

Rafael Ravina Ripoll /
Luis Bayardo Tobar Pesantez /
José Marchena Dominguez
(eds)

Happiness Management: A Lighthouse for Social Wellbeing, Creativity and Sustainability





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The mystery of happiness has occupied human beings from ancient times until the present day. Philosophers, economists, historians, artists, and psychologists have offered different definitions of what happiness is and how to measure and develop it in various fields.

In this regard, the group of researchers from six countries: Spain, Italy, Mexico, United Kingdom, Brazil and Ecuador, present their fourth joint work in this new book titled "Happiness Management: A Lighthouse for Social Wellbeing, Creativity and Sustainability", which contains twelve contributions about different knowledge areas, all based on the approach to happiness.

Rafael Ravina Ripoll is a Business Organization professor at Cádiz University and coordinator of the Iberoamerican Group of Multidisciplinary Studies on Happiness in the Salesian Politecnic University of Ecuador. His research and publications focus on happiness management.

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Third chapter.

Happy and ethical consumption in a globalized world

Abstract

The process of globalization has resulted in the increase in the interconnection of economic, technological and social process worldwide, and that is has resulted in several changes in the psychological and social processes and therefore, in changes in the consumer behavior. So, the main aim of this work is showing the relationships between households and different aspects of their daily lives are related to environment. According to the results the income level has a big influence on how people behave in terms of their purchasing decisions affecting the environment. The gender gap is not very relevant and it does not find differences in terms of age. Although awareness about these problems has increased, yet we need to find a way for population to care more about these aspects, since it means guaranteeing the well-being for future generations.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Ethics, Happiness, Environment, Development.

1. Introducción

Nowadays the patterns of consumption are suffering a change, with the spread of media the information now is more available to everyone, and consumers are affected by what they read, hear or see (Núñez and González, 2015; Núñez and González, 2016; Núñez, 2017; Núñez y Álvarez, 2018). The consequences of their actions, is focused on consumption have an effect

on their morality, and their actions are shaped by it as well, so morality and values play an important role on the way that people behave and makes them more happier (Núñez and Ravina, 2017).

For the past decades, global economic expansion, together with constantly rising standards of living and the development of new consumer needs that have the possibility of being satisfied result in a position where the Earth's resources capacity is not enough. Also, as the world develops, the economic inequality among people is increasing, and there is an increasing trend of unhappiness linked to the trend of materialism, all of these are the effects of the "turbo-capitalism" (Luttwalk, 1999; Barriopedro, López, & Ripoll, 2018) and the expanding domains of consumption into people's daily lives.

This is the point where ethical consumption comes up as the solution to this capitalist consumerism problem without challenging the system itself. The way for doing this is by bringing a new kind of capitalism that enhances the values of justice, sustainability and happiness.

This paper is divided in different parts, beginning by defining how culture affects the behavior of people, other aspect of interest is the different approaches that consumers take in order to press the producers to be more ethical. The results show the relationships between households and different aspects of their daily lives are related to environment, in terms of income, gender, and age what are the concerns of people about transportation, environment and product consumption. Furthermore, it is able to identify to which aspects they look at when considering whether to purchase a product, and if they are concerned and take action in environmental activities.

1.2. Market culture and development

There are two theories about the role that plays consumption in capitalism, the classic critical theory, by which consumption desires are the false needs that the system incorporates into consumers' lives to tie them to processes of self-recreation and actualization that never finish. In the end, the consumer losses sight of his/her real needs and the destructiveness of capitalism is sustained by the excess demand that the system never satisfies (Carrington et al., 2015). The other theory consists in consumerism representing the feeling of "freedom" to make own choices to find a medium of hedonistic

enjoyment in what would otherwise be an empty existence and to promote further socialist human development (Laermans, 1993). The point is, that these two theories coincide in the point that the consumer culture fostered by capitalism is always related to excessive consumption.

In a consumer culture, the consumers tend to obey the market rules, the consumer society in which they live is within the frames of the market values which are scarcity, competition, wealth accumulation and individualism (Barnett et al., 2005). They are aware of the need to act more ethically and they have the desire to do so but, yet they do not act consistently with these and make up for excuses.

There are also structural elements that influence the market such as the role of retailers, producers or brands that tend to shape the consumption choices of the people as well. In the end, “The marketplace constitutes a sphere of instrumental and self-interested decision-making governed by the delinguistified rationality of the medium of money that is not committed to norms or values” (Habermas, 1985).

