they express. He proposes a typology of values that people use to establish priorities to inform choice across cultures. Values are defined by Schwartz (1994) "as desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or othersocial entity". Value types in SVS are:

• Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (protecting the environment, a world of beauty,
unity with nature, broadminded, social justice, wisdom, equality, a world at peace, inner harmony).

- Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible, true-friendship, a spiritual life, mature love, meaning in life).

- Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image, social recognition).

- Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential, intelligent, self-respect).

- Self-direction: Independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring, (creativity, curious, freedom, choosing own goals, independent).

- Stimulation: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life, an exciting life).

- Hedonism: Pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgent).

- Tradition: Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide (devout, respect for tradition humble moderate accepting portion in life, privacy).

- Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms (politeness, honoring parents and elders, obedient, self-discipline).


Ten motivationally distinct value types which were listed above and fifty-seven single values representing the ten types emerged for use in the survey. The single values in the Schwartz Value Survey are presented in two lists. The first 30 values are phrased as terminal values followed by 27 values phrased as instrumental values. Adopting Rokeach's (1973) procedure each value has a short explanatory phrase to further specify the meaning of the value. Terminal values or terminal goals are defined as end states and are phrased as nouns. Instrumental values or instrumental goals are defined as modes of behavior and are phrased as adjectives.

57 values were measured by using a 9-point scale from -1 to 7 (-1,0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7). As a guiding principle in my life, -1 states “opposed to my values”, 0 states “not important”, 3 states “important”, 6 states “very important” and finally 7 states “of supreme importance”. -1 and 7 numbers are very important, so prior to rating the values on each list, respondents are asked to choose and rate their most and least important values, thereby anchoring their use of the response scale.

After mentioned SVS and using of SVS, it requires to briefly touch on sustainable consumption concept. In this context, sustainable consumption is a consumption pattern
about meeting our needs without destroying the environment or overexploiting natural resources, thereby not jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet their needs. People who living in the world can exhibit sustainable consumption behavior by transforming behavior to more sustainable consumption behavior and reducing material consumption level. Some of sustainable consumption behaviors are:

• Prefering long-lasting, organic, eco-labelled, energy saving or local produced products
• Repairing instead of buying a new one
• Walking or riding a bake instead of getting on the bus or driving a car
• Hiring or sharing the product instead of buying it
• Using his bag when shopping
• Putting dead batteries, used papers and bottles in recycling bin
• Prefer to be nourishment fresh vegetables and leguminous seeds rather than meat and fowl
• Buying organic vegetables and fruits
• Not demanding receipt when he transacts by ATM
• Walking instead of getting on the bus or driving a car
• Prefer using his mobile phone for 3-5 years rather than renew it annually or biennially
• Using high efficiency bulbs
• Prefer to share the books rather than buy them
• Using cleaning agent slightly when cleaning his/her home
• Using paper towel thrifty,
• Turning lights off in unused rooms,
• Keeping closed tap when cleaning teeth or soaping up
• Prefer to shower rather than to take a bath
• Flushing the toilet at a low frequency.

Sustainable consumption behaviors which listed above and more are so important for future of the world and people who exist. So adopting sustainable consumption idea and sustainable consumption behaviors are compulsory not luxury for us.

Methodology

The main aim of the study is to analyse the relationship between personal value types and frequency of sustainable consumption behaviors. Questionnaire was used as data collection instrument and there are two scale, 8 demographic questions and 1 item about the membership of any environmental institution in the questionnaire form. The scales were Schwartz’s values scale (SVS) and sustainable consumption scale. Sustainable consumption scale which has 36 behaviors was composed by searching
various studies (Kaiser et al., 2003; Barr and Gilg, 2003; Thogersen, 2002; Karalar et al., 2008). Frequency of behaviors in that scale were measured by using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

The population and sample of the study were class teachers who working Kutahya. The study was conducted on 614 class teachers but only 343 usable questionnaires were returned.

Before implementing SVS and sustainable consumption behavior scales (SCBS), preliminary study was done on about 30 class teachers and in that study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (CAC) was computed to determine the internal consistency reliability of each scale and it was determined that alpha value for SVS scale was 0.82 and for SCBS scale was 0.76. Considering the result of the reliability analysis, it can be stated that reliability of those scales is in high level. As for implementing those scales in the study, it was found that CAC of SVS was 0.86 and CAC of SCBS was 0.78.

Connective research model has been used in the study. At first, it was analysed the relationship between personal value types and frequency of sustainable consumption behaviors by computing Pearson correlation coefficients. Later, regression analysis performed to expose the effects of value types on frequency of sustainable consumption behavior. And finally T-test and ANOVA were used to analyse whether there are meaningful differences in frequency of sustainable consumption according to respondents’ demographic characteristics.

As to implementing those scales, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of each scale used in this study and it was determined that alpha value for RSC scale was 0.63 and for SSC scale was 0.62. Both scales do not have high alpha values and so these scales could be improved in future research.

Results

The findings indicate the significant effect of in sustainable consumption behavior. Also, it is found that frequency of sustainable consumption behavior is mid-level. The results of this research have significant implications for stakeholders of sustainable consumption and future research.

Discussion

Various precaution should be taken in order to increase the frequency of sustainable consumption behavior. For example, it should be stressed the universalism and security values type in campaign or any activity oriented sustainable consumption behavior. Besides, sustainability index can be developed and placed on packages of products to show the side of sustainability of products. Finally, all stakeholders including people, businesses, non-profit organizations, international organizations, governmental and environmental institutions should take responsibility for universalizing sustainable consumption pattern.