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ENVIRONMENTAL TENDENCY OF CONSUMERS TOWARD SUSTAINABLE LIFE*

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Abstract

This study addresses the investigation of the environmental tendencies of consumers with regards to realization of sustainable life. Within this framework, based on the result of an existing public survey, the study tries to clarify to what extent the environmental tendencies consumers match with different aspects of sustainable life which are conceptualized as “consistency”, “efficiency” and “sufficiency”. As a result of the evaluation carried out, it can be said that environmental tendencies determined for the consumers and conceptualized as “environmental world view” and “environmental concern” match with the environmental suitability, efficiency and thriftiness aspects of sustainable life to a great extent. However, on the other hand, it can be concluded that as there is a widespread reluctance seen among consumers with regards to exhibiting reflexes such as participation, reaction, sacrifice, and taking responsibility, there is not enough determination on the side of consumers for realizing the requirements of “environmental commitment”.

Key Words: Sustainable life, environmental tendency, consumer

Özet

Bu çalışma, tüketicilerin çevreye ilişkin eğilimlerinin, sürdürülebilir yaşam anlayışına uygunluğunun irdelenmesini konu almaktadır. Bu çerçevede, mevcut bir kamuoyu araştırmasının sonuçlarından yola çıkılarak, tüketicilerin çevreye ilişkin eğilimlerinin, sürdürülebilir yaşamın “doğaya uygunluk”, “verimlilik” ve

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“tutumluluk” şeklinde kavramsallaştırılan her bir boyutuna ne ölçüde elverişli olduğuna açıklık getirmeye çalışılmıştır. Yapılan değerlendirmeler sonucunda, “çevresel dünya görüşü” ve “çevresel kaygı” şeklinde kavramlaştırılan tüketicilerin belirlenen çevresel eğilimlerinin, sürdürülebilir yaşamın doğaya uygunluk, verimlilik ve tutumluluk ilkeleriyle önemli ölçüde örtüştüğü söylenebilir. Ancak, katılım, tepki gösterme, özveride bulunma ve sorumluluk alma gibi reflekslerde yaygın bir çekincenin yaşanması nedeniyle, tüketicilerde “çevresel taahhüt”ün gereklerinin yerine getirilmesine ilişkin henüz yeterli bir iradenin bulunmadığı sonucuna varılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sürdürülebilir yaşam, çevresel eğilim, tüketici

Introduction

Industrial activities’ negative impacts to an unexpected extent on environment since 1970s raised questions about the understanding of economic developed dominant throughout the world.¹ As a result of this, the idea of limiting economic developed activities to the carrying capacity of the environment became a globally common target.¹ In 1987, “United Nation’s Our Common Future” report also known as “Brundtland Report” introduced the concept of “sustainable developed” to the agenda of the world as a form of environmentally friendly developed², which became accepted commonly after the Rio Conference.^{3 4} Considered as the most vital project of the age, sustainable developed, in its simplest sense, can be defined as meeting the needs of the present societies without risking the future of next generations.⁵ Sustainable developed approach takes the idea of rendering all human activities directed to terrestrial resources sustainable with regards to ecology and socio-economy as its starting point.

It can be said that the concept of sustainable developed has ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Ecological dimension means the protection of natural structure and functioning of ecosphere, economic dimension means considering the carrying capacity of the nature, and consistent economic developed, socio-cultural dimension means fair distribution of the resources in the world both intra-nationally and internationally and even among generations. In this respect, sustainable developed, in

¹ Penna, A.N., **The Human Footprint, A Global Environmental History**, Willey-Blackwell, Oxford, 2010.

² Benton, T. and Redclift, M., **Social Theory and The Global Environment**, Londra ve Newyork, Routledge, 1994.