Principally, ethical consumption is a concept that has become more important especially in wealthy capitalist nations in the past few decades (Lewis & Potter, 2011); but what is it exactly? Well, in fact these two words have evolved to become a term that covers a wide range of topics ranging from labor standards, human rights, animal welfare to issues regarding health and wellbeing as well as environmental and community sustainability (Littler & Humphery, 2011). But although it involves so many concepts we must consider that the world is going through the process of globalization and that the interpretation of what is ethical might differ depending on the culture (Belk et al., 2005; Núñez-Barriopedro, Penelas-Leguía, Cuesta-Valiño, & Moncluz, 2016) playing an important role the moral judgments, norms and values. Another aspect is that people began caring more about ethical consumption when the social media and brought up into light the issues that concerned ethical dilemmas in the countries that were less developed, so this leads us to think that consumers need external help to start to care about this.

Research also shows that people in developed countries certainly do not lack of information about ethical products, but sometimes they feel they do not have the opportunities or the resources to be able to buy them, leading us to the fact that income is an important factor, but there are more such as having access to ethically produced products in order to exercise the choice of whether to buy them or not (Barnett et al., 2005).

According to studies (Roberts, 1996), there is evidence that non-ethical consumers do exist since they tend to make up for excuses to avoid moral judgement on consumption make them feel guilty (Auger and Devinney, 2005), but also ethical consumers, whereas the most important predictor of whether a person will be or not inclined to take part in ethical consumption is their involvement in social causes, especially through groups or communities which also influences them on moral values and judgements, for example their involvement in NGOs such as WWF, Ofram Intermon, Amnesty International, etc. or even at local scales, being involved in community groups whose aim is to protect people or the environment.

Another important factor that influences consumers' decision of whether buying or not a product is the price, we can distinguish certain consumer heterogeneity in terms of price sensitiveness, meaning that for low-cost, low-involvement products for example bath soaps, the consumers that are more price sensitive were less likely to be ethical orientated in terms of buying that product; whereas for high-cost, high involvement products for example cars, there has not been found any link between the consumers' price and ethical sensitiveness. This indicates that individuals do react to costs and rewards, some consumers do bring ethical/moral considerations in when taking purchasing decisions, but still most of the people will prefer to buy what they consider a fair product at a decent price, without thinking much about the harm that its production might have caused. In the other hand, some studies (Doane, 2001) suggest that companies and firms should also get involved in the ethical process and that the change should start from them, since they also have the ability to reach consumers and modify their behaviors towards more ethical consumption.

It is difficult to determine whether moral norms and values can be malleable traits and if consumers can redirect their consumption path towards a more ethical one. Often people do not realize that they are involved in unethical actions, they tend to see themselves as moral beings and take action to maintain this even when their behavior involves something immoral (Mazar et al., 2008; Monin and Jordan, 2009; Barkan et al., 2012; Shalvi et al., 2015). When people commit an act considered moral, their self-image of is morally strengthened and they allow themselves to be happy in seeking to engage in moral actions, which makes it inevitable to engage in immoral actions unconsciously; whereas the opposite happens when someone engaged in an immoral action, they seek to make up for it and they look forward engaging in activities that thrive their moral

self by being moral situations. So, when people are made aware that they committed something not moral their self-esteem is lowered, resulting in feeling of guilt, shame, regret... and they look for means to make it up in order to feel better with themselves; leading to the belief that one's moral identity is self-regulatory and is associated with different beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Aquino and Reed, 2002).

1.3. Ethical Consumption

Globalization is giving a chance to the rise of new cultural groups and communities, to which people from all over the world can feel identified with.

As the world evolves, consumers around it has begun to increase the trend of the purchase and use of goods and services that are respectful towards the society and the environment and at the same time there has been a decrease in the acquisition of products that do not comply with the definition of ethical product. Everyday people are motivated towards making more socially conscious decisions taking into account the effects on the environment and in other individuals that will be a consequence of their choice. There must be defined that the effects of a decision can play a role in the universal background that would be benefits that serve a greater good than the personal; and in the individual background by which consumers might perceive benefits to themselves and an emotional well-being situation as a result of their action (Cho and Krasser, 2011).

In the past, people used to be generally in touch with the communities and groups they had around, but now, they have a much wider range of options and new values that previously they did not exist, or people simply were not aware (Chiranjeev et. al, 1995).

