













## Analysis of responsible consumption in relation to gender in students of a higher education institution

## Análisis del consumo responsable en relación al género en estudiantes de una institución de educación superior

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### Abstract

To address the effects of the accelerated consumption of goods and services, there is a global push to promote a culture of more responsible and environmentally and socially empathetic consumption. The objective of this study is to identify whether there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of responsible consumption practiced by students from a university in southern Sonora and the gender variable. To evaluate attitudes toward responsible consumption, three dimensions of a measurement instrument were analyzed: individual responsibility, recycling behavior, and ecological behavior. The most significant findings revealed that, in the dimension of individual responsibility, women exhibit high levels of responsibility, while men show a medium level. This pattern aligns with existing literature, which suggests that women tend to adopt more responsible behaviors compared to men.

### Resumen

Para hacer frente a los efectos del acelerado consumo de bienes y servicios, a nivel global se viene fomentando una cultura de consumo más responsable y empático con el medio ambiente y la sociedad. El objetivo del presente estudio es identificar si existen relación significativa entre las dimensiones de consumo responsable practicado por estudiantes de una universidad del Sur de Sonora y la variable género. Para evaluar las actitudes hacia el consumo responsable se analizaron tres dimensiones de un instrumento de medición: responsabilidad individual, comportamiento de reciclaje y comportamiento ecológico. Los hallazgos más trascendentes revelaron que en la dimensión de responsabilidad individual, las mujeres presentan niveles altos de responsabilidad, mientras que los hombres muestran un nivel medio. Este patrón se alinea con la literatura existente, que sugiere que las mujeres tienden a adoptar comportamientos más responsables en comparación con los hombres.

#### Analysis of responsible consumption in relation to gender in students of a higher education institution



#### Objective

Identify responsible consumption in students of a higher education institution

#### Methodology

The type of research is quantitative, descriptive and correlational



#### Contribution

The most relevant findings reveal women present high levels of responsibility, while men show a medium level.

Behavior, Recycling, responsible consumption

#### Análisis del consumo responsable en relación al género en estudiantes de una institución de educación superior



#### Objetivo

Identificar el consumo responsable en estudiantes de una institución universitaria

#### Metodología

El tipo de investigación es cuantitativa, descriptiva y correlacional



#### Contribución

Los hallazgos más relevantes revelan que las mujeres presentan niveles altos de responsabilidad y los hombres niveles medios

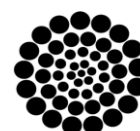
Comportamiento, Reciclaje y Consumo Responsable

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## Introduction

Within the framework of economic globalisation, significant environmental, social and cultural deterioration is observed.

Currently, industrialised nations consume between 50% and 90% of available natural resources, generating approximately 75% of total carbon dioxide emissions, a situation exacerbated by an excessive consumption of resources such as food, water, energy and clothing, among others (Armenteros, 2016).

Consumerism becomes an ideological component that validates and strengthens the dominant capitalist system, promoting the accumulation and expansion of capital without adequate consideration of the adverse effects it generates both socially and environmentally (Maldonado, Aguirre and Campar 2018).

Consequently, for consumers, it is crucial to maintain critical judgement when assessing the impact of their consumption choices, which will help them to avoid consumerist behaviour influenced by advertising and marketing strategies.

To cope with the effects of the accelerated consumption of goods and services, a more environmentally and socially responsible and empathetic consumer culture is being promoted globally. According to Webster (1975) cited by Martínez (2021) the concept of responsible consumption implies that the individual considers the implications of his or her personal consumption and seeks to influence social change through informed and thoughtful purchasing decisions. On the other hand, Punina (2017) states that responsible consumption refers to a disposition, sensitivity and conviction that the individual manifests when faced with the choice of whether or not to purchase a specific product or service.

The concept of responsible consumption is not a recent one; it has its roots in the 1970s, coinciding with the first environmental movements, which prompted the development of green marketing or green consumption. This approach initially referred to consumers taking environmental concerns into account when making purchases (Dueñas, Perdomo and Villa 2014).

Over time, the concept has evolved into a broader context. Kosiak, Modesto and Raigada (2014), argue that responsible consumption is grouped into three main dimensions: green consumption, ethical consumption and social consumption.

Over time, various studies have been conducted to investigate responsible consumption, such as the one by Restrepo, Tocarruncho and Ortiz (2022), whose findings indicate an increase in commitment to recycling practices and environmentally friendly activities. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge among students about government policies and business initiatives aimed at promoting responsible consumption.