³ F. Zimmermann, ve F. Brunner, “**Nachhaltige lehrumangeographisches seminar**”, Inst. Für Geographie und Raumforschung der Karl-Franzen UniversitätGraz, <http://www.oikosinternational.org/graz>, (18.05.2007)

⁴ Keating, M., **Yeryüzü Zirvesinde Değişimin Gündemi**, UNEP Türkiye Komitesi Yayını, Nisan 1993

⁵ Plewes, B. et al., “Sustainable human developed as a global frammework”. **International Journal LI (Spring)**, 1996, p.211-234.

⁶ L.Erdmann, S. Sohr, S. Behrendt, R. Kreibrich, “**Nachhaltigkeit und Ernährung**”, Institut für Zukunftsstudien undTechnologiebewertung, http://www.izt.de/pdfs/IZT_WB57_Nachhaltigkeit_Ernaehrung.pdf (20.6.2007).

line with its content, can built on three legs which can be summarized as “ecologic carrying capacity” “economic sustainability” and “social justice”.⁶

It is accepted that the implementation of sustainable developed project depends on human beings’ directing all their activities in the world in compliance with the principles of this. In this context, the main principles which should guide the sustainable developeds are: sufficiency, efficiency and consistency. Sufficiency principle means correctly performing cost-benefit calculation when it comes to consumption choices. Efficiency means obtaining maximum efficiency from minimum amount of resource. Consistency principle means use of material and energy sources, ranging from the production of food to the disposal of wastes, in such a way that the earth capacity can tolerate their usage.^{7,8,9} When the principles of sustainable developed undergo a general evaluation, it is seen that sufficiency principle is in a more close relation with social sustainability, efficiency principle with economic sustainability and consistency principle with ecologic sustainability. They are interconnected to each other.¹⁰

For human-nature relation to be in sustainable orientation, primarily, it is necessary for human behaviors and living styles in compliance with this orientation to be commonplace.¹¹ In this respect, in the provision of the conditions for the sustainability at both intra-national and international levels, the compliance of societies’ environmental tendencies with sustainable living style, that is, the compliance of environmental living style with the sustainability has a decisive role.¹²

With its broadest definition, living style is regular behavioral patterns built upon habits and social tendencies.¹³ In this framework, (1) individuals’ behavioral changes,

⁶ U. Stoltenberg, M. Adomssent, “Lüneburger Projekt “Nachhaltigkeit in Bildungsinstitutionen in Schleswig-Holstein (NaBiSch)”. Universität Lüneburg Inst. Für Umweltkommunikation (INFU), 2004, <http://www.kinder-was.de/mitmachen>. (17.05.2007).

⁷ L. Erdmann, S. Sohr, S. Behrendt, R. Kreibrich, “Nachhaltigkeit und Ernährung”, Institut für Zukunftsstudien und Technologiebewertung, http://www.izt.de/pdfs/IZT_WB57_Nachhaltigkeit_Ernaehrung.pdf (20.6.2007).

⁸ G. De Haan ve D. Harenberg, “Bildung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung: Förderprogramm Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung”. Freie Universität Berlin: ,1999, <http://www.blk-bonn.de/papers/heft72.pdf> (21.06.2007).

⁹ Zimmermann, ve F. Brunner, “Nachhaltige lehrhumangeographisches Seminaer”, Inst. Für Geographie und Raumforschung der Karl-Franzen UniversitätGraz, <http://www.oikosinternational.org/graz>, (18.05.2007)

¹⁰ O. Özdemir et al, **Biotechnological Foods-Sustainable Developed, Sustainable Consumption Education Research On Education**. Edited by Marina-Stefania Giannakaki, Gregory T. Papanikos, Yiannis Pozios & John Kelvyn Richards, 2006, p. 301.

¹¹ Catton, W.R. ve Dunlap, R., “A New Ecological Paradigm For Postexuberant Sociology.” **American Behavioral Scientist**, 24 (1), 1980, p.15-47.

