Sustainability in behaviour of generation Y - research study of values and behaviour

If there would be any future for the mankind a radical change in source exploiting is necessary. There are discussions how to achieve sustainable production and consumption. The effort was at first focused on the side of offer, it means influencing production and distribution to minimize their impact on environment so that the sources would be used effectively. Attention was later shifted on the side of consumption. The goal was to know consumers better, recognize their needs, behaviour and trends as well as taking into account all pros and cons that emerge as a cause of their actual behaviour in the society. The aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of values in understanding consumer behavior and present the results of a survey conducted in autumn 2013. Its aim was to find out what values are recognized among young people. Based on the attitudes and behavior we created a typology of sustainability conscious behavior and values of young people that are also referred to as Generation Y. The data concerning their ecologically conscious behavior have been presented in previous issue of this magazine.

Values

There are many factors that to a certain extent, greater or smaller, influence the behavior of consumers. This behavior is partially determined by culture its norms and values (Antonides and Van Raaij 1998, p. 87) although consumers themselves may not realize it. Each culture is characteristic by certain system of values (Solomon 2006, p. 137) but it is necessary to realize that there are individual differences among members of the culture in the extent to which they accept and recognize these values.

Shalom H. Schwartz (2013, p. 1) summarized the main features of values as follows:
• Values are beliefs closely tied to emotion.
• Values are associated with motivation, they refer to the desirable goals.
• Values transcend specific activities and situations, they are abstract goals.
• Values govern the evaluation or selection of actions and subjects, they serve as standards.
• Values are ordered by relevance relative to one another.

When examining the values, Schwartz (2012) did not name them directly. He created a system of statements (inventory), in which each statement represented one of 10 basic values (Schwartz 2012, p. 11): conformity, tradition, benevolence, harmony-universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power and safety.
To explore human values Shalom Schwartz created questionnaire containing 40 statements describing the person. These portraits describe a person with her/his aims, aspirations or desires and they indicate the importance of studied values. As an example, we mention two statements of the inventory:
He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him. (Harmony)
Forgiving people who have hurt him is important to him. He tries to see what is good in them and
not to hold a grudge. (Benevolence)
The role of the respondent is to determine the extent to which the described person is such as
him/her. To express the degree of similarity (or differences) between described person and
himself/herself, respondent has to answer using one of the following options (the number indicates
the code of the answer):

very much like me = 6 like me = 5 some-what like me = 4
a little like me = 3 not like me = 2 not like me at all = 1

As it is obvious from coding, the higher the value, the more respondent sees himself/herself similar
to the given example and the more describing the given value is. Next table 1 shows averages for
each researched value. Benevolence, self-direction and hedonism had the highest score. On the
other hand, the lowest scores had tradition and power.

Table 1: Averages of Schwartz’s values
Source: authors

Results of t-test show that students see benevolence and self-direction as the most expressing value.
The least typical is tradition, power and conformity.

**Typology based on values and behaviour**

When creating a typology we used cluster analysis. Data from Schwartz’s inventory was used as a
base for segmentation. Segments were after defined based on behavior and opinions, (these results
were presented in the previous issue of this magazine).
Segments were named by two words. The first word of the name is derived from the values, the
second from attitudes and behavior. Clusters can be characterized as follows:

**Type 1 - Variegated and Responsible**
This type consists of 29,4% of students. For this type of students (table 2), values such as self-
direction, security and benevolence are significant, but all values except tradition and power have
certain importance - therefore the name Variegated.
Table 2: Rank of average scores among type 1
Source: authors

In terms of beliefs, attitudes and behavior, this segment can be characterized as follows: Compared with other types they are more aware of the importance of environmental protection and they understand their personal role in it. They are more ready are to buy environmentally friendly products as well as they are prepared to change their habits. Most of them doesn’t throw even a little trash on the ground and an absolute majority of them regret if they have to throw away food. In comparison to other types they tend to save water and energy, no matter if they have to pay for it or not. When purchasing they consider the impact on the environment. Having suitable conditions for waste separation at home, more collection points and information on how and where to separate would help them to separate the waste more. Young people of this type tend to agree that greater use of public transportation and paying higher – so called environmental- taxes would help to solve environmental issues. Based on their attitudes and behavior they had been given the name Responsible.

Type 2 – Harsh and Selfish
The type is represented by 16,6% of students. Achievement, ambition and self-direction are the most important values (table 3). They do not see tradition as important at all. They seek individualistic hard values and lack soft values- therefore the name Harsh.

Table 3: Rank of average scores among type 2
Source: authors
When it comes to opinions, attitudes and behaviour they can be characterised this way:

Environmental protection is not important for them. Least of all types they agree with the fact that an individual may play a role in protecting the environment. They do not agree that the problems related to the environment have a direct impact on their daily lives. They believe that especially by large emitters should take care of environmental protection. They do not want to restrict themselves or change their habits in order to protect the environment. They have no problem to throw small trash on the ground and do not regret if they have to throw away food.

