# VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY, VALUES AND LIFESTYLES: A CASE OF ANKARA-TURKEY

[1]Dr. Ayşegül Ermeç Sertoğlu (Gazi University, aermec@gazi.edu.tr)

[2]Dr. Çağla Pınar Bozoklu (cutkutug@hotmail.com)

[3]Prof. Sezer Korkmaz (Gazi University, sezerk@gazi.edu.tr)

**Abstract**

Several concerns such as environmental impairment, overconsumption, abuse of developing nations and advertising clutter paved the way for a voluntarily simple life. Similar concerns have arisen recently in Turkey. In this research, the relation between the value structure and voluntary simplicity lifestyle (VSL) of Turkish highly educated consumers in Ankara is examined. For this purpose, the scale depending on VSL scale of Iwata (2006) along with Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) is employed. By the convenience and snowball sampling methods, 195 web-based and paper-and-pencil questionnaires were collected but the number of usable ones was 101. Data were analyzed by means of explanatory factor analysis and the cluster analysis. Results present that a significant portion of the sample seems to adopt a voluntarily simple lifestyle compatible with the expectations. Further, the value patterns of the sample that present three different degrees of voluntarily simple life contribute new insights to the literature.

**Keywords:** Voluntarily Simple Life, Value, Explanatory Factor Analysis, Cluster Analysis

## 1. Introduction

As a divergent attitude, resistance to consumption is not easy to adopt and refusing to purchase certain items can often be emotionally and financially costly (Cherrier 2009, Cherrier and Murray 2007). On the other hand, a voluntarily simple life is crucial for sustainability of scarce sources as well as the survival of the nature and human life. Several concerns such as environmental impairment, overconsumption, abuse of developing nations (Craig-Less and Hill, 2002) and advertising clutter paved the way for sustainable behaviors and anti-consumption activities.

Similar concerns have arisen recently in Turkey which is a developing nation

[1-3]Gazi University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Beşevler-Ankara, TURKEY

surrounded by many embattled regions such as Libya and Syria, and also countries struggled with economic problems like Greece. It is expected that micro and macro environmental factors such as Gezi protests, damage of the green belts in cities (e.g. land of Atatürk Forest Farm), political disputes and turmoil, the economic recession may have triggered anti-consumption activities of a group consumers who have ecologically and socially conscious preferences.

Purchase decisions differ from more to less sustainable consumption ones based on their ethical, resource, waste, and community perspectives (McDonald and the others, 2006). Some researches such as Schor (1998) and Hamilton (2003) point out many people in affluent societies are questioning everlasting consumption growth, and they are choosing to make changes in their lifestyles which demands earning less money (Pepper, Jackson and Uzzell, 2009: 126). This opens the way for sustainable consumption research that examines frugal consumer behavior (Pepper et al., 2009: 126) which is defined as the limiting of expenditures on consumer goods and services, and is characterized by both restraint in acquiring possessions and resourcefulness in using them (Lastovicka et al., 1999). In the literature, growing interest has been conspicuous on voluntary simplicity which is a research into more frugal lifestyles.

## 2. Voluntary Simplifiers

European and American literature have lately reviewed voluntary simplifiers (VS) who have distinctive social-economic characteristics, life styles, consumption attitudes and behaviors. VS are 'individuals who have freely chosen a frugal, anti-consumer lifestyle that features low resource utilization and low environmental impact' (Mcdonald et al., 2006). Leonard-Barton and Rogers (1980, p. 28) also characterized voluntary simplicity as 'the degree to which an individual consciously chooses a way of life intended to maximize the individual's control over his own life', and Leonard-Barton (1981, p. 244) added "… and to minimize his/her consumption and dependency. In fact, a Spartan and self-sufficient lifestyle adopted purely in response to economic constraints could not be considered voluntary simplicity". Consumers who can be defined as relatively voluntary simplicity aim to minimize their dependency on large and powerful institutions such as government, oil companies, etc. that they cannot control whereas they choose to maximize their harmony with nature mother. On the other hand, Etzioni (1998:620) approached to the

[1-3]Gazi University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Beşevler-Ankara, TURKEY

concept in a different perspective. According to him, they tend 'to limit expenditures on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning'.