Another study examined responsible consumption behaviour among the millennial generation, concluding that, in general terms, participants showed an intermediate level in three of the four dimensions analysed, while they presented a low level in the dimension related to consumption stages (Acurio 2023).

In the analysis of responsible consumption, few studies have addressed the gender variable.

According to Carosio (2008), women have a natural inclination towards consumption and are responsible for 80% of household purchasing decisions. This finding contrasts with the report of the National Commission for the Protection and Defence of Financial Services Users (CONDUSEF 2020), which indicates that both men and women spend in similar proportions. At this point, the following research question arises

Is there a significant association between responsible consumption and gender?

Bianchi, Ferreyra and Kosiak (2013) conducted a comparative study of responsible consumption in Argentina and Uruguay, where they identified that the majority of responsible consumers are women.

This finding coincides with that observed by Arredondo, Maldonado and De la Garza (2011), who found that the female gender shows greater effectiveness in the adoption of socially responsible consumption practices.

## Objectives

To identify responsible consumption in students at a higher education institution, with the aim of establishing recommendations for improvement.

To identify whether there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of responsible consumption (individual responsibility, recycling behaviour, ecological behaviour) practised by students at a university in southern Sonora and the gender variable.

## Methodology

The type of research in this study is quantitative, descriptive and correlational.

It is descriptive because it seeks to investigate the incidence of habits, behaviours and attitudes towards responsible consumption; it is correlational because it seeks to establish significant relationships between the gender variable and the dimensions of responsible consumption (Hernández and Baptista 2014).

The research design is non-experimental, as personal responsible consumption habits will be observed in students at a university and then analysed; it is cross-sectional, as data will be collected and variables will be analysed at a single point in time.

To assess attitudes towards responsible consumption, three dimensions of a measurement instrument with a Likert-type response scale with five response options were analysed, the dimensions are: individual responsibility, recycling behaviour and ecological behaviour with a total of 24 items.

The instrument was validated by Amezcua, De la Peña, Ríos and Saucedo (2018), additionally the Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistic was determined, obtaining a result of .948, being higher than .70 indicates its reliability (See table 1).

### Box 1

**Table 1**

Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of elements
.948	24

Source: Own elaboration

We worked with a convenience sample of 111 students from a university in southern Sonora.

In this type of sampling, the units that make up the population do not have the same possibility of being selected.

## Results

Table 2 shows the distribution of participants according to their degree, highlighting that the highest percentages correspond to economics and finance with 27%, followed by industrial and systems engineering with 18.9%.

In contrast, the lowest percentages correspond to bachelor's degrees in physical exercise science and marketing.

### Box 1

**Table 2**

Career to which you belong

Career	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Bachelor's Degree in Administration	18.0	18.0
Bachelor's Degree in Physical Exercise Science	2.7	20.7
Bachelor's Degree in Psychology	14.4	35.1
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	5.4	40.5
Bachelor's Degree in Education Sciences	10.8	51.4
Industrial and Systems Engineering	18.9	70.3
Degree in economics and finance	27.0	97.3
B.Sc. in Marketing	2.7	100.0
Total	100.0	

Source: Own elaboration

In terms of the gender of the participants, 73% were female, while 27% were male (see table 3).

### Box 3

**Table 3**

Sex of respondent

Sex	%	Cumulative percentage
Female	73.0	73.0
Male	27.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

Source: Own elaboration

Table 4 shows the source of income of the surveyed university students, where 50.5% obtain their income through paid employment, 45% comes from their parents or guardians, and the remaining 4.5% comes from scholarships or student loans.

#### Box 4

**Table 4**

Source of income

Source of income	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Parent or guardian	45.0	45.0
Your job	50.5	95.5
Scholarship or student credit	4.5	100.0
Total	100.0	

Source: Own elaboration

In the second part of the results we present the averages by dimension, highlighting that, in the dimension of individual responsibility, the most frequent responsible consumption habit is "I avoid buying products or services from companies that discriminate against women", with a mean response of 3.90.

On the other hand, the least frequently practised habit in terms of individual responsible consumption is "I read labels to determine whether companies carry out environmental and/or social assistance campaigns" (see table 5).

#### Box 5

**Table 5**

Descriptive statistics for the individual responsibility dimension

Item	Media	Std. Deviation
1. When I have a choice between two similar brands, I choose the one that supports the community.	3.65	1.084
2. When I have a choice between two similar products, I choose the one that sponsors food drives.	3.59	1.155
3. When I have a choice between two identical products, I choose the one that donates a portion of the price of the product to charity.	3.74	1.118
4. When I go shopping, I try to buy from companies that seek to improve conditions for their factory workers.	3.55	1.150
5. I try to buy from companies that support victims of natural disasters.	3.69	1.158
6. I make an effort to buy products or services from companies that pay their employees a living wage.	3.63	1.144
7. I avoid purchasing products or services from companies that discriminate against women.	3.90	1.235
8. I avoid buying products that are made in factories where child labour is practised.	3.69	1.360
9. I read labels to find out if they have environmental and/or social welfare campaigns.	3.27	1.272

Source: Own elaboration

In the recycling behaviour dimension, the least practised consumption habit is "I recycle magazines and newspapers" with a mean of 2.86, while the most practised consumption habit is "When I go to the supermarket I take my own reusable bag" with a mean of 4.05 (See table 6).

#### Box 6

**Table 6**

Descriptive statistics on recycling behaviour

Item	Media	Deviation
10. I recycle cardboard.	3.08	1.428
11. I recycle plastic packaging (PET)	3.15	1.390
12. I recycle magazines and newspapers.	2.92	1.428
13. I recycle aluminium cans.	3.16	1.487
14. I recycle steel/tin cans.	2.86	1.455
15. I recycle paper.	2.95	1.479
16. I am in the habit of seeking information about the environmental impact of the products I buy.	2.96	1.321
17. When I go to the supermarket I take my own reusable bag.	4.05	1.212

Source: Own elaboration

In the ecological behaviour dimension, the most frequently practised habit is "I avoid buying products made from endangered animals", with a mean response of 4.01.

In contrast, the least frequently practised habit is "Whenever possible, I walk, cycle, carpool or use public transport to help reduce environmental pollution", with a mean response of 3.50 (see table 7).

#### Box 7

**Table 7**

Descriptive statistics for environmental behaviour

Item	Media	Desv. Deviation
18. I avoid buying products that pollute water.	3.54	1.234
19. I make an effort to avoid buying products or services that cause damage to the environment.	3.73	1.152
20. I avoid buying products that pollute the air.	3.60	1.208
21. I avoid buying products that are made from animals that are endangered.	4.01	1.239
22. I limit my use of energy, such as electricity or gas.	3.73	1.175
23. I avoid buying from companies that harm plants and animals.	3.82	1.177
24. Whenever possible I walk, cycle, carpool or use public transport to help reduce environmental pollution.	3.50	1.306

Source: Own elaboration

The cross-tabulation of the individual responsibility dimension with the gender variable reveals that the majority of females exhibit high levels of practice in individual responsibility, while the majority of males show medium levels.

Furthermore, in the table of association analysis between variables using statistical tests such as Chi-square, a significance value of 0.028 was found, indicating a significant association between individual responsibility habits and gender (See table 8 and 9).

### Box 8

**Table 8**

Cross-tabulation of individual responsibility with gender

		Individual responsibility			Total
		Under	Medium	High	
Sex	Female	6	26	49	81
	Male	1	18	11	30
Total		7	44	60	111

Source: Own elaboration

### Box 9

**Table 9**

Chi-square test, individual responsibility dimension and sex variable

	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square	7.175 <sup>a</sup>	2	.028
Likelihood ratio	7.098	2	.029
Linear by linear association	2.254	1	.133
N of valid cases	111		

Source: Own elaboration

The cross-tabulation of the recycling behaviour dimension with the gender variable shows that the majority of women have medium levels of practice in recycling habits, in agreement with men who also exhibit a medium level.

In addition, in the table of association analysis between variables using statistical tests such as Chi-square, a significance value of 0.271 was found, indicating that there is no significant association between recycling behaviour and the gender of the participants (See Table 10 and 11).

### Box 10

**Table 10**

Cross-tabulation of recycling behaviour with gender variable

		Recycling behaviour			Total
		Under	Medium	High	
Sex	Female	19	33	29	81
	Male	8	16	6	30
Total		27	49	35	111

Source: Own elaboration

### Box 11

**Table 11**

Chi-square test, recycling behaviour dimension and sex variable

	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square	2.613 <sup>a</sup>	2	.271
Likelihood ratio	2.752	2	.253
Linear by linear association	1.417	1	.234
N of valid cases	111		

Source: Own elaboration

The cross-tabulation of the ecological behaviour dimension with the gender variable shows that most of the females exhibit high levels of ecological behaviour, similarly with males showing a high level in this dimension.

On the other hand, in the table of association analysis between variables using statistical tests such as Chi-square, a significance value of 0.173 was found, indicating that there is no significant association between ecological behaviour and the gender of the participants (see table 12 and 13).

### Box 12

**Table 12**

Cross-tabulation of ecological behaviour with gender variable

		Ecological behaviour			Total
		Under	Medium	High	
Sex	Female	5	24	52	81
	Male	5	10	15	30
Total		10	34	67	111

Source: Own elaboration

**Box 13****Table 13**

Chi-square test, ecological behaviour dimension and variable Sex

	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square	3.505 <sup>a</sup>	2	.173
Likelihood ratio	3.228	2	.199
Linear by linear association	3.076	1	.079
N of valid cases	111		

Source: Own elaboration

**Discussion**

The most relevant findings of the present research reveal that, in the dimension of individual responsibility, women show high levels of responsibility, while men show a medium level.

This pattern is in line with the existing literature, which suggests that women tend to adopt more responsible behaviours compared to men.

The results obtained corroborate the findings of Bianchi, Ferreyra and Kosiak (2013), who identified a higher prevalence of responsible consumers among women in Argentina and Uruguay.

This consistency suggests that responsible consumption behaviour may be influenced by gender, with women showing a greater inclination towards responsible practices. In addition, Arredondo, Maldonado and De la Garza (2011) also found that women have higher efficacy in adopting socially responsible consumption practices, which supports our findings and underlines a persistent trend across different contexts and cultures.

These results could be explained by differences in values and priorities between genders. Previous studies suggest that women tend to have a greater concern for ethical and social issues, which may be reflected in their more responsible consumption decisions.

In addition, social expectations and gender roles may influence how norms of individual responsibility are internalised and practised.

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**Conclusion**

This study examines various aspects of responsible behaviour among university students, as well as gender differences in these behaviours. Among the most important findings are:

In the dimension of individual responsibility, the most frequent responsible consumption habit among participants is avoiding buying products or services from companies that discriminate against women, with a mean of 3.90. In contrast, the least practised habit is to read labels to determine whether companies conduct environmental or social assistance campaigns (mean 3.27).

These results suggest a greater awareness and concern for gender equity issues compared to other responsible practices.

In the recycling behaviour dimension, the most practised habit is taking a reusable bag to the supermarket (mean 4.05), while the least practised habit is recycling magazines and newspapers (mean 2.86). This indicates a trend towards adopting more visible and accessible recycling practices rather than actions that require additional effort.

The most practised ecological behaviour is avoiding products made from endangered animals (mean 4.01). On the other hand, the least frequent habit is using alternative means of transport to reduce environmental pollution (mean 3.50).

These results reflect a high ecological awareness in some aspects, although with less emphasis on actions involving changes in transport patterns.

The association between gender and individual responsibility shows that women tend to exhibit higher levels of individual responsibility than men, with a statistical significance of 0.028. This indicates a significant association between gender and individual responsibility habits, with women showing a greater inclination towards responsible practices.

In contrast, no significant association was found between gender and recycling behaviour or ecological behaviour, with significance values of 0.271 and 0.173, respectively.

This suggests that, in these respects, gender does not significantly influence the practice of green or recycling behaviour among participants.

The findings indicate that strategies to encourage individual responsibility could benefit from a specific focus on women, given their higher level of engagement compared to men.

To promote recycling practices and green behaviour, interventions need to be developed that address perceived barriers and encourage the adoption of responsible habits through education and awareness-raising campaigns.

Future research should explore the reasons behind gender differences in individual responsibility and assess how recycling practices and eco-behaviour can be improved in different demographic groups. In addition, a more detailed focus on differences in specific motivations and barriers could provide a deeper understanding of how to effectively promote responsible and sustainable behaviours among university students.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the responsible consumption habits of university students, revealing the influence of gender on individual responsibility and suggesting key areas for future research and policy development.

## Declarations

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. They have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced their participation in this article.

## Authors' contribution

The contribution of each researcher in each of the points developed in this research was defined on the basis of the following:

*Galaviz-Zamora, Marisol*: Contributed with the project idea, research method, part of the data analysis and systematisation of the results, conclusions, recommendations and writing of the article.

*Murillo-Félix, Cecilia Aurora*: She carried out the systematisation of the research background, conclusions and recommendations and supported the writing of the article.

*Galvan-Corral, Alberto*: Contributed with part of the data analysis and the systematisation of the results, as well as support with the writing of the article.

## Funding

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