¹² Buttel, F. and Taylor, P., “Environmental Sociology And Global Environmental Change: A Critical Assesment. Ed. M. Redclift and T. Benton. **Socioal Theory and the Global Environment**. Routledge, 1994

¹³ Lüdke, H., **Methoden der Lebensstilforschung**. Schriftreihe der Arbeitsgruppe Umweltbildung der der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft: Edit: Dietmar Bolscho/Gerherd Michelsen (Hrsg.). Leske-Budrich, 1999.

(2) type of mentality such as understanding and judgment, (3) different social variables are argued to be influential on living style. It is claimed that value-orientation and consumption patterns are more influential than classical socio-economic variables such as gender, age, income level, and education level on living style.¹⁴ In this respect, extent to which the living styles of individuals and societies comply with sustainable living style depends on their environmental tendencies.

When the related literature is reviewed, it is seen that the number of the studies investigating the environmental tendencies of societies has greatly increased in the recent years. In this respect, “The 2000 GlobalScan” conducted in 27 countries revealed that %76 of the participants support the idea of “living together with the nature” and %19 of them support the idea of “being the master of the nature”.¹⁵ In particular, the USA citizens have the tendency of attributing ethical value to both living and non-living things and showing respect to their existence and, they show great resistance to the mechanistic approach, which sees the human-being as the master of the nature.

Another study of 11 developed and 23 developed countries was conducted in 2000, and the study found that high majority of the participants (%83), with relatively higher percentages from the developed countries, are interested in and concerned about the environmental problems. Nearly half of the participants state that the concerns about both local and global issues such as water and air pollution, degradation of bio-diversity and climate change are higher today than they were 20 years ago.¹⁶ A study was carried out in 27 European Union countries among 27.000 people through face-to-face interview technique. This study revealed that %57 of the participants view climate change as the most important environmental problem and this is followed by water pollution (%45), air pollution (%42), spread of GMOs (%20) and urbanization-induced problems (%15). Moreover, %41 of the participants stated that they think the environmental problems affect their lives and %3 do not think so.¹⁷

A more recent global study revealed that nearly half of the general participants, and %74 of the participants from G7 countries attach more importance to the protection of the environment than economic developed.¹⁸ Citizens of the G7 countries think that economy (%84), environment (%78) and social phenomenon are influential on the quality of their life; while %15 them consider economy important, %67 think that

¹⁴ Rheingans, A., *Einige Überlegungen zur Analyse (Ökologischer) Lebensstile. Schriftreihe “der Arbeitsgruppe der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft: Bd. 3), Edit: Dietmar Bolscho/Gerherd Michelsen (Hrsg.), Leske-Budrich, 1999*

¹⁵ GlobeScan, *Environics International Environmental Monitor Survey Data-Set”. Envionics International, Canada, 2000.*

¹⁶ GlobeScan, “Results Of First-Ever Global Poll On Humanity's Relationship With Nature”. *Envionics International, Toronto, 2004 .*

¹⁷ Eurobarometer , “Special Eurobarometer”, 295/Wave 68.2-TNS Opinion & Social. *Europa Comission, 2008.*

¹⁸ *GlobeScan, “International Environmental Monitor”, Envionics International, Toronto, 2002.*

economic, environmental and social phenomena should be considered in combination with each other.

When the issue is investigated in relation to attitudes and tendencies towards technology, a global study conducted in 1995 revealed that %67 of the participants think science and technology as something good, and only %9 of them view technology as something bad.¹⁹ The same study also reported that the citizens of the poor countries have more positive attitudes towards technology than those of the rich countries. Moreover, it was found that majority of the European societies (%67) support the use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and bio-mass.²⁰ It was found that %70 of the participants from G7 countries and %62 of the participants from European countries are against the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), this ratio decreases to %45 among USA citizens.²¹ Another study reported that %65 of the participants from the poor countries believe that benefits of bio-technological applications are more than their risks; however, participants from the rich countries believe that the benefits of such applications are shadowed by their risks