The basic foundations of what is considered moral are still there, people can still distinguish that, if an action taken by them results in harm, is morally wrong and the opposite for morally good. But the extent to where those kinds of actions can reach has become larger due to globalization (Monin and Jordan, 2009).

There is a relation between culture and consumption behavior that relates because of the changing conceptions of what is good or bad for an individual and then for the society in general, the judgement of what can be distinguished as an ethical breach will vary depending on the cultural orientation. In general, studies have found a lack of concern about ethical

issues in general terms, but also few differences in terms of culture can be distinguished, in countries where individualism is a strong feature, the concern for ethical matters is more important than those countries where people belong to a more collective culture. Other findings are related to materialism, defined as the value that people gives towards the acquisition of new goods and services; and post-materialism represented by those values that aim towards ethical issues (environmental protection, community sense, tolerance and inclusion, quality of life, human rights...), it places higher priorities in the values that result from a purchase; the findings in this matter are that post-materialism is more positive related towards ethical consumption whereas materialism is negatively, in other words, the more materialistic the culture the less ethically concerned the people that belong to it (Cho and Krasser, 2011).

There can be different forms of ethical consumption (Stolle et al., 2005), it can highlight the boycotts and buycotts as the most recurrent. Boycotts (Stolle et al., 2005) defined as “negative purchase behaviors”, consists in actions taken to protest against the negative involvement of an industry in human rights violations, discriminations of minorities (homosexuals, women, indigenous, religion groups...), environmental damage, animal rights and the violation of fair trade (especially in underdeveloped countries). There are also some boycotts (Stolle et al., 2005) that may occur at the individual level and they reflect the personal choice of individual towards not consuming any good or service that can be associated with topics related to ethics, these consumers try to promote the interests of themselves and their families in the first place. As for the buycott, is the “positive purchase behavior”, consisting in people buying the products and services of certain industries or brands that are defined as ethical in order to reward this practice (Stolle et al., 2005).

Ethical behavior is more probable (Schwartz, 1994) when people are aware that the consequences of non-ethical behavior can result in harm or damage to the environment or other individuals, and he/she feels responsible for it making ethical behavior kind of a moral obligation. In other situations, consumers want to make people surrounding them notice their behavior because this generates personal benefits in the sense of being admired by others.

So, once it has developed on what it understand as the morality and the values that shape the consumption habits it can do an analysis of what is happening in the world today, what are our consumption patterns, the

effect they have on the world in environmental and social terms and it will include some possible solutions for this issue, since it must guarantee the well-being for future generations.

2. Methodology and Objectives

The method of collecting information was in 2018 based in the survey called “Environment and Households Survey” collected by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) for the main objective of analysing several variables that it can relate to the variables of consumption and environment in order to determine the current situation.

The survey was made to 27.832 households and it was mainly in terms of environmental concern not taking into account the aims of households towards saving money when purchasing goods and services. With this sample it was intended that at the national level the characteristics present in the population with a proportion of 10 % had a relative error of sampling around 3 %.

3. Results

In order to study if people worry about environment and if so, to what extent they are informed about the environmental actions that occur near-by them.

3.1. People’s worry about environment according to income group

In the table 1, it can see the knowledge that people have on these matters related to their level of income, in terms of percentages. It means, the aim is to determine whether the income level determines this environmentally friendly behavior.

Table 1. People's worry about environment according to income group in percentages.

	<i>General Worried about environment</i>	<i>Very worried about environment</i>	<i>Has knowledge of any campaign related with environmental care</i>	<i>Has detected environmental problems in own community</i>
Less than 1.000 € (0)	92,4	69,4	46,9	19,4
1.101-1.800 € (1)	95,7	77,7	57,8	26,9
1.801-2.700 € (2)	97,2	79,8	63,9	32,5
More than 2.700 € (3)	97,1	84,4	72,3	39,8
No answer (4)	94,7	77,3	62,0	28,3
TOTAL (5)	95,1	76,9	59,2	27,9

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Environment and Households Survey

It has done a regression that represents the percentage of people that have a general worry about environment as the dependent variable and income on the independent ($R^2=0.0978$). Other one represents the percentage of people very worried about environment related to the income level ($R^2=0.2009$). Third one linear regression of people's campaign awareness about environment according to income group ($R^2=0.2803$). Lastly, it be analyzed the relation between the people that detected certain environmental problems in their community as dependent variable with the income level as the independent variable ($R^2=0.1834$). From all the regressions it is showed the same result, the highest the level of income the more informed and concerned the people are.

