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Does Childhood Socioeconomic Status Influence Sustainable Consumption? A Life History Approach

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Social Science

Poster

Title: Does Childhood Socioeconomic Status Influence Sustainable Consumption? A Life History Approach

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Abstract:

Sustainable consumption is the ability for consumers to meet their material needs and other necessities without causing irreversible damage to the environment. Current research defines sustainable consumption but does not explain thoroughly why consumers engage in sustainable consumption behaviors. Childhood socioeconomic status (SES) might be an explanatory factor. Childhood SES has been looked at in relation to many lifestyle factors such as finances, health care, and education. Further, according to Life History theory, higher childhood SES is associated with long-term planning and delay of gratification, whereas the opposite is true for lower childhood SES. However, childhood SES has not been studied specifically in relation to sustainable consumption. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to quantitatively explore the influence of childhood SES on adult sustainable consumption through a Life History lens. Using an eight-response scale adapted from Griskevicius and Mittal (2016), data will be collected through a survey distributed to approximately 200 college-aged participants. Respondents will be asked to choose between a sustainable product and a non-sustainable product and rate their preference for their chosen product. Respondents will also be asked to provide their current and childhood SES. With support of the Life History theory, it is hypothesized that individuals with a higher childhood SES will choose sustainable products more often than individuals with a lower childhood SES. Results will help fill the gap of understanding in sustainable consumption behavior. Sustainable products are still a small but growing segment in the industry, and understanding these factors better will help marketers market to green and non-green consumers in a more effective way.