## 2.1.Values, Motivations and Lifestyle of VS

Previous researches generate peculiar characteristics of voluntary simplifiers (Elgin and Mitchell 1977a, 1977b, Leonard Barton and Rogers 1980, Shama 1984, Etzioni 1998, 2003, Craig-Lees and Hill 2002, Moisander and Pesonen 2002, Shaw and Newholm 2002, Johnston and Burton 2003, Huneke 2005, McDonald and the others 2006, Cherrier and Murray 2007, Roubanis 2008).

Elgin and Mitchell (1977: 5) selected five basic values that, they felt, lie at the heart of a voluntary simplicity lifestyle:

- Material simplicity (nonconsumption-oriented patterns of use)
- Self-determination (desire to assume greater control over personal destiny)
- Ecological awareness (recognition of the interdependency of people and resources)
- Human scale (a desire for smaller-scale institutions and technologies)
- Personal growth (a desire to explore and develop the inner life).

On the other hand, researchers underline that the voluntary simplifiers are predominantly over-educated, high-income people, working under stressful conditions and motivated by spiritual and material values instead of solely material values. However, free choice condition distinguishes them from the poor or near poor who are forced to last a simpler life (Mitchell 1983, Craig-Lees and Hill 2002). Moreover the results of some researches indicate that high education found as the most essential determining factor, rather wealth or having professional skills in a socio-economical perspective (Craig-Lees and Hill 2002, Etzioni 1998, Zavestoski 2002a, 2002b).

Many researches in US and UK indicate that voluntary simplifiers intend to resign from their well-paid jobs to pursue a relaxing life style (Budden 2000, Birchfield 2000, Schachter 1997, Caudron 1996), spending more time with their families, their hobbies and reconnecting with nature mother (Bekin, Carrigan and Szmigin 2005: 415). Their main concerns varied as the environment (Craig-Lees and

[1-3]Gazi University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Beşevler-Ankara, TURKEY

Hill 2002, Ottman 1995), health or religion (Craig-Lees and Hill 2002), and ethical implications consumption preferences (Strong 1997, Shaw and Newholm 2002, Bekin, Carrigan and Szmigin 2005). Some part of community have started to realize that material values cannot atone for stress, unhappiness and lack of meaning, and also to avowing those spiritual needs and self-esteem cannot be met by consumption (Zavestoski 2002). Southerton and others (2001) point out to 'harried and hurried' existence of some consumers who complain for not having sufficient time, being always busy and unable to accomplish their priorities.

We can have a better understanding of the motivations behind people's actions and analyze the meaning of their actions both for themselves and others by looking at their lifestyles (Chaney 1999: 14, Mowen 1993: 236, Blackwell et al. 2001: 253). Lifestyles emerge due to similar consumption models of consumers having common values and tastes (Solomon 1999: 658, Chaney 1999: 14). One of the measurement methods used in the lifestyle researches is Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). Rokeach (1973: 32-33) developed a system which consists of 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values for value measurement. Rokeach integrates the terminal values according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) and the previous researches on value (Shao 2002: 20). Terminal values define the preferences related to values that someone aim to accomplish them for lifelong time (Schermerhorn et al. 1994:136). The terminal values are; a comfortable life, an exciting life, sense of accomplishment, world at peace, a world of beauty, equality, family security, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, mature love, national security, pleasure, salvation, self-respect, social recognition, true friendship and wisdom. While instrumental values refer the instruments that are utilized for achieving goals, they function as a representative of acceptable behaviors that individuals use for coming to conclusions. They comprise personal characteristics and character traits. The instrumental values are; being ambitious, broad-minded, capable, cheerful, clean, courageous, forgiving, helpful, honest, imaginative, independent, intellectual, logical, loving, obedient, polite, responsible and self-controlled.

## 2.2. Degrees of Voluntary Simplicity

The extent to which individuals adopt voluntary simplicity lifestyle varies. The literature defines non-voluntary simplifiers (NVS) who do not engage in any

[1-3]Gazi University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Beşevler-Ankara, TURKEY

sustainable activities. The broad gap between these two groups (NVS and VS) consists of consumers who make purchase decisions with a new awareness of sustainability issues as embracing aspects of VS, yet remains close to its NVS origins (Oates et al. 2008: 353). These individuals were termed as beginner voluntary simplifiers (BVS) in some researches. In terms of promoting sustainable consumption, they are an intriguing group (McDonald and the others 2006: 518).