3.2. Measures for environmental protection

All activities concerning production and consumption have some kind of impact in the environment, and for this reason it is interesting to investigate whether people are aware of these measures proposed, and to what extent they agree with the proposal.

Table 2. People in favor for environmental protection measures by income group in percentages

	<i>In favor of any measure</i>	<i>Obligation under a fine to recycle</i>	<i>Restrict water consumption</i>	<i>Establish a tax on the most polluting fuels</i>	<i>Restrict use of private transportation</i>	<i>Establish an ecological tax on tourism</i>	<i>Reduce the noise from highways</i>
Less than 1.000 € (0)	94,6	55,8	81,6	63,2	53,0	36,7	82,5
1.101-1.800 € (1)	97,3	55,1	82,7	68,1	48,8	37,2	87,2
1.801-2.700 € (2)	98,2	52,7	82,0	67,9	45,1	37,9	87,8
More than 2.700 € (3)	97,9	53,3	82,8	71,1	48,2	35,4	89,2
No answer (4)	95,3	51,0	78,7	57,6	41,4	29,1	83,9
TOTAL (5)	96,4	53,5	81,3	64,4	46,9	34,7	85,6

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Environment and Households Survey

By setting the dependent variable as the favoring of any of the above measures and the income as the independent we have found that there is not much correlation between income levels and the propensity to favor some kind of action towards environmental protection.

3.3. Relationship between the ethical consumption of different types of transport and the level of consumer income

Transportation is very important in terms of environment, the more vehicles on the road the more the noise contamination, the CO₂ emissions, the higher people's carbo footprint. Currently many cities and governments are trying to encourage people to use less the private transportation and more the public services offered and the bicycles, many cities have even set a series of public bicycles in cities which people can rent for specific time as well as they have improved the infrastructures for the use of this mean of transportation. Walking to places is as well encouraged with the excuse of having health benefits and reducing the pollution.

First of all, it will analyze whether the use of transportation is related to the people's level of income, the following table represents the use of different kinds of transportation in terms of the money they earn.

Table 3. Ethical consumption of different types of transport according to the level of consumer income in percentages.

	<i>Public Transportation TOTAL</i>	<i>Private transportation TOTAL</i>	<i>Bicycle</i>	<i>Byfoot</i>	<i>Do not move</i>
Less than 1.000 € (0)	22,80 %	27,20 %	1,20 %	46,00 %	2,80 %
1.101-1.800 € (1)	19,90 %	47,30 %	1,20 %	30,30 %	1,40 %
1.801-2.700 € (2)	21,10 %	55,80 %	1,30 %	20,90 %	0,80 %
More than 2.700 € (3)	20,30 %	57,00 %	1,50 %	20,50 %	0,60 %
No information (4)	23,60 %	46,20 %	1,40 %	27,90 %	0,90 %
TOTAL	21,70 %	45,30 %	1,30 %	30,30 %	1,40 %

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Environment and Households Survey.

For the analysis it has taken the values in the table and developed a series of multiple analysis linear regressions. It has taken the public transportation as the dependent variable and the income as the independent. And the result has been the following.

There is not any specific relation between the level of income and the use of public transportation. (The coefficient p is too high at $p = 0,7501$ which allows us to discard the hypothesis that there is any existing relationship between the two variables). As for the use of private transportation again we take income as the independent variable and the private transportation percentage as the dependent. And it has found the following regression.

One linear regression of people's use of private transportation according to income level. In this case there isn't any kind of relation between the level of income and the use of public transportation, the coefficient $p = 0,2527$ and ($R^2 = 0,3993$).

In this other case, it has done another linear regression of people's use of bicycles according to income level. The coefficient obtained is $p = 0,0689$ which demonstrates that certainly there is a relationship between the income and the use of bikes as transportation method, people with lower money available tend to expend less in moving to places probably in order to save money for other expenses ($R^2 = 0,7205$).

Lastly, we have taken the method of walking to places as the dependent variable and the income as the independent with the following results. It mean, it has done a linear regression of people walking according to income level. The analysis shows that cannot confirm the relationship ($p = 0,1865$).

All of these results indicate us that there is not a tendency for people that has less money available to use the transportation methods that are more economic. So, they can do it for environmentally reasons.

It is also interesting to see which the relationship between the transportation habits and the characteristics of the individuals is. As for the gender, women make more use of public transportation whereas men use more the car, it is as well a fact that men use more bicycles and women walk more than men. In general terms, there is a higher percentage of people using private transportation than public.