Across European Union, %59 of the citizens assign the responsibility of fighting against environmental problems to the organizations and %43 of them to the individuals.²² In addition, %37 of the participants think that punitive measures should be strengthened to fight against environmental problems, %33 of them think that the products should be labeled, %30 think that awareness should be raised, %29 think that economic incentives should be introduced, and %14 think that taxes should be increased. In this respect, the percentage of those supporting the idea of introducing extra taxes to protect the environment increased from %62 in 1995 to %69 in 2000.^{23 24}

Consumption patterns constitute the practical indicators of societies' environmental tendencies. In this context, based on the results of many studies, social status and title-oriented consumption is perceived to be an important threat to human culture and environment²⁵. Indeed, a global study revealed that %45 of the participants see over-consumption as an important threat to human culture and environment, and this ratio is higher in rich countries than it is in poor countries.²⁶ Another study showed that

¹⁹ R Inglehart., et al., "GlobalScans and European Values Surveys 1981-1984, 1990-1993, and 1995-1997" **Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)**, 2000.

²⁰ Eurobarometer, "Special Eurobarometer. 295/Wave 68.2-TNS Opinion & Social." **Europa Comission**, 2008

²¹ Worldviews 2002, **Chicago Council on Foreign Relations**, . CCFR,

²² Eurobarometer, "Special Eurobarometer": 295/Wave 68.2-TNS Opinion & Social, **Europa Comission**, 2008

²³ *GlobeScan*, "International Environmental Monitor", **Environics International**, Toronto, 2002.

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ A.Leiserowitz, et al., ., "Do Global Attitudes and Behaviors Support Sustainable Developed?". **Environment**, 00139157, Vol. 47, 2005, Issue 9.

²⁶ *GlobeScan*, "International Environmental Monitor", **Environics International**, Toronto, 2002.

%54 of the participants regard “material richness” as good, and %21 regard it as bad.²⁷

²⁸ According to a study investigating the consumption patterns in 20 developed and developed countries, %36 of the participants avoid buying environmentally-destructive products, %27 of them are against the system of environmentally-destructive packaging and %25 of them pay attention to the information given in the labels of the products they intend to buy²⁹. Moreover, it was found that recyclable products receive great approval, especially in North America. Another global study carried out in 1995 showed that in general, %46 of the participants prefer environmentally-friendly products, this ratio increases to %67 in developed countries and decreases to %30 in developing countries.³⁰ According to the study called GlobalScan (2000), preference for the environmentally-friendly car is about %40 in rich and poor countries; however, this ratio is about %29 in moderately rich countries, and in general participants are not willing to pay extra for environmentally-friendly fuel.

It was found that in European Union, %50 of the citizens are thoroughly willing to buy environmentally-friendly products, %14 of them are not willing; %12 of them have a complete trust in labeling and %13 do not have any.³¹ In addition to this, it was found that %55 of the citizens of the European Union opt for the recyclable products, %47 of them pay attention to energy-saving, %38 to public transportation, %30 to waste saving and %23 to the purchase of environmentally-friendly and local products.

As a result of a global study conducted in 1995 to determine the participation in environmental protection and reactions against environmental problems, it was found that though it is higher in developed countries, the general ratio of being the member of environmental organizations and participating in environmental campaigns is %13.³² A similar study conducted in 2000 revealed that only %10 of the participants sent e-mails or made phone calls to react against environmental problems, %18 of them voted for environmentally-friendly policies and %11 are members of an environmental organization. These data show that throughout the world, the tendency of reacting against environmental problems and active participation in the protection of the environment is quite low.

When the above-mentioned findings are considered, it is seen that, across the world, particularly in European Union, environmental awareness has greatly raised due to increasing concern about the environmental problems. Therefore, preferences for the sustainable consumption of the resources have increased; yet, parallel increase has not

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ R Inglehart., et al., “Globalscans and European Values Surveys 1981-1984, 1990-1993, and 1995-1997” **Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)**, 2000.

²⁹ *GlobeScan*, “International Environmental Monitor”, **Environics International**, Toronto, 2002.

³⁰ R Inglehart., et al., “Globalcans and European Values Surveys 1981-1984, 1990-1993, and 1995-1997” **Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)**, 2000.

