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Research Article

BECOMING ECOLOGICALLY CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS: THE DISCERNMENT OF YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Environment concerns and discourses are found more vibrant during this millennium. Environmental matters like ecological devastation, exploitation of natural resources, sustainability and more are discussed critically worldwide with an elegant aim of creating a better Planet, a better place to live. On the other side the human activities causing havoc to the planet resources increasing day by day. According to the UN's Intergovernmental Commission on Climate Change (2001) very likely i.e. 90 % of the human activities are causing global warming which in turn causes crucial climatic disturbances and resource depletion. As the most intelligent species on Earth humans need to behave in a concerned and responsible way to the natural resources which include land, water, forest, animals and all else which constitute the blue planet. To conserve nature and its resources for the next generation the inhabitants, the consumers of the nature may behave in an ecologically conscious manner and off course wisely trigger a chain of changes in attitudes and behavior towards the nature in order to transform as ecologically conscious consumers (ECCs) who were concerned about the environment.

The study concerned with the mensuration of ecologically conscious consumer behavior of youth as it act as the raw factor for the construct leading to the conservation and preservation of nature and natural resources. The participants of the study constitute 120 post graduate students from Calicut district. The investigators prepared a three point scale on ecologically conscious consumer behavior namely; ECCB Scale based on the behavioral components of ecological consciousness and is used for the study.

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental concerns and discourses are found more vibrant during this millennium especially after the Rio de Janero Earth Summit, 1992. Environmental matters like ecological devastation, exploitation of natural resources, sustainability and more are discussed critically worldwide from the Earth decade itself with an elegant aim of creating better planet ; a better and sustainable place to live. On the other side the human activities causing havoc to the planet resources increasing day by day and it has become one of the most anxious topics of discussion worldwide. Most of them conclude the significant reason of environmental depletion is the unconcerned and careless interferences of humans with nature. According to UN's International Commission on Climate Change (2001) very likely i.e. 90 % of the human activities are causing global warming which in turn causes crucial climatic disturbances and resource depletion.

As the most intelligent species on Earth, humans need to behave in a concerned and responsible way to the natural

resources which include land, water, forest, Animals and all else which contribute the blue planet. It is the responsibility of this generation to conserve the resources for the coming generations. Hence the inhabitants or present consumers of the planet may weave a sustainable relation with the environment and its components. In fact they must develop an ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB) which off course wisely triggers a chain of changes in the attitudes and behavior towards the nature in order to transform them as ecologically conscious consumers (ECCs).

Ecological consumers were considered to be the consumers who were concerned about the environment, the so called ecologically concerned consumers (Kinneer *et al.*, 1974; Buttel & Flinn, 1976; Murphy *et al.*, 1979). For a better tomorrow it is inexorable to mould humans as perfect consumers of the ecosystem. Ecologically responsible and concerned behavior of an individual ultimately depends on the ecological conscience. It can be described as a framework consisted of three dimensions. First one is the cognitive dimension, which again

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has a sub component Environmental knowledge. The second dimension is affective which constitutes pro-environmental attitudes and recycling attitudes as components. And the third and last one is the behavioral dimension (ECCB) which is composed of pro-environmental purchase behavior, Pro-environmental post purchase (recycling) behavior and pro-environmental activities (Tilikidou, 2001).

Present study concentrates on the behavioral dimension of ecological consciousness. Pro-environmental behavior is such behavior which is generally judge in the context of the considered society as a protective way of environmental behavior or a tribute to the healthy environment (Krajhanzl, 2010). And it involves conscious application of an ecologically sound and socially responsible ethic to lifestyle choices (Akpan, Matto, Hansberger, Rehbein, Rogozinski, Rosenthal & Shaw, 2003). The young generation is always interested in shopping mainly cloths, gifts and food and are very much concerned about their life style. At the same time they need to be concerned of the impacts of using and disposing the consumer goods to the environment. They may made sustainable choices during purchase of life style things. Efficient and environmentally responsible disposal of material good requires a level of knowledge on the part of the consumer that is often lacking (Moisander, 1995). Waste reduction must start with knowledge of the need for reducing material use, then reusing materials then recycling it.

In this context the study aims to attain a task of analyzing how the youth interpret the relation between ecology and consumerism. The study concerned with the mensuration of ecologically conscious consumer behavior of youth, who represent the new generation, as ecologically conscious consumer behavior act as the raw factor for the construct leading to conservation and preservation of nature and natural resources.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method is selected for the research work.

Participants

The study targets the youth. Hence the sample constitutes 120 post graduate students of different colleges of Calicut District.

Instrument

The instrument used to assess the ecologically conscious consumer behavior is a three point scale designed by the INVESTIGATOR and named as ECCB Scale. The scale constitutes 20 statements based on the components of behavioral dimension of ecological consciousness, i.e. pro-environmental purchase behavior, pro-environmental post-purchase behavior (attitudes and recycling) and pro-environmental activities. Each statement carries a maximum score of 2 and a minimum of 0. The total score is 40.

Procedure

The ECCB Scale with response sheet were distributed among the sample with due instructions and allowed a time span of 20 minutes to deliver their response. After the scheduled time it is collected from the students. The response sheets were scored and tabulated for further analysis.

RESULT

The tabulated data were subjected to percentage analysis

Distribution of Scores on ECCB Among The Youth

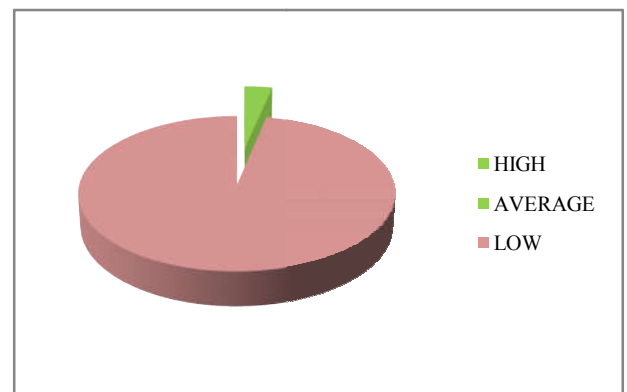
The scores divided to 3 categories High, Average and Low and percentage of scores in each category is also scrutinized here.

Table 1 Distribution of Scores on ECCB Among The Youth

Categories	Number of scores	Percentage
low	116	96.67
Average	4	3.33
High	0	0

Vast majority of the population comes under the low category. A very few scores, comparig the number of scores in low category comes under average. And the high category is vacant.

Graphical Representation of Distribution of Scores on ECCB Among The Youth



CONCLUSION

The study canvasses a very pathetic situation, that is the youth of Kerala actually lacks the Ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. Majority of the population posses a very low level of Ecologically conscios consumer behavior. The inhabitants of the Planet are well aware of the impacts of environmental devastation and how to manage or reduce the ecolgical disturbances. But all the knowledge is theoretical. What they percieved from their experiences or education for protecting the environment remains undisturbed in their brain. But practically they wont follow the theories. The study strongly stamps that this may be the reason for prevailing environmental issues. The world need a practical approach in ecological conservation otherwise all the efforts for making people aware of its necessity will be a vain. The planet expects a generation of ecogically conscious consumers who can develop ecofriendly strategies for their life and activities. There is no use of all the facilities humans create for his convenient life if they don't have a tolerable Earth to put all this on. The entire Planet population needs to take effort to change as an Ecologically conscious consumer population for the well maintanace of the blue planet.

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