

IDENTIFYING BEHAVIOR RELATED FACTORS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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The world is going to face an energy crisis and resource scarcity due to the population growth and the natural resources are decreased rapidly due to careless activities of human. If this pattern continued for future, every living being of the planet will have to face many problems such as environmental pollution, climate change, poverty, civil unrest *etc.* since most of these issues start with demand for products and services from the consumers. If we want to prevent or eliminate these issues, it has to be started from the consumer end. To handle this issue, a new concept called “Sustainable Consumption and Production” (SCP) has emerged from European Community decades ago. It means ‘doing more and better with less,’ through reducing resource use, degradation and pollution while increasing the quality of life for all. Consumer’s behavior plays a crucial role when converting whatever the society towards SCP based society. However, consumers’ behavior depends on factors; social and religious values as well as level of knowledge towards global problems to mention few. Main purpose of this research is to identify level of understanding of SCP and environmental consciousness and to co-relate the understanding level with diversity of the undergraduate community. A survey was carried out to collect information and data through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to extract information about the diversity factors such as education background, religious beliefs *etc.*, level of knowledge of global environmental problems and possible solutions, consuming behaviors by taken in to account of products life cycles’ different phases such as buying, usage and consumption and disposal. After analyzing the data, an awareness campaign was carried out in posters inside the university with the purpose of improving the thinking on sustainable consumption and developing their positive attitudes towards environment. The questionnaire was distributed among 200 students from every faculties of University of Peradeniya. Based on the analysis majority [58%] of students have a concern on environmental issues as a result of human activities and the scarcity of resources. However, more than half [66%] of them have not actively participated to prevent them. Another significant deviation [73%] was recognized in disposal of electronic waste while 79% of students have fair awareness on disposal of rest of waste types. About 70% of students used to bring polythene as packing material. In addition, any co-relationship cannot be identified according to the academic background and faith on religion with sustainable consumption patterns. It is important to do this analysis on other layers of the society to identify the awareness on sustainability before taking decisions on it.