According to Etzioni (1998, 2003), the degree of voluntary simplicity ranges from moderate to extreme levels. He defines Downshifters as 'the most moderate simplifiers; economically well off who choose to give up some luxuries but not the luxurious lifestyle'. Strong simplifiers abandon high-paying, high-stress jobs for either more time or occupations that are perceived as more meaningful. The Simple living movement involves the most dedicated VS who change their lifestyles completely in due to obey the principles of voluntary simplicity

Taylor- Gooby (1998:646) made a striking comment to Amitai Etzioni within the context of his research on voluntary simplicity:

> *'The argument distinguishes three kinds of voluntary simplicity: Down-shifting, strong simplification, and the simple living movement. The first may be no more than a fashion statement - in fact the choice of particular designer jeans or the juxtaposition of simplicity and extravagance (15 year old car and 50 foot yacht) may be an effective way of underscoring success and status-claims while avoiding apparent ostentation. The second and third categories involve an abrupt break with the commitment to ever-higher consumption standards that has characterized the advanced economies. Such a shift in values is only available to the more affluent members of the most affluent nations who have the luxury of choosing their simplicity.'*

## 3. Method
### 3.1. Data Collection

The scale of this research is based on VSL scale of Iwata (2006) and 20 items of the scale are chosen according to Turkish society structure and habits. The research of

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Özgül (2010), which translated the scale into Turkish language before its validity and reliability were tested, is utilized during the adapting process of scale. Moreover, the value survey of Rokeach (1973) is also added to survey in due to analyze the statistical relationship between voluntarily simple lifestyle and values.

Values can be defined as standards of desirability invoked in social interaction to evaluate the preferability of behavioral goals or modes of action (Williams, 1968). From this point of view, "values are assumed to be central to the cognitive organization of the individual and to serve as a basis for the formation of attitudes, beliefs, and opinions" (Alwin and Krosnick 1985: 535).

Values can be measured by ranking set of competing alternatives or rating a group of items. According to Rokeach (1973:6) values are often thought to be inherently comparative and competitive, and thus the 'choice' nature of the ranking task fits with this conceptualization. There are also other researchers (Allport et al. 1960, Kluckholn and Strodtbeck 1961, Lenski 1961, Bengston 1975) who validated this point of view. On the other hand this approach has some drawbacks (Alwin and Krosnick 1985: 536). Ranking process may be difficult for respondents because it requires cognitive effort and concentration, especially when the list of concepts to be ranked is lengthy (Rokeach, 1973:28; Feather, 1973:228). This process is also time-consuming and it is difficult to gather such information using telephone methods of data collection (Groves and Kahn 1979:122-33). And the statistical techniques that can be employed to the ranked preference data are limited. The aggregate or average preference orders measured by ratings and rankings have generally been found to be quite similar (Feather 1973, Feather 1975, Moore 1975) while individual level orders tend to be much less similar across ratings and rankings (Moore 1975, Rankin and Grube 1980). Alwin and Krosnick (1985) suggest that these techniques may be interchangeable for the purpose of measuring aggregate preference orderings.

In this research, Rokeach's rating scale (1973) is preferred by reason that researchers wanted to reveal the pattern for value and VSL relationship in a general manner (for clusters not for individuals). Besides these two scales the final questionnaire included a set of questions about socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

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## 3.2. Population and Sample

The general target population of the survey was Turkish consumers living in Ankara, capital city of Turkey, having at least a graduate degree from a university. Stratified sample method is applied for the calculation of sample size. In the data collection process, the sampling started with convenience sampling method and proceeded with snowball sampling method. The sample size estimate of survey was computed by following formula:

$$ss = \frac{Z^{2*(p)*(1-p)}}{C^2} \tag{1}$$

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)
c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .04 = ±4)

The correction for finite population is:

$$New\ ss = \frac{ss}{1+\frac{ss-1}{pop}} \tag{2}$$

pop= population

The data related to the sample size for the year of 2015 was taken from Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK, 2015). The population of Ankara was 4.671.340 for that year and 384 participants are enough for its representative sample depending on the sample formula with the type 1 error. The population of people who had education degree at least university level was 911.266. The ratio of 'Undergraduates of Ankara' to 'Population of Ankara' was equals to .195. According to that, the sample size of the research was calculated as 74.88 and the number of 75 was accepted.