³¹ Eurobarometer, “Special Eurobarometer”: 295/Wave 68.2-TNS Opinion & Social, **Europa Comission**, 2008

³² R Inglehart., et al., “Globalscans and European Values Surveys 1981-1984, 1990-1993, and 1995-1997” **Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)**, 2000.

been observed in taking individual responsibility and tendencies for displaying reactions.

In this study, the extent to which the environmental tendencies of the Turkish consumers comply with the sustainable developed approach is holistically analyzed in relation to the each of the dimensions called “sufficiency”, “efficiency” and “consistency”, and based on this analysis, socio-cultural advantages and obstacles which have potential to play a role in the implementation of sustainable life will be determined.

Materials and Methods

The present research was built on the findings of the study entitled as “Environment-related Social Tendencies in Turkey” conducted by Tuna³³ throughout Turkey in 2003-2004. Tuna’s study was conducted on 1028 participants from the seven regions of Turkey. In the study, Tuna measured the environmental tendencies of consumers with the tree-dimensional environmental tendencies³⁴ scale.³⁵ In this respect, the three dimensions of being environmentalist are defined as “environmental worldview”, “environmental concern” and “environmental commitment”. Environmental world view is the most basic and common form of environmentalism and determines the relation between environment, and developed and modernization; environmental concern determines how the individuals are affected from the events taking place in the environment at individual, family and social levels, and environmental commitment determines the extent to which individuals are willing to commit themselves to solving environmental problems.

In the present study, on the other hand, we will try to establish the relations and links between the basic dimensions of consumers’s environmental tendencies; “environmental world view”, “environmental concern” and “environmental commitment” and the basic dimensions of sustainable life; “sufficiency”, “efficiency” and “consistency”. That is, we will discuss the extent to which the Turkish consumers’s environmental tendencies comply with the sustainability principles or the extent to which sustainable life at social level is possible in Turkey.

Results

When the environmental tendencies of the Turkish consumers expressed as “environmental world view”, “environmental concern” and “environmental commitment” are analyzed in relation to “sufficiency”, “efficiency”, and “consistency” principles of sustainable life, following conclusions can be reached:

³³ M. Tuna, **Türkiye’de Çevrecilik: Türkiye’de Çevreye İlişkin Toplumsal Eğilimler**, Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2006.

³⁴ R Cluck, et al., “Attitudes Towards And Commitment To Environmentalism: A Multidimensional Conceptualization.” **Sociological Consumers**, Toronto. 1997.

³⁵ M.Tuna, **Environmentalism: An Empirical Test Of Multi-Level Effects Of On Environmental Attitudes In More And Less Developed Countries**. PhD Thesis, Mississippi State University, MS. 1998.

Sufficiency

These comments can be put forth with regards to how much *environmental world view*, the basic form of environmental tendencies, complies with the *sufficiency* principle:

It was observed that the participants are undecided about the statement saying that animal should have the same rights as human beings.³⁶ In contrast to this, most of the participants believe that when the environment is left to its own dynamics, it maintains its existence without any change.³⁷ The participants seem to be indecisive about the statement that to improve the living conditions, harsh struggle should be carried out against the environment.³⁸ Although these findings show that “Bio-centric” environmental view has not been adequately adopted, it can be claimed that the Turkish consumers is respectful to the unity of the environment. In this respect, for environment, the belief that the nature was created by God is thought to have an important role.³⁹

In general, the participants seem to believe that the main body responsible for protecting the environment is the state.⁴⁰ Parallel to this, high majority of them think that it is necessary to enforce stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment.⁴¹ Although this, at the first glance, may show that the Turkish consumers have an environmentally-friendly world view, it is highly possible to argue that Turkish consumers is not willing to take responsibility for the protection of the environment, instead, they rely on the governmental enforcement.

