

Environmental Education and Pro-environmental Consumer Behaviour – Results of a university survey

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Joint Actions on Climate Change Conference

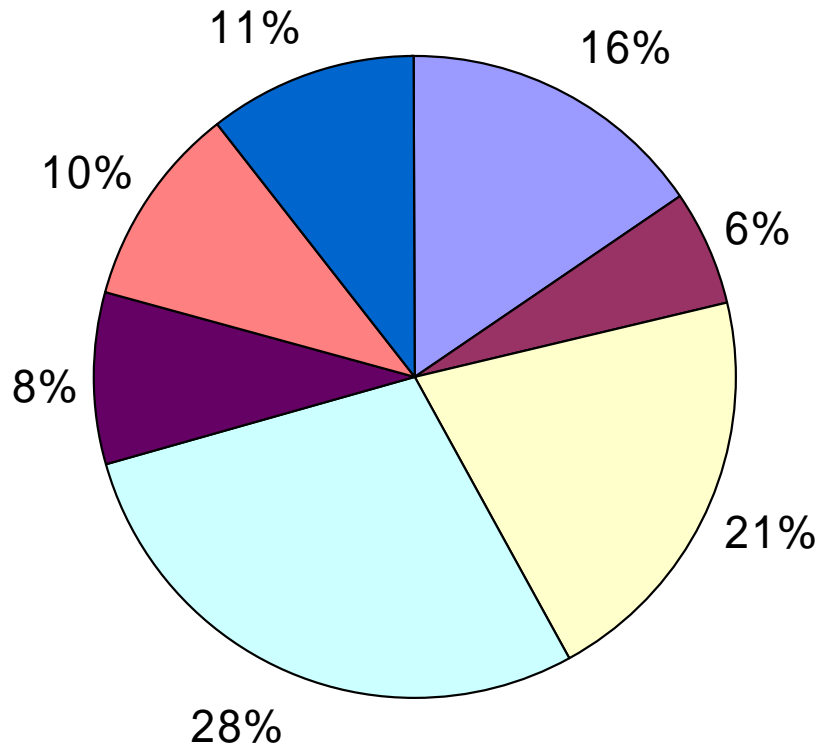
8-10 June, 2009

Aalborg, Denmark

Characteristics of the survey