The data collection process ended with 195 web-based and paper-and-pencil questionnaires. Nevertheless, the number of usable ones is 101, as 84 questionnaires had to be omitted due to the errors ascertained, especially stemmed from the ranking (ordinal) data (values). This fact will be discussed in detail in the discussion and limitations section.

Table 1 shows demographics of the respondents, which consist of 58.4 %female and 41.6 %, male. Majority respondents were at 20-30 years of age,

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representing 39.6 % followed by the age of 31-40 (36.6 %). Considering the educational level, most of respondents were bachelor degree graduates 42.6 %, and 34.7 % had master degree. The highest percentages of respondents (45.6 %) were those occupied/ employed in education sector (teachers and academicians), whereas near about 11 percent of the respondents employed in a white job. Table 1 also revealed the income level of the respondents with majority (38.6 %) earning an annual income above 5001 TL and those whose income falls between 5000 and 3501 were 27.7%. Over half of the respondents (53,5%) were single.

**Table 1. Socio-economic Characteristics of the Sample and the Clusters**

| Characteristics | | Sample | | Cluster 1 | | Cluster 2 | | Cluster 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | (%) | n | (%) | N | (%) | n | (%) |
| Gender | Female | 59 | 58.4 | 12 | 48.0 | 41 | 66.1 | 6 | 42.9 |
| | Male | 42 | 41.6 | 13 | 52.0 | 21 | 33.9 | 8 | 57.1 |
| Age | 20-30 | 40 | 39.6 | 8 | 32.0 | 26 | 41.9 | 6 | 42.9 |
| | 31-40 | 37 | 36.6 | 11 | 44.0 | 23 | 37.1 | 3 | 21.4 |
| | 41-50 | 15 | 14.9 | 4 | 16.0 | 9 | 14.5 | 2 | 14.3 |
| | 51 and over | 9 | 8.9 | 2 | 8.0 | 4 | 6.5 | 3 | 21.4 |
| Education | Graduate | 43 | 42.6 | 12 | 48.0 | 23 | 37.1 | 8 | 57.1 |
| | Master's degree | 35 | 34.7 | 11 | 44.0 | 22 | 35.5 | 2 | 14.3 |
| | Doctoral degree | 23 | 22.8 | 2 | 8.0 | 17 | 27.4 | 4 | 28.6 |
| Income level | < 890 TL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 891-1600 TL | 5 | 5.0 | 1 | 4.0 | 3 | 4.8 | 1 | 7.1 |
| | 1601-2500 TL | 11 | 10.9 | 1 | 4.0 | 9 | 14.5 | 1 | 7.1 |
| | 2501-3500 TL | 18 | 17.8 | 6 | 24.0 | 9 | 14.5 | 3 | 21.4 |
| | 3501-5000 TL | 28 | 27.7 | 8 | 32.0 | 15 | 24.2 | 5 | 35.7 |
| | > 5001 TL | 39 | 38.6 | 9 | 36.0 | 26 | 41.9 | 4 | 28.6 |
| Occupation | Student | 7 | 6.9 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 11.3 | 0 | 0 |
| | White collar | 11 | 10.9 | 2 | 8.0 | 6 | 9.7 | 3 | 21.4 |
| | Health personnel (MD. nurse.etc) | 7 | 6.9 | 1 | 4.0 | 5 | 8.1 | 1 | 7.1 |
| | Academician | 33 | 32.7 | 6 | 24.0 | 23 | 37.1 | 4 | 28.6 |
| | Banker | 7 | 6.9 | 3 | 12.0 | 4 | 6.5 | 0 | 0 |
| | Engineer | 8 | 7.9 | 1 | 4.0 | 7 | 11.3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Teacher | 13 | 12.9 | 5 | 20.0 | 4 | 6.5 | 4 | 28.6 |
| | Others | 15 | 14.9 | 7 | 28.0 | 6 | 9.7 | 2 | 14.3 |
| Marital status | Single | 54 | 53.5 | 15 | 60.0 | 31 | 50.0 | 8 | 57.1 |
| | Married | 47 | 46.5 | 10 | 40.0 | 31 | 50.0 | 6 | 42.9 |