When purchasing they do not care what impact the product has on the environment. They tend to not separate the waste. Neither they limit themselves when taking a shower nor prefer use of bike or walk instead of driving. They do not agree that the information on labels enable them to recognize environmentally friendly products. And they do not trust the information on the labels.

To separate more the only motivation could help - financial or nonfinancial benefits.

When it comes to environmental protection activities, they do not agree that cars should be driven by more than one person at a time. They’d rather see more effective cars instead. They do not prefer purchase of ecological products in case they are more expensive, but on the other hand they prefer local products. Compared to other segments, the highest proportion of them has never helped anyone selflessly.

Due to the fact, that this type tends to act egoistically and environment is of no interest to them, they got the name Selfish.

**Type 3 - Adrenaline and Undecided**

The third segment represents 24.6% of students. Students in this cluster (table 4) strongly seek hedonism, stimulation and self-direction. Only in this segment the average score was over 5.

Tradition has low importance, but benevolence and harmony are significant - and that makes them softer. Since they tend to seek pleasure and excitement they got the name Adrenaline.

When it comes to opinions, attitudes and behaviour they can be characterised this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hedonism</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stimulation</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-direction</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Benevolence</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Achievement</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Harmony</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Security</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Conformity</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Power</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tradition</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Rank of average scores among Type 3

Source: authors

Their answers were usually clear yes or clear no. Of all respondents they are the ones that are the most convinced that problems related to the environment affect their daily lives. But they are not aware of the fact that they should change their lifestyle. They save water and energy, but only when they pay for it and when taking a shower, they do not limit themselves to not waste water. They separate. They do not trust the information on product labels.

When it comes to environmental activities they do not see solution in extensive use of public transportation, or car driven by more than one person at a time, but rather replacing the current cars by more efficient. The most they can identify with preferring of buying organic products even if
they have a higher price and also with the fact that energy consumption should be reduced. They do not tend to purchase local products. These are the people who selflessly help, especially financially. The characteristics of this segment seem to be environmentally contradictory – in some areas they are environmentally conscious in some not – therefore the name – Undecided.

**Type 4 -Nice and Soft**
The fourth type consists of 29.4% of students. Students in this segment (table 5) recognize particularly benevolence and also harmony and conformity. The least important is power. Only three values had an average score higher than 4, so they have formed the basis for their name – Nice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Benevolence</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Harmony</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conformity</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-direction</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Security</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hedonism</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Achievement</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tradition</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Stimulation</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Power</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Rank of average scores among type 4

Source: authors

When it comes to opinions, attitudes and behaviour they can be characterised this way: Their answers were usually partial agreement or partial disagreement. They are not ready to buy environmentally friendly products. Although they agree that an individual can play a role in environmental protection, they think that rather large polluters should take care of environmental problems. They partially disagree that an environmental impact of individual is minimal and they understand (slight agreement) that they should change their lifestyle. They see labels as helping when deciding about purchasing environmentally friendly products. They do not see themselves as producers of large quantities of garbage. When it comes to environmental activities most of all they think it would help if cares were driven by more than one person and least of all they think replacing of current cars by more effective ones would help. If they decide to help selflessly, it usually is nonfinancial help. As this type usually used only partial agreement or disagreement, they got the name – Soft.

**Summary**

Each person recognizes certain values and these have an effect on his behavior. Schwartz created a system of values that are distinguished by the type of goal or motivation that each of them expresses. According to research results students see benevolence and self-direction as the most expressing value. The least typical is tradition, power and conformity. Created segments indicated that even among students there are different types, which differ by shared values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.
Notes

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List of References


Key Words

values, Schwartz’s system, typology, research hodnoty, Schwartzov systém, typológia, výskum

JEL Classification

M31

Summary

Udržateľnosť v správaní generácie Y – výskumná štúdia hodnôt a správania. Časť II. Existuje veľké množstvo faktorov, ktoré v menšej alebo váčšej miere ovplyvňujú naše správanie. Medzi ne patria aj kultúra a s ňou súvisiace hodnoty. Shalom Schwartz vytvoril systém desiatich hodnôt, ktoré sa lišia typom cieľa a motivácie, ktoré každá z nich vyjadruje. Prieskum, který sme realizovali v roku 2013 medzi študentmi 3. ročníka, ukázal, že najviac uznávanými hodnotami sú láskavosť, samostatnosť a hedonizmus a najmenej uznávanými sú tradícia, moc a poslušnosť. Ďalšou analýzou sme vytvorili štyri typy mladých ľudí, ktoré sa lišia uznávanými hodnotami, názormi, postojmi a správaním.

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