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Perception of Generation Y on Waste Disposal and Waste Management in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Solid waste piling has become a serious problem to Sri Lanka. It was proven from Meethotamulla garbage dump tragedy. Serious discussions took place and committees were appointed to look into the problem as a whole. Waste management is not solely the responsibility of the government. Citizens should also need to have a vision towards waste management. Urbanisation, industrialisation, and improvements in quality of life of people had led the increase in quantity as well as complexity of generated waste. The main purpose of this study is to determine the perception of undergraduates on waste, waste disposal mechanism and waste management techniques in their living area. The research data were obtained from one hundred and seventy three (n=173) undergraduate respondents, in private universities which are located in Western province, Colombo 07. A questionnaire was developed according to the literature survey and adapted accordingly to suit the Sri Lankan context. The method used to collect data was cross sectional. SPSS version 16.0 was used for data analysis. Methods used to analyse data were Cross-tab and chi square test. The Cronbach's alpha obtained with the present sample was 0.63. One of the main issues in relation to waste disposal is dumping waste to unoccupied lands by service providers who are involved in cleaning garbage. The results revealed that 51% of the respondents do not have any clue of where their service providers are dumping their waste and unfortunately 53% had reported that they are not concerned about where their service providers dump their waste. Even though the responses are as such, 80% of the respondents had stated that they are aware that environmental degradation affects their families. The results revealed (based on p-value) that there is no association between gender and student perception on waste management. Furthermore student's concern about the environment and waste management was moderate and reveals that there should be a proper mechanism to improve young generation's concern about the environment and waste management to attain a sustainable future in the long term.

Keywords: Waste, Waste management, Service providers, Dumping waste, Environmental degradation