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

To refine and test the dimensionality of the VSL scale, a series of exploratory factor analysis were applied to data with the use of PCA and a varimax rotation and items didn't load on any factor (< .50) or loaded on more than one factor were removed iteratively. To decide how many factors to retain for rotation, the Kaiser's eigenvalue-greater-than 1 (Kaiser 1960) method was considered. This process ended up with a six factor solution (eigenvalues> 1.0), retaining 16 items, accounting for 65.5% of the

[1-3]Gazi University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Beşevler-Ankara, TURKEY

total variance. As coefficient alpha is inappropriate for two items, the estimate for the whole scale was computed and it was .71. The appropriateness of the factor structure was ensured with KMO measure at .624. The emergent factors were labeled.

First factor, explaining the 15.6% of total variance, was composed of four items related to not doing impulse buying and not shopping unless something is really needed, so it was labeled as "Planned buying behavior". The second factor, explaining the 12.1% of total variance, contained four items associated with using products as long as possible and thus, named as "A desire for long term usage". Third factor, explaining the 11.4% of total variance, contained two items related to being self sufficient as much as possible. So we labeled this factor as "Acceptance of self-sufficiency" like Iwata (2006). The fourth factor, explaining the 10.1% of total variance, contained two items related to preferring simple products to more complicated ones and labeled as "Preferences for simple products". The fifth factor, explaining the 9% of total variance, contained two items associated with having a simple life, so this factor was labeled as "A desire for a simple life". The last factor, explaining the 7.3% of total variance, composed of two items related to buying long term usable and comfortable products even if they are more expensive. People may prefer using products they bought for a long term as they feel discomfort when they have to rebuy more frequently. When considered together, these two items seemed to be related to comfort and convenience so we named this factor as "A desire for convenience and comfort" (See Table 2).

**Table 2:** Exploratory Factor Analysis: Voluntary Simplicity Scale

| *Factors* | *Factor Loading* |
|---|---|
| *Factor 1: Planned buying behavior* | |
| I 1: Even if I have money, it is not my principle to buy things suddenly. | .804 |
| I 2: I want to buy something new shortly after it comes out, even if I have a similar thing already. | -.685 |
| I 3: I do not do impulse buying | .670 |
| I 4: When I shop, I decide to do so after serious consideration of whether an article is necessary to me or not. | .544 |
| *Factor 2: A desire for long-term usage* | |
| I 5: If I am surrounded by what I have bought, I feel fortunate. | .737 |
| I 6: When I shop, I take a serious view of being able to use an article for a long time without getting tired of it. | .611 |
| I 7: I try to use articles which I bought as long as possible. | .603 |
| I 8: Except for traveling, I enjoy my leisure time without spending too much money. | .535 |
| *Factor 3: Acceptance of self-sufficiency* | |
| I 9: In the future, I want to lead a life that can be self-sufficient as far as possible. | .915 |
| I 10: It is desirable to be self-sufficient as much as possible | .905 |
| *Factor 4: Preferences for simple products* | |
| I 11: As far as possible, I do not buy products with sophisticated functions. | .836 |
| I 12: I prefer products with simple functions to those with complex functions. | .802 |
| *Factor 5: A desire for a simple life* | |
| I 13: I try to live a simple life and not to buy articles which are not necessary | .764 |

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| | |
|---|---|
| I 14: I want to live simply rather than extravagantly. | .697 |
| **Factor 6: A desire for convenience and comfort** | |
| I 15: I tend to buy something that can be used for a long time, even if it is expensive, rather than buying cheap new things frequently. | .716 |
| I 16: Products designed to promote convenience and comfort make people spoiled. | .652 |

Afterwards, in order to reveal the connection between voluntary simplicity lifestyles and values, we computed factor scores for each subject. Herein, as the item 2 was reflecting a non-voluntary approach, this item was reverse coded before this computation.

### 4.2.Cluster Analysis

In order to define groups of people with similar value rankings and VS scores, cluster analysis was applied to the data. Cluster analysis is used to classify objects "with respect to a particular attribute" (Moye and Kincade, 2003: 62). The obtained clusters of participants are homogeneous within the clusters and heterogeneous between the clusters. Two-step clustering process (hierarchical and then non-hierarchical) using Ward's method yielded 3 clusters. Characteristics of the clusters profiled in Table 1. As can be seen, majority of the largest cluster (Cluster 2) were female (66.1%), had income level over 5001 TL (41.9%) and were at 20-30 years age. Most of the respondents with doctoral degree (73.9%) and concordantly majority of the academicians were in this cluster.

