

Getting Rid of Unnecessary Products as A Sign of Sustainable Consumption in The Age of Consumerism*

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Abstract

Consumption is increasingly becoming a major determinant of economic efficiency and a determinant of one's position in the social structure. The trend of searching for pleasure and opportunities to experience the adventure of buying consumer goods is noticeable. This phenomenon can be described as consumerism, i.e. the need to consume constantly new products. Sustainable consumption is often mentioned as opposition to consumerism. The process of sustainable consumption starts from the stage of feeling a need by the consumer, the next stage is responsible acquisition of the product on the market, then responsible use. The last stage of responsible consumption, analyzed by the author's research, is responsible disposal of unnecessary products from households. The author analyzed the scale of the phenomenon and the reasons for disposing of unnecessary but efficient household items. The survey was conducted in January 2020 using the CAWI method on a representative sample of n=1012 adult Polish citizens aged 18 to 60 years. Large differences can be observed in the way the respondents act, depending on the product category under investigation. For all the tested categories of products, on average 15% of the respondents declare that they are thrown away. Analyzing the efficient products that are thrown away to the dumpster one can conclude which products are most affected by the problem of waste. Decorative articles and food and furniture are by far the most frequently thrown away. The amount of municipal waste is steadily increasing, and it seems necessary to take action to remove the products suitable for use from this waste stream and hand them over to those in need. The article contains a literature review and current research results concerning the analyzed issue.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Sustainable Consumption; Consumerism; Unnecessary Products.