When the societal tendencies were investigated with regards to consumption behaviors, it was observed that majority of the participants attach importance to environmentally-friendly products.⁴² According to this finding, it can be argued that with regards to their consumption behaviors, the Turkish consumers is far away from the understanding of sustainable life. Yet, one of the important outcomes of the Rio Summit, Section 4 of Agenda 21 expresses that for the life on the earth to be in a sustainable direction, consumption patterns should be rendered sustainable.⁴³

These conclusions can be reached with regards to the extent to which the *environmental concern* dimension covering the areas related to public’ opinions about the environmental destruction and how much the activities taking place in the environment affect the life of an individual and consumers complies with the consistency principle:

³⁶ M. Tuna, *Türkiye’de Çevrecilik: Türkiye’de Çevreye İlişkin Toplumsal Eğilimler*, Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2006. Table 18a; p.95

³⁷ Ibid: Table 6b; p.67

³⁸ Ibid: Table 6e; p.68

³⁹ Ibid: 5d; p.65

⁴⁰ Ibid: Table 18a; p.95

⁴¹ Ibid: Table 46c; p.128

⁴² Ibid: Table 44; p.126

⁴³ R. Alvensleben,., “*Nachhaltiger Konsum: Konzepte, Probleme Und Strategien, Leitbild*” *Nachhaltige Landwirtschaft* : Welche Wege Führen Zum Ziel?”, 1998 <http://www.uni-kiel.de/agrarmarketing/lehrstuhl/nachhaltigerkonsumdlg.pdf>. (17.06.2007).

It is understood that majority of the public are sensitive about the negative effects of nuclear power plants, pesticides and herbicides, traffic, industrialization, global warming and wastes on the health of humans and environment.⁴⁴ In contrast to this, most of them seem to be not very eager to show their reactions against environmentally-destructive activities.⁴⁵ The fact that only 6 % of the participants reported that they are the members of the environmental organizations, 14 % of them complained about environment-related problem, and 10% of them participated in a environmental protests, proves that the public do not have much tendency to show their concern for environmental issues. On the other hand, it seems that most of the participants are in a conviction that environmental destructing human activities do not much affect themselves and their relatives.⁴⁶ All these show that the conditions for the effective participation of the public which is regarded as the driving force behind the creations of sustainable life have not matured in Turkey yet.⁴⁷

The sensitivity expressed by the Turkish consumers about the destruction of the environment is a great advantage in terms of the sufficiency principle of the sustainable life. However, their reluctance to activate their sensitivity about the destruction of human health and environment shows that the existing cultural structure is not suitable enough to activate the consistency principle.

To what extent the responsibility and sacrifice brought by the sustainable life project will be taken depends on the environmental commitment tendencies of the consumers. In this context, high majority of the participants seem to be not ready to make financial sacrifices⁴⁸ be confronted with increasing environment taxes⁴⁹ and make sacrifices in their living standards.⁵⁰ This explicitly shows that the Turkish consumers is far away from the principle of sufficiency in relation to environmental commitment.

Efficiency

The tendencies of the Turkish consumers towards using technologies and products with lower environmental and economic costs can be seen as an indicator of the extent to which the Turkish consumers has tendency towards the efficiency principle of sustainable life. In this respect, following conclusions can be reached with regards to how much suitable the general tendency of the consumers is for putting efficiency principle into practice based on the tendencies reflecting world view, environmental concern and environmental commitment.

⁴⁴ M. Tuna, **Türkiye’de Çevrecilik: Türkiye’de Çevreye İlişkin Toplumsal Eğilimler**, Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2006: Table 18a; p.95Table 11b, 11e, 12a, 12c, 14a, 37, 42).

⁴⁵ Ibid: Tablo 20, 21a, 21c; p.100-103).

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Keating, M., **Yeryüzü Zirvesinde Değişimin Gündemi**, UNEP Türkiye Komitesi Yayını, Nisan 1993.