Contrary to the Cluster 2, most of the respondents in the first cluster (Cluster 1) were male. Majority of this cluster were at the 31-40 years age (%44) and Bachelor Degree graduates (42.6%).

The smallest cluster (Cluster 3) with 14 members was also dominated by males and most of the respondents were graduates. About %43 of the respondents aged 20-30 and as in the second cluster, majority of the members engaged in education sector (academicians and teachers).

From a VS point of view, Cluster 2 had the highest scores on voluntary simplicity scale as a whole and on nearly all dimensions (See Table 3).

**Table 3.** Voluntary Simplicity Scale Values of Clusters

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| | Sample $\bar{X}$ | Cluster1 $\bar{X}$ | Cluster 2 $\bar{X}$ | Cluster 3 $\bar{X}$ | p value* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor 1: Planned buying behavior | 3,57 | 3.39 | **3.65** | 3.54 | ,366 |
| Factor 2: A desire for long-term usage | 3,91 | 3.74 | **4.00** | 3.80 | ,434 |
| Factor 3: Acceptance of self-sufficiency | 4,65 | 4.64 | **4.68** | 4.57 | ,423 |
| Factor 4: Preferences for simple products | 3,49 | 3.40 | **3.52** | 3.46 | ,798 |
| Factor 5: A desire for a simple life | 3,96 | 3.62 | 4.06 | **4.11** | ,124 |
| Factor 6: A desire for convenience and comfort | 3,74 | **3.80** | 3.74 | 3.64 | ,803 |
| VS (whole scale) | 3,89 | 3.77 | **3.94** | 3.85 | ,376 |

*\* Kruskal Wallis Test*

Although not statistically significant, Cluster 2 had the highest mean value in terms of VS, and it was over the mean value of the whole sample. So, this group should be named as "Voluntary Simplifiers-VS" in accordance with the literature (Iwata, 2006). This group also had the highest scores on four dimensions, namely, planned buying behavior, a desire for long-term usage, acceptance of self-sufficiency and preferences for simple products. With the moderate value in terms of VS, Cluster 3 had the highest score on the fifth dimension, a desire for a simple life. While the VS score was under the sample value, members of this cluster had a desire for simplicity, thus this group should be named as "Beginner Voluntary Simplifiers-BVS". With all but one mean scores being under the sample values, Cluster 1 had the lowest mean value in terms of VS. On the other hand, this value (3.77) was quite high in order to define this group as Non-Voluntary Simplifiers. Also, members of this group were ready to pay more to feel comfort and use a product for a long time. Therefore, we named this group as "Voluntary Simplifier Candidates-VSC". However it is not definite that they will choose to live as BVS or VS in the future.

## 4.3. Value Patterns of Clusters

In the perspective of values, the clusters exhibited different ranking patterns (See Table 4 and 5).

With regard to terminal value rankings, living an exciting life and comfortable life, a world of beauty and national security seem to be the strongest discriminators among the segments.

Voluntary simplifiers seem to give lesser importance to an exciting and a comfortable life, and as VS scores decreases the importance given to these values seem to increase. On the other hand, voluntary simplifiers care more about national

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security relative to other segments, and as VS scores decreases the importance given to that value seems to decrease.

Beginner voluntary simplifiers give more importance to world of beauty than the other two segments. Freedom, mature love, pleasure, salvation, social recognition and true friendship said to be undiscriminating values. What is interesting, and somewhat of a surprise, is that voluntary simplifiers being the most highly educated group (majority of the doctoral graduates are in this segment) indeed give less importance to sense of accomplishment, that represents the self-actualization aspect (Crosby et al. 1990), relative to other segments. On the other hand, two other values that also represent this aspect, namely self respect and inner harmony, were considered as more important by Voluntary Simplifiers relative to other groups. Another interesting result is that Beginner Voluntary Simplifiers gave more importance to values (a world of beauty and equality), representing the idealism dimension (Crosby et al. 1990), than Voluntary Simplifiers.