For the age values the relationship between the values with the linear regression analysis. It can see that younger people are the ones that make the most use of public transportation, probably because they do not have access to a private mean. People over 65 also use it more than the middle age groups but still less than young people. It cannot determine that the use of public transportation is linked to the age group ($p = 0,3317$).

So our findings show no clear correlation between age and use of private transportation, also it is very visible that the ones who use it the least are the people over 65 and the ones under 25. The coefficient $p = 0,7134$ allows us to discard the hypothesis that the usage of certain kinds of transportation is linked to age.

Others are the results obtained from the bicycles as the dependent variable and the age as the independent. According to the linear regression of people's use of bicycle transportation according to age. In the case of the bicycles, findings do show that there is no correlation ($p = 0,1777$) between the use of bikes and the age.

Lastly, it selected walking as the dependent variable, and our findings show again that there is no correlation ($p = 0,3662$).

It can therefore conclude that the transportation is not linked to the age.

3.4. People's factors of importance in buying a product

In the table 4 it can see in terms of gender and age to which factors of the products they give importance in terms of percentage of people.

Table 4. People's factors of importance in buying a product according to sex and age groups.

	<i>Price is important</i>	<i>Price is very important</i>	<i>Brand is important</i>	<i>Brand is very important</i>	<i>Consumption/Energetic efficiency are important</i>	<i>Consumption/Energetic efficiency are very important</i>
Men	98,8	93,2	87,3	53,2	94,1	79,4
Women	99,1	93,8	85,0	50,9	93,4	79,0
Bothsexes	98,9	93,4	86,4	52,3	93,8	79,2
Lessthan 25	99,0	93,4	83,1	53,1	89,4	73,0
Between 25 and 45	99,1	93,8	87,8	53,7	95,2	82,5
Between 45 and 65	98,9	93,1	87,3	53,8	95,3	82,5
65 and over	98,8	93,4	83,3	47,9	89,9	70,2
Age Total	98,9	93,4	86,4	52,3	93,8	79,2

	<i>Eco-guarantee is important</i>	<i>Eco-guarantee is very important</i>	<i>Proximity of production is important</i>	<i>Proximity of production is very important</i>
Men	82,0	52,1	79,9	51,6
Women	81,3	52,1	80,1	52,5
Bothsexes	81,7	52,1	80,0	51,9
Lessthan 25	76,1	46,7	69,1	38,6
Between 25 and 45	83,0	54,4	78,1	48,8
Between 45 and 65	83,7	55,8	82,0	55,4
65 and over	77,5	43,8	80,6	52,4
Age Total	81,7	52,1	80,0	51,9

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Environment and Households Survey.

It is showed the fact that everyone gives importance to the price of the good or service, but when it ask if it is very important it see that in general around 93 % of people think so, and the percentage is similar for every category, this might mean that there are individuals that might be willing to pay a little more for some product with additional aspects that satisfy more the buyer.

Most of the people believe that the brand has some kind of importance although just 52,3 % consider it as a very important factor, men more than women, and people over 65 the less.

Mostly all people interviewed consider that consumption or energetic efficiency from the product are very important and that the ecological guarantee is important but not very important, the percentages are similar for all groups but it seems that the group of over 65 is the one that cares the less about these factors.

Finally, it has different opinions about the proximity of production among the age groups, being the young people the ones that do not give much importance to this factor, in general they consider it as important.

4. Conclusions

The attitude towards consumption can be changed, moral values play a very important role. As long as consumption is environmentally friendly, socially fair and promotes a better quality of life for everyone, it is considered as beneficial towards society. For this, we must take into consideration an analysis of the consumption patterns under the field of ethics, happiness and develop a set of alternatives that turn into a development model with its pillars being sustainable criteria and that reaches most of the population, especially those who are more vulnerable. We must do that by analyzing certain values like health, happiness and conservation of the environment.

The term ethical consumption generally englobes terms as well such as solidary consumption, responsible consumption, and fair consumption, among others. It can understand ethic in this contest as a series of values which are based on the attention and responsibility with oneself, others and the environment who are center of actions and relations in compromise with lives. It considers the respect for the own limits of human beings and nature, recognizing the environment as a source of life, the responsibility of everyone for a collective and effective management of resources and the recognition of the rights of others to access the resources and products necessary for them to achieve a worthy quality of life, meaning that all elations, goods, services and ideas destined towards