⁴⁸ M. Tuna, **Türkiye’de Çevrecilik: Türkiye’de Çevreye İlişkin Toplumsal Eğilimler**, Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2006: Table 18a; p.95Table 11b, 11e, 12a, 12c, 14a, 37, 42). Table 18a; p.95Table 21b; p.101

⁴⁹ Ibid: Table 30b; p.109, 38b; p.119, 43b; p.124

⁵⁰ Ibid: Table 26, 27; p.105-106

World view of the consumers about science and technology can provide guidance in the adoption of efficiency principle. In this context, 44% of the participants believe that modern science has positive influences.⁵¹ In addition, 44% of the consumers seem to believe that the changes taking place in the environment always bring about adverse affects.⁵² This shows that interventions in the environment are not acknowledged by the consumers in general. When the above-mentioned tendencies related to environmental world view are generally considered, it is seen that although the Turkish consumers does not support the interventions in environment, they are not against the spreading of scientific and technological advances. Thus, the consumers can be said to have an environmental world view in compliance with efficiency principle. Yet, in order to be able to elaborate the related tendencies of the consumers in this context, their opinions about the implementation of advanced technologies with lower environmental cost should be solicited.

Certainly, to be able to put the efficiency principle into practice, majority of the consumers should react against the activities violating this principle and show tendency to adopt alternative applications. In this respect, it was found that 30% of the participants attempt to organize their wastes in a suitable way for recycling “always or frequently” and 45% of them “sometimes or never”.⁵³ This shows that the majority of the consumers do not have the adequate sensitivity and responsibility required by efficiency principle. Moreover, 70% of the consumers was found to have a tendency to consume meat.⁵⁴ Consumption of meat which requires high level of energy input and has high environmental and economic cost to such a great extent can be claimed not to be in compliance with the efficiency principle.⁵⁵

Furthermore, it was found that 25% of the participants do not have tendency for accepting the importance of using motor vehicles which are less harmful to environment. This shows that the Turkish consumers is not adequately aware of the importance of the environmental applications with lower cost.

Although more data are needed to reflect the Turkish consumers’s environmental world view on, environmental concern for and environmental commitment to efficiency principle, in the light of the present data, the general tendency of the consumers is not suitable for the principle to be put into effect.

Consistency

Effective use of the natural resources is of great importance with regards to both decreasing the environmental cost and rendering social justice possible. In this respect, evaluation of the Turkish consumers’s tendencies with regards to environmental world view, environmental concern and environmental commitment may contribute to

⁵¹ Ibid: Table 4b; p.61

⁵² Ibid: Table 4c; p.62

⁵³ Ibid: Table 19a; p.97

⁵⁴ Ibid: Table 19c; p.98).

⁵⁵ G. Gardner et al., **Günümüzde Tüketim**, Dünyanın Durumu, Özel Konu: Tüketim Toplumu. Worldwatch Enstitüsü, İstanbul, TEMA, 2004:3-21.

understanding how suitable the consumers's tendency is to put the consistency principle into effect.

In this context, although high majority of the consumers agree with the idea of providing more incentives to the people to save more energy, they seem to be against increasing the taxes to decrease energy consumption.⁵⁶ Thus, it is understood that the majority of the Turkish consumers is supporting the idea of saving but is not ready to make sacrifices such as paying higher taxes to do this. However, more data are needed to determine the consumers's world view on the thrifty use of natural resources.

How much the Turkish consumers is concerned about the wasteful use of natural resources, and how intent they are to take responsibility for their more thrifty use are vital for understanding the possibilities of realizing the efficiency principle. In this framework, it can be said that the participants are not sensitive to and responsible enough for the use of resources in a more thrifty way as only 30% of them attempt to organize their wastes in a suitable way for recycling.⁵⁷ On the other hand, although most of the participants reported that they do not consume energy unnecessarily for the purposes of lighting and heating, most of them were found to have had no effort to save energy in lighting and heating.⁵⁸ This shows that although the consumers is in general sensitive to saving energy in their houses or flats, wasteful use of energy is still going on. Moreover, the participants were found to be against the idea of taxing the energy used in houses and flats.⁵⁹

The way of transportation preferred by the majority of the consumers is also considered to be one of the indicators of consumers's tendency to take responsibility for and to show sensitivity to efficiency. In this context, it was found that half of the participants prefer their own cars or public transportation to commute, and only a quarter prefer bicycle or walking.⁶⁰ This shows that the consumers does not behave in line with the consistency principle while commuting.