VSC gave more importance to values (a comfortable and exciting life) that seem to represent a hedonistic point of view in comparison to both VS and BVS. This group also lagged behind in importance given to family security compared to others. These findings are not surprising considering that the majority of this segment is at 31-40 years of age and single (not married). In addition to these, considering the top 6 values, VSC should be defined as more individualistic.

In terms of instrumental values, as can be seen in Table 4 and 5, being polite, broad-minded, courageous and self-controlled seem to be the strongest discriminators among the segments, while being cheerful, forgiving, helpful, honest, imaginative, independent, logical and loving said to be undiscriminating values. Being honest was considered as the most important instrumental value in all groups.

Voluntary Simplifiers give more importance to being self-controlled and as VS scores decrease, the importance given to this value also seems to decrease. Contrary to that, as VS scores decrease, the importance given to being courageous seems to increase and VSC find this value extremely important compared to VS and BVS. While VS care about being polite, BVS and VSC give relatively much less importance to this value. Being broad-minded and ambitious are considered most

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importantly by VSC, while being a responsible person is given more importance by Voluntary Simplifiers. Three of the values that compose the integrity factor (Vinson et al.1977), namely being polite, self-controlled and responsible, seem to be more important for Voluntary Simplifiers compared to the other segments. As integrity related to avoiding from "unethical behaviors" (Turkyilmaz and Uslu, 2014: 264), it is not surprising to see the Voluntary Simplifiers being emphasized these values more significantly. VSC give more importance to being ambitious compared to others and this is compatible with the more individualistic perspective of VSC.

**Table 4.** Terminal and Instrumental Values Rankings

| | Ranking | Cluster 1 | Cluster 2 | Cluster 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TERMINAL VALUES** | 1 | **Happiness** | **Family security** | **Family security** |
| | 2 | **A comfortable life** | **Inner harmony** | **Equality** |
| | 3 | **Inner harmony** | **Happiness** | **Sense of accomplishment** |
| | 4 | Freedom | Freedom | Freedom |
| | 5 | **Family security** | **Self-respect** | **World at peace** |
| | 6 | **Sense of accomplishment** | **Wisdom** | **A comfortable life** |
| | 7 | Pleasure | **Equality** | **A world of beauty** |
| | 8 | **An exciting life** | **World at peace** | **Happiness** |
| | 9 | **Self-respect** | **National security** | **Inner harmony** |
| | 10 | **Equality** | **Sense of accomplishment** | **Self-respect** |
| | 11 | **Wisdom** | **A comfortable life** | **An exciting life** |
| | 12 | **A world of beauty** | True friendship | Mature love |
| | 13 | Mature love | Pleasure | **National security** |
| | 14 | True friendship | Mature love | Pleasure |
| | 15 | **World at peace** | Social recognition | Social recognition |
| | 16 | Social recognition | Salvation | True friendship |
| | 17 | **National security** | **A world of beauty** | Salvation |
| | 18 | Salvation | **An exciting life** | **Wisdom** |
| | | **Cluster 1** | **Cluster 2** | **Cluster 3** |
| **INSTRUMENTAL VALUES** | 1 | Honest | Honest | Honest |
| | 2 | **Broad-minded** | **Responsible** | Independent |
| | 3 | Cheerful | Independent | Logical |
| | 4 | **Courageous** | **Self-controlled** | Helpful |
| | 5 | **Clean** | Helpful | **Intellectual** |
| | 6 | **Capable** | Logical | **Self-controlled** |
| | 7 | Helpful | **Polite** | Cheerful |
| | 8 | Independent | Cheerful | Forgiving |
| | 9 | Logical | **Broad-minded** | Loving |
| | 10 | Forgiving | Loving | **Courageous** |
| | 11 | **Responsible** | **Clean** | Imaginative |
| | 12 | Loving | Forgiving | **Responsible** |
| | 13 | **Intellectual** | **Courageous** | **Clean** |
| | 14 | **Ambitious** | Imaginative | **Broad-minded** |
| | 15 | Imaginative | **Capable** | **Obedient** |
| | 16 | **Polite** | **Intellectual** | **Polite** |
| | 17 | **Self-controlled** | **Obedient** | **Capable** |
| | 18 | **Obedient** | **Ambitious** | **Ambitious** |

**Table 5.** Comparison of Value Rankings for Clusters

| | Terminal values | Chi-Square | p value* | | Instrumental values | Chi-Square | p value* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | A comfortable life | 18.420 | **.000** | 1 | Ambitious | 13.805 | **.001** |
| 2 | An exciting life | 33.659 | **.000** | 2 | Broad-minded | 15.731 | **.000** |

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| 3 | Sense of accomplishment | 14.923 | **.001** | 3 | Capable | 12.554 | **.002** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | World at peace | 10.358 | **.006** | 4 | Cheerful | 4.788 | .091 |
| 5 | A world of beauty | 33.630 | **.000** | 5 | Clean | 8.208 | **.017** |
| 6 | Equality | 7.306 | **.026** | 6 | Courageous | 17.510 | **.000** |
| 7 | Family security | 6.627 | **. 036** | 7 | Forgiving | 1.943 | .378 |
| 8 | Freedom | .583 | .747 | 8 | Helpful | .757 | .685 |
| 9 | Happiness | 8.257 | **.016** | 9 | Honest | .846 | .655 |
| 10 | Inner harmony | 9.705 | **.008** | 10 | Imaginative | 2.944 | .229 |
| 11 | Mature love | 1.610 | .447 | 11 | Independent | 2.985 | .225 |
| 12 | National security | 17.123 | **.000** | 12 | Intellectual | 10.480 | **.005** |
| 13 | Pleasure | 5.416 | .067 | 13 | Logical | 4.038 | .133 |
| 14 | Salvation | 2.784 | .249 | 14 | Loving | 2.834 | .242 |
| 15 | Self-respect | 10.870 | **.004** | 15 | Obedient | 8.088 | **.018** |
| 16 | Social recognition | .795 | .672 | 16 | Polite | 26.421 | **.000** |
| 17 | True friendship | 5.795 | .055 | 17 | Responsible | 13.666 | **.001** |
| 18 | Wisdom | 14.007 | **.001** | 18 | Self-control | 17.970 | **.000** |

*Kruskal Wallis test*

## 5. Conclusions

Comparison of consumers' values revealed patterns according to degree of voluntary simplicity. Although the clusters are not so fixed and the sample size is not too much satisfactory to come to a more generalizable conclusion, we have been able to identify differences in terms of importance given to values by consumers performing different levels of voluntary simplicity behaviors.

The factor analysis produced six factors, namely, planned buying behavior, a desire for long-term usage, acceptance of self-sufficiency, preferences for simple products, a desire for a simple life and a desire for convenience and comfort. Second, the voluntary simplicity factor scores and values were used in cluster analysis to create consumer segments with similar VS lifestyles and value patterns and the process ended up with 3 clusters. The demographic characteristics such as education (Craig-Lees and Hill 2002, Etzioni 1998, Zavestoski 2002) and income level (Mitchell 1983, Craig-Lees and Hill 2002) indicators were similar with the previous VS researches.

The clusters exhibited different patterns in terms of both terminal and instrumental values. While living an exciting life and comfortable life, a world of beauty and national security seem to be the strongest discriminators among the segments, freedom, mature love, pleasure, salvation, social recognition and true friendship seem to be undiscriminating values. Voluntary simplifiers, being the most highly educated group seem to give less importance to sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, self-respect and inner harmony were considered as more important

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for Voluntary Simplifiers relative to other groups. According to value rankings, BVS are thought to be more idealistic while VSC are thought to be more individualistic.

In terms of instrumental values, being polite, broad-minded, courageous and self-controlled seem to be the strongest discriminators among the segments, while being cheerful, forgiving, helpful, honest, imaginative, independent, logical and loving said to be indiscriminative. Voluntary Simplifiers give more importance to being self-controlled and VSC find being courageous extremely important.  Being broad-minded and ambitious are considered most importantly by VSC, while being a responsible person is given more importance by Voluntary Simplifiers. VSC give more importance to being ambitious compared to others and this is compatible with the more individualistic perspective of VSC.

As a conclusion, a significant portion of the sample seems to adopt a voluntarily simple lifestyle compatible with the expectations. Further, the value patterns of the sample that present three different degrees of voluntarily simple life contribute new insights to the literature.

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