

Chapter 51

Promoting Healthy Lifestyle for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Economic growth, environment, and health are three significant aspects of sustainable development. Nowadays, lifestyle is increasingly evaluated as one of the most important factors influencing health. As increasing health expenditure is an important problem for sustainable development, it is essential to examine the society in terms of their health-related habits and promote healthy lifestyle to support sustainable development. In this chapter, healthy lifestyle of highly educated Istanbulites is researched. The respondents are classified into three distinct clusters according to their healthy lifestyles as “young and single individuals with low healthy lifestyle tendency,” “young and middle-aged individuals consuming natural food,” and “elderly, married adults leading healthy lifestyles.” Afterwards, analyzing the data by ANOVA and post-hoc tests, it is found that respondents in different clusters have significantly different green consumer values and health motivations. Finally, theoretical and managerial discussions are provided and some recommendations are made for academicians and practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

1970s social marketing and green marketing schools strengthened the relation between marketing and natural environment. As the concept of sustainability became widespread, the number of consumers preferring products that won't harm the environment and their health, increased to a great extent. These consumers are sensitive about their health as well as the health of their environment. LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability), which is one of the latest approaches about lifestyle, brings a consumer segment who care about consumer health, environment, social justice and sustainable living (Cohen, 2010). Thus, it is impossible to take the concept of sustainability regardless from healthy lifestyle.

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As the main focus of this study is the issue of attaining sustainable development through promoting healthy lifestyle, it is important to define the consumers in terms of their health related habits. As healthy lifestyle of groups are different from each other, there is no single public health, health education and marketing approach that will be effective on all (Gould, 1988). Therefore, marketing strategies should be designed in accordance with the characteristics of the target group.

In this study, where consumers' healthy lifestyle is evaluated in connection with health motivation and green consumer values, 377 highly educated İstanbulites are examined and they are clustered into three groups according to their healthy lifestyles. The result of variance analysis and post hoc tests indicated significant differences between the level of green consumer values and health motivation of the respondents belonging to different clusters. Depending on these findings, some suggestions are made to practitioners and academicians. It is believed that, focusing on healthy lifestyle within the framework of sustainability is not a common approach and thus will add value to the literature and guide government institutions, non-profit organizations and companies who develop policies on this issue.

BACKGROUND

Sustainable Development

The term “sustainable development” has become an important topic for governments, institutions and individuals with the Bruntland Commission Report (Our Common Future) in 1987. *“Development is the process of improving the quality of human life”* (Our planet, our health, 1992). Sustainable development is defined as *“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (Bruntland Commission, 1987). This definition is focused on human needs and the way to meet them both today and in the future. Later in 1991, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and UNEP defined sustainable development from an environmental perspective as *“improving the quality of human life within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems”* (UNEP, 2011). Pronk and ul Hak (1992) underlines economic growth, justice and environment with their following definition: *“economic growth that provides fairness and opportunity for all the world's people, not just the privileged few, without further destroying the world's finite natural resources and carrying capacity”*. These definitions show that sustainable development means much more than economic growth. Many developing countries may perform positive economic growth rates in short term, however the citizens of these countries may live in poor environmental and social conditions, or have difficulty to reach health and education services equally. So, it is obvious that economic growth alone doesn't bring sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development is the result of the growing awareness of the global links between mounting environmental problems, socio-economic issues to do with poverty and inequality and concerns about a healthy future for humanity. Environmental problems threaten people's health, livelihoods and lives and can cause wars and threaten future generations. It crucially embraces the key issues for humanity of how to ensure lives worth living and our relation with the planet and our relations with each other (Hopwood et al., 2005).

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