Conclusion

Tendencies of societies certainly constitute the driving force for the provision of the conditions of sustainable life on the earth. In this era, to stop the process rapidly becoming unsustainable and turn it back to sustainable route necessitate the existence of human type and social structure complying with this.

In this context, realization of sustainable living style in Turkey depends on the tendencies of the consumers towards environment. In this study based on the results of a recent study conducted throughout Turkey⁶¹ each of the environmental tendencies

⁵⁶ M. Tuna, *Türkiye'de Çevrecilik: Türkiye'de Çevreye İlişkin Toplumsal Eğilimler*, Nobel Yayınları, Ankara, 2006: Table 18a; p.95 Table 21b; p.101, Table 21b; p.101, Table 30a, 30b; p.108-109).

⁵⁷ Ibid: Table 19a; p.97

⁵⁸ Ibid: Table 26, 27; p.105-106).

⁵⁹ Ibid: Table 30b; p.108

⁶⁰ Ibid: 34c; 114

⁶¹ Ibid

expressed as Turkish consumers's environmental world view, environmental concern and environmental commitment in related study was investigated in relation to the sufficiency, efficiency and consistency principles of sustainable life, respectively, and in the light of the findings, following conclusions were reached:

It can be argued that the Turkish consumers has an environmentalist world view under the influence of traditional and religious belief and this is an advantage in realizing the sufficiency principle; yet, their expecting the state to be main body responsible for protecting the environment through bans seems to be a disadvantage in realizing the same principle.

On the other hand, majority of the consumers's showing sensitivity towards the factors destructing environment is in compliance with the sufficiency principle, their not being ready to react is the main obstacle in front of the realization of this principle. Given the fact that one of the primary targets of "Agenda 21" reflecting the shared concern in the world is having people participate in the process, it is clear that the societies not ready for this participation will have some difficulties in realizing the sustainability of life.⁶²

Turkish consumers's not being ready to make sacrifices in their living standards to protect environment can be considered to be one of the obstacles making it difficult to realize the sufficiency principle.

When the compliance of Turkish consumers's environmental tendency with the efficiency principle is examined, it is seen that although the consumers is against the interventions in environment, they are for the spread of scientific and technological advances. In the light of the findings, it is seen that the Turkish consumers has a tendency in line with the efficiency principle as they are for technological applications with lower environmental and economic costs.

Finally, although the environmental tendency of the consumers supports the more thrifty use of resources, in the issues of lighting, heating and transportation, saving is not still heeded enough.

When the above mentioned comments are evaluated in general, it can be said that Turkish consumers's environmental tendencies, environmental world view and sensitivity, comply with the principles of sufficiency, efficiency and consistency of sustainable life to a great extent; yet, it can be claimed that the tendencies related to participation, reaction, sacrifice, and taking responsibility are obstacles in front of the realization of these principles. These show that Turkish consumers has not reached the required level of democratic maturity to meet the requirements of and to take the responsibilities for sustainable life.

Finally, it is seen that the extent to which environmental worldview and environmental concern tendencies of the Turkish consumers comply with the principles of sustainability is highly similar to those of other societies. However, the match

⁶² Keating, M., **Yeryüzü Zirvesinde Değişimin Gündemi**, UNEP Türkiye Komitesi Yayını, Nisan 1993

between the tendencies for environmental commitment and taking responsibility and the principles of sustainability is worse than that is seen in other societies, particularly in European Union societies. There is a need for educational and awareness-raising processes that will convert environment protection tendency of the Turkish consumers that is fed from cultural and traditional characteristics of it into individual and organizational responsibility and participation.

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