

# Researchers survey 'ethical consumerism' views

June 1 2016, by Keith Robinson

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Research at Purdue University draws a connection between lifestyles choices and demographics of consumers and how they view not only their own social responsibility in their buying decisions but also that of corporations.

The study on "ethical consumerism" brings attention to how consumers' attitudes regarding socio-ethical issues might align with their expectations for [corporate social responsibility](#), or CSR.

"Collectively, this analysis suggests that a wide array of ethical concerns are considered by many U.S. consumers in their current purchasing behaviors and that the values underlying their actions may indeed hold implications for consumer perceptions of and support for corporations and their CSR initiatives," the researchers wrote in their report "Exploring Relationships between Ethical Consumption, Lifestyle Choices, and Social Responsibility."

The research was conducted by Nicole Olynk Widmar, associate professor of agricultural economics in the College of Agriculture; agricultural economics master's student Carissa Morgan; and Candace Croney, associate professor of comparative pathobiology and animal sciences in the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Agriculture.

Their study builds on existing research involving consumer social responsibility behaviors. The researchers conducted an online survey of 1,201 U.S. consumers in April 2015, targeted to be representative of the

U.S. population in gender, age, income and geographic region of residence.

Women, younger respondents and more educated respondents were more likely to value and support environmental protection aspects of social responsibility in their consumption behaviors, the researchers found.

Women and younger respondents also were more sensitive to animal welfare concerns, as were vegetarians and vegans, who also strongly supported [environmental protection](#) through their consumption behaviors.

Those who traveled, volunteered or engaged in charitable giving also reported more highly valuing the environmental, [animal welfare](#), corporate responsibility and philanthropic dimensions of [social responsibility](#).

All demographics reported avoiding companies that used advertisements that were deceptive or depicted minorities negatively.

**More information:** Carissa J. Morgan et al. Exploring Relationships between Ethical Consumption, Lifestyle Choices, and Social Responsibility, *Advances in Applied Sociology* (2016). [DOI: 10.4236/aasoci.2016.65017](#)

Provided by Purdue University

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