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## A Study of the Relationship between Social Value Orientations and Sustainable Consumption among Urmia Citizens

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### Extended Abstract

Among various influencing factors on sustainable consumption, are basic social value orientations, as the cornerstone for any human behavior, including consumer behavior. The present survey study aimed at investigating the relationships between basic social value orientations, including; materialism, individualism, and collectivism (besides their sub-scales), with sustainable consumption. The study population includes all 15-64 years old citizens of Urmia City, from whom 516 are selected to be studied by the use of cluster sampling technique. Findings show that centrality dimension of materialism has shown negative and significant, and both horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism have shown positive and significant correlations with sustainable consumption. Multiple regression results indicate that these three variables accounted for 19 percent of the variation in sustainable consumption.

*Keywords:* sustainable consumption, Materialism, individualism, collectivism

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## INTRODUCTION

Rapid growth of human population and wasteful use of environment under the influence of consumer culture, as the main feature of modern life in most of developed and developing countries, have increased pressure on ecosystem at global level (Wackernagel and Yount, 1998, 511). These changes in life style and consumption pattern have had significant effect on environment and- directly or indirectly- reduced the environmental capacity and challenged the sustainable development goals and objectives (Abd'Razack, Ahmad Nazri & Umaru, 2013, 425). Along with discussing these ambiguities and instabilities in urban life style, human beings, at least in academic debates, have felt the immediate need for a new strategy to encounter environmental and consumption challenges (Sachs, 2015, 4). This strategy was first introduced under the title of *Sustainability* by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1980. Sustainable consumption has provided the chance for consumers to use the natural services and goods more effectively and efficiently, to properly meet their needs in a way that negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of consumption are minimized (United Nations Environment Program, 2005). It is essential to change the consumption pattern of individuals and families to have a sustainable society. Changes in consumer life style and consequently, reducing the environmental effects of consumption by families, can be affected by many factors at micro (social value orientations) and macro (social and cultural constructs) levels. Value orientations are regarded as the building blocks of any behavior, including consumption and environmental. Accordingly, dominant values and the consequent behavior play a significant role at environmental crisis, since human behavior is mainly rooted in dominant social paradigms.

## PURPOSE

Taking the general social approaches to environmental issues, the present study aimed at examining the relationship between some value orientations, including; materialism, individualism, and collectivism (and their various dimensions) with sustainable consumption.

## METHODOLOGY

Present study is a kind of survey research, which gathered data related to its constructs, including; vertical and horizontal individualism, collectivism, materialism (and its dimensions; centrality, happiness, and success) as independent variables and sustainable consumption (and its dimensions) as the dependent variable, by the use of questionnaire. Population of the study was all 15-64 years old citizens of Urmia City (counts around 476445 based on the 2016 national

population census), which 516 individuals were determined as the study sample and selected by the use of cluster sampling design.

## RESULT

Results indicate that centrality dimension of materialism has negative and significant effect on dependent variable, while horizontal individualism and horizontal collectivism have positive and significant effect on sustainable consumption. In addition, results of multivariate analysis showed that these variables could explain around 19 percent of variance in dependent variable.

Table 1. Results of Multivariate Regression Analysis of Sustainable Consumption

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig
Horizontal collectivism	0.279	0.241	5.085	.000
Horizontal individualism	0.194	0.182	3.813	.000
Centrality	-0.144	-0.156	-3.789	.000
R= 0.432    R <sup>2</sup> = 0.188    DW= 1.867    F= 38.459    Sig.= .000				

## CONCLUSION

Sustainable consumption is a multidimensional concept which includes behaviors such as; protecting natural resources through proper use of goods, recycling, purchase, and consumption of green goods, as well as experiences that promotes environmental conditions (Goldsmith, 2015, 3). Value orientations as a main component of the dominant social paradigm, play an important role in directing human actions toward (un)sustainable consumption. It is worth mentioning that though changing values is not the only solution for all environmental problems, however, it could be a path to alter the dominant social paradigm which can lead to pursue environmentally-friendly actions by social actors and organizations. This line of actions will facilitate progressing towards sustainable consumption and consequently, a sustainable society. Given the findings of the study (the negative general impact of materialism and the positive effect of some aspects of individualism and collectivism on sustainable consumption), it seems that in the study context, considering these relationships and weakening the materialistic values and strengthening horizontal individualism and collectivism, will end in reduction of the environmental damage associated with unsustainable consumption. Promotion of public awareness about the relationship between the



quality and quantity of consumption and its environmental impacts, under the influence of some value orientations, may be regarded as an important intervention to improve environmental conditions in Urmia City.

**NOVELTY**

The relationship between socio-cultural variables with sustainable consumption has been studied comprehensively in this study.



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