

## RECENT DISSERTATIONS

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Sustainable development and its promotion in a welfare society in a global age

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### Abstract

The objective of the dissertation was to determine the concept of sustainable development according to current understanding and to analyze the structuration of sustainable daily life and how it varies between different groups. The present dissertation is both a literature-based theoretical study and data-based empirical research. The theoretical framework of the study was a created model of the Structuration of Sustainability in Everyday Life. The model is based on a synthesis of Giddens Theory of Structuration (1984), Spaargaren and van Vliet's Theory of Consumption as Social Practices (2000), and principles of sustainable development. According to the model created, sustainable everyday life is generated in a context of internal and external factors compromising the interests of ecosystems, society and business.

The literature used in the thesis included international and national statements on sustainable development and research into sustainability and the transition to sustainable societies. The data were collected at Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The discretionary sample consisted of students of social services (n = 210) and were collected using the semantic differential technique. The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The results showed that the value placed on ecological, economic and social sustainability increased with age. Activity in non governmental organizations was associated with the acceptance of sustainable development as a whole and especially with global responsibility. Women's everyday life promoted sustainability more than men's. People living in Helsinki had more sustainable ways of living than those living in the surrounding municipalities because of greater recycling and the low importance given to ownership. Preferring vegetarian food turned out to be a real opportunity for a more sustainable way of living because there were few barriers identified. Contradictory human behavior occurred when advanced sustainable consumer were ready to risk their health. The importance of communality was high and it was considered an aspect of health. The most significant obstacles to sustainable development in daily life were high costs, lack of knowledge and busyness.

Similar attitudes towards sustainable development translate into different people's behavior, which indicates complexities of the behaviour change in the context of sustainable development. The role of non governmental organizations is significant in increasing global responsibility. Education presents an opportunity to increase sustainability, but there are challenges to face from system thinking and in understanding entities in a state of transition towards sustainable everyday life. The responsibility of policy makers is paramount because high costs create a barrier to a sustainable way of living. The implementation of the concept of sustainable development should be focused on the planetary ethics which cover humans, animals, plants and ecosystems.

*Keywords:* Sustainable development, sustainable thinking, behaviour change