News

Calls for submissions

UK

Journal of Consumer Ethics on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

A special issue of JCE will be published in 2019 in collaboration with the University of Leeds. The edition will publish the best papers submitted for the university's upcoming conference on "Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change".

It will be edited by academics from Leeds curating the conference. The deadline for final submissions to the conference is July 31st 2018.

Sub themes include:
- Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Behaviour
- Food Supply Chains and Sustainability
- Circular Economy
- Stakeholders and the Natural Environment
- Change Agency in Sustainability Transitions
- Sustainability and Big Data
- Modern Slavery in International Business

More information is available at: http://crrconference.org/

Conferences

Denmark

Journal of Consumer Ethics on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

The conference will be held 27-30th June 2018, in Copenhagen, Denmark. It will focus on "Sustainable Consumption: Fostering Good Practices and Confronting the Challenges of the 21st Century".

The topics covered by the conference are expected to include:

- Emergence of post-consumerist lifestyles
- Role of behavioral economics and related strategies on consumption routines
- Social practices research related to sustainable consumption
- Sustainability and the transformation of agro-food systems
- Policy frameworks to promote a circular economy
- Consumption-based greenhouse gas accounting
- Grassroots innovation to facilitate sustainable consumption
- Challenges of reconciling sustainable consumption priorities in a globalized world
- Post-consumerist and post-capitalist visions of the future
- Consumption and sustainable cities

Its keynote speakers are Jan Gehl's, a Danish academic working on public spaces and public life; and Mary Mellor, expert on alternative economics. scorai.org/2018conference/

assumptions of ethics in consumption and/or the competing ethical frameworks underlying consumption decisions.
- The role of complex and culturally derived understandings of ethics in consumption.
UK

Conference on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

The University of Leeds' 13th Corporate Responsibility Research Conference will take place on the 11th-12th September 2018, in association with the Kedde Business School, France. It will look at how to engage business and consumers in present ecological and sociocultural challenges; as well as that role that the state, the international community and civil society organisations play in engagement.

It is looking for papers from different disciplines and fields of study, including literatures on corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability, sustainable consumption, sustainable development, business and society, business ethics, ethical consumption, sustainable entrepreneurship, and organisation and the environment. Sub-themes range from Tensions, Conflicts and Paradoxes in Corporate Sustainability and CSR; to Sustainability and Big Data; to Circular Economy. The deadline for submissions is July 31st 2018. The conference will be preceded by a PhD workshop on 10th September. www.see.leeds.ac.uk/research/sri/news/story/call-for-abstracts-13th-corporate-responsibility-research-conference/

UK

First International Sustainable Production and Consumption conference to be held in Manchester

The conference will be held 4-5th October 2018, in Manchester UK, and has been organised by the Institution of Chemical Engineering in conjunction with the journal Sustainable Production and Consumption.

The topics covered by the conference will include:

- circular economy
- sustainable technologies, products and services
- energy, food, water and waste nexus
- life cycle sustainability assessment and management
- consumer engagement and communication
- sustainable lifestyles
- sustainable policy development

Current key note speakers include Professor Raimund Bleischwitz; Chair in Sustainable Global Resources at University College London; David Greenfield, Managing Director of SOENECS ($Ocal, $Environmental & $Economic Solutions); Dr Hirschberg, Senior Advisor in Energy Divisions at the Paul Scherrer Institute; and Carmen Teodosiu, Director of the Department Environmental Engineering and Management at Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași. www.icheme.org/events/conferences/sustainable-production-and-consumption/home.aspx

Spain

Shopping Location choices as a method to address city inequalities

Applied Network Science has published a study of consumer behaviours in Barcelona and Madrid. The study looked at the spatial distribution of consumers' spending across the two cities, using data from one year of bank card payments from more than 150,000 anonymous users in over 95,000 businesses. It then used this data to establish the proportion of individual shopping trips that would have to be redirected in order to evenly share the commercial income from spending between different neighbourhoods.

Shopping and leisure trips account for 15 to 20% of the individuals' daily travels. Such trips virtually move money from one part of the city to another, and directly contribute to shape the spatial distribution of wealth across neighbourhoods.

The study found that for both cities only a small fraction (~5%) of trips would need to be modified to equally distribute spending across the city. It also found that it was possible to significantly decrease the total distance travelled and at the same time to strongly reduce wealth inequality among neighbourhoods. However, it did find that it was not possible to decrease distance travelled whilst increasing the spatial mixing of individuals; and more surprisingly, that it was not possible to increase the equality of wealth distribution and the spatial mixing of individuals.

The study concluded: "one could easily imagine
dedicated mobile applications, querying databases similar to the one we used in this paper. Their purpose would be to assist their users in a transition toward a more socially and spatially concerned shopping mobility.”

https://appliednetsci.springeropen.com/articles/10.1007/s41109-017-0026-3

**China**

**Narratives of sustainable consumption in Nanjing**

An empirical analysis of 129 narrative interviews with local residents in urban Nanjing has been pushed in Social and Cultural Geography. The study found that a combination of ‘being green’ – living a healthy lifestyle which has less impact on the environment – and being rational through qinian jieyue – by reducing both consumption and waste – was regarded as key to sustainability.

Quinjian jieyue — which can be roughly translated as being diligent and thrifty / frugal — was found to be the most significant component of sustainable consumption. Most of the interviewees were therefore found to portray their sustainable practices as contributing to the sustenance of their own families and personal lives. The study commented, “producing waste is conventionally considered to be an improper behaviour.” Such attitudes align with recent government campaigns to create an environmentally-friendly and resource-conserving society.

Recent eco-awareness campaigns also appeared to have had an impact. Thus, the report found that sustainable consumption in the region was “ambivalently positioned between concerns for sustaining the environment and sustaining personal or family lives.”

The study also found, however, that this sustainable way of consumption is restricted by Chinese mianzi and guanxi cultures. Mianzi can be defined as favourable self-esteem, wealth and prestige; guanxi as the importance of interpersonal connections that requires the maintenance of long-term relationships, mutual commitments and obligations. As both cultures play a significant role in Chinese approaches to hospitality, they often lead to significant amounts of food waste for those hosting.

Anxieties caused by scares related to food safety, a social welfare system that does not promote a sense of security, and a widespread distrust of products made in China which has diffused across society were also found to restrict sustainable consumption.

The participants were diverse in terms of gender, socio-economic status and other various factors, and were interviewed in Nanjing between February and October 2016.


**Romania**

**Older generations more likely to engage in ecologically sustainable behaviours**

The study, published in March 2018 in the open access journal Sustainability, focused on the correlation between generation and approach to ethical consumption, in relation to the potential for developing a circular economy.

Based on 597 online questionnaires completed by Romanian nationals, the study analysed results from three generation: 35 to 44 years (Generation X); to 34 years (Generation Y); and 18 - 24 years (Generation Z). All three generations had a major favorable attitude towards the business and consumption models that have a lower impact on the environment, the most concerned were, in ascending order, the X-ers, the Y generation and the Z generation. Although concern for the environment was relatively important for all three generations, all three adopted ecologically concerned behaviour relatively infrequently. Generation X was again the generation most engaged in ecologically concerned consumption, followed by generation Y and generation Z.

The study stated: “Generation Y is behind generation X with regard to ecologic activities, but we expect a more pronounced ecologic behavior once they become older. This trend is not in accordance with the behavior of Ys in the West, where Ys are more expected to establish the trend and adopt ecological behaviours.” However, it also concluded that business models based on the circular economy would have to educate customers from the current Y and Z generations in the future: half of generation X did not try to adopt experiential type consumption behaviour, staying instead within traditional practices.

www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/3/865
India

Links between sustainable consumption and reuse and recycling of household waste

A study of households in Bhopal city, India has found links between sustainable consumption and prevailing green practices in reuse and recycling. The study looked at longstanding practices in the reuse and recycling of materials such as paper, plastic, glass, metal, textile, kitchen waste, garden waste, e-waste, and appliances, by those living in both formal and informal housing.

Practices in the lowest income, often informal, households were found to range from the reuse of cement bags for covering roofs and grain bags for doormats; to the sale of paper, metal, glass, and plastic to waste dealers. For middle and higher income households, likely to be based in formal housing, they included the sale of books to used book dealers and the donation of appliances and old jars to domestic help or needy people.

“Waste generated is mostly reused by the household itself in lower income groups, whereas it is given away for reuse and recycling by the higher income groups. The three most commonly adopted ‘green practices’ identified across all income groups are: first, selling (directly or indirectly) of waste that is considered to have any reuse and recycle value to waste-dealers; second, textile waste is reused again and again, recycled many times before discarding it for disposal; thirdly, reuse of plastic (PET) jars for refilling purpose in kitchens…”

The practices identified for reuse and recycling are currently being practiced informally at household level. Formal recognition of such practices can promote efficient outcomes which would further help in the curbing of waste generation. As Indian households are already following green practices for managing waste, recognizing and incentivizing these practices can help in achieving sustainable consumption. The current generation of urban practitioners should learn to connect the dots in order to offer solutions to global problems from the bottom up.


UK

International: Ethical Values of Consumers has greatest impact on likelihood of action against multinationals

Two studies of consumers in the UK and 14 other nations, published in the Journal of Business Ethics in 2018, found that participants’ ethical values had the greatest impact on their likelihood to engage in instrumental actions against multinationals, such as boycotts.

The first study surveyed 606 UK nationals, online or in person. The second surveyed 2561 individuals from 15 nations: Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, UK, USA. The studies aimed for maximum heterogeneity across age, gender and income.

Both studies focused on consumers’ ‘instrumental actions’: actions with a perceived purpose and likely outcome. Boycotts were one example, insofar as they aim to cause economic damage for the targeted multinational and thereby reduce its social capital.

Looking at consumers’ likeliness to engage in instrumental action, the report concluded: “Perhaps the most important and surprising finding of our study is that societal practices seem to play less important roles than we expected.” The impact of social practices represented less than 2% of the variance. The affect of age and gender was also found to be insubstantial, although both studies linked higher personal income to likeliness to engage.

The report concluded that individual ethical values played the primary role across cultural contexts. Belief in the likelihood that the action would succeed in its desired outcome was also found to have a significant impact on consumers’ likeliness to engage.

www.researchgate.net/publication/323201536_Sustainable_consumption_Insights_from_the_protection_motivation_PMT_deontic_justice_DJT_and Construal_level_CLT_theories
International

Special issue of Management Decision on Sustainability and Ethical Consumerism

A ten-article special issue of Management Decision, published in 2018, focuses on current understandings in the area of sustainability and ethical consumerism and new possibilities for future research.

The range of empirical and conceptual submissions includes a range of topics from philanthropic engagement, ethical investment in corporations, collaborative framework for balancing stakeholder power and social responsibilities to responsible consumer behaviour, fair trade movement, mapping the sharing economy for sustainability, ethical product attributes, green purchase intention and the role of information in ethical consumption.

One article appearing in this special issue was of factors impacting green purchasing choices in Saudi Arabia. A study of 471 students at Northern Border University, Arar, has found a strong correlation between consumers’ likelihood to make green purchasing decisions and their perception of how serious a risk global warming poses. Participants’ perception of their own vulnerability to global warming’s effects also played a significant role.

A strong sense of self-efficacy — belief that one could control events — was further found to be key. The study therefore concluded that “fear-appeal messages – that include strong efficacy information and threat information – are more likely to be influential.” Moral outrage and moral accountability were also confirmed as significant drivers.

The psychological study primed participants to consider global warming either in abstract or immediate terms. Participants then completed a questionnaire on their purchasing decisions. The above variables – perception of risk, perception of vulnerability, sense of self-efficacy, and moral outrage and accountability – were found to be more important for the likelihood of making green purchasing decisions when students were encouraged to consider global warming in abstract terms.

The study was published in Volume 56: Issue 3 of Management Decision, which was a special issue on sustainability and ethical consumerism.


Other News

India

Launch of global impact rating system

Impactwala, a new global impact rating system, has launched in India to help consumers make sustainable choices.

40% of those living in India are willing to pay and extra 15% for an ethical alternative. However, a study conducted by Fairtrade in the country revealed that lack of information and transparency on the sustainability of products is one of the fundamental factors that prevent Indians for buying ethical products. Impactwala seeks to address this gap.

It acts as a collaborative platform for multiple, like-minded organisations around the world. It processes and analyses the data that they contribute to create a system for rating companies’ and products’ sustainability. It provides information about the health, social and environmental impacts of all products at the point of purchase, and allows users to compare prices and customise impact options.

“It is our belief that as our choices become more and more sustainable, the producers and manufacturers will be compelled to bring sustainable products to the market and produce sustainably. In a world, where our choices are driven by mindless consumerism, Impactwala empowers consumers to demand ethical products and manufacturers to unflinchingly provide them. It envisions to initiate a societal revolution towards a more sustainable and ethical future.”
Books

Ethical Consumption: Practices and Identities, a realist approach

Routledge has published Ethical Consumption: Practices and Identities, a realist approach, by Yana Manyukhina. The book is a sociological contribution to the field of consumer studies. Taking a critical realist approach, it consists of sections on theorising the ethical consumer and studying the ethical consumer, in the context of a growing movement towards and main-streaming of ethical consumption around the world. In particular, the book seeks to provide an account of “how ethical consumer identities emerge, evolve and materialise” through what is broadly conceived to be more responsible consumer behaviour.1


The SAGE Handbook of Consumer Culture

SAGE Publications has published The SAGE Handbook of Consumer Culture. The collection of essays offer an interdisciplinary perspective on how the complexities of consumer culture are addressed by a variety of academic disciplines, from sociology, anthropology, history to media studies, material studies and business/marketing. The book includes six discreet sections:

• Part 1: Sociology of Consumption
• Part 2: Geographies of Consumer Culture
• Part 3: Consumer Culture Studies in Marketing
• Part 4: Consumer Culture in Media and Cultural Studies
• Part 5: Material Cultures of Consumption
• Part 6: The Politics of Consumer Culture

In the final section, authors look at the concept of consumer-citizens; the politics of consumption under neoliberalism; sustainable consumption and the politics of the megatrend; and consumption and nationalism. Other chapters dealing with consumer ethics include 'Spaces of (Consumer) Resistance' and 'Contesting Understandings of Contestation: Rethinking Perspectives on Activism'.

Societal Transformation, Social Innovation and Sustainable Consumption

Routledge has also published Societal Transformation, Social Innovation and Sustainable Consumption: Research and Action for Societal Transformation, in association with SCORAI Studies in Sustainable Consumption. Edited by academics from five European universities, the collection looks at “strategic policies for and processes of societal transformation, which are required to address the challenge of sustainability.” It provides:

• in-depth discussions at the nexus of sustainable consumption, social innovation and social transformation, highlighting their significance to sustainability-related policy and practice;
• detailed case studies of social innovation in energy, food, housing and policy which illustrate emerging practice and promising policy, business and civil society interventions; and
• critical reflections and commentaries on the contribution of social innovation to societal transformation.

The collection includes chapters on more specific topics including the sharing economy, community energy, community agriculture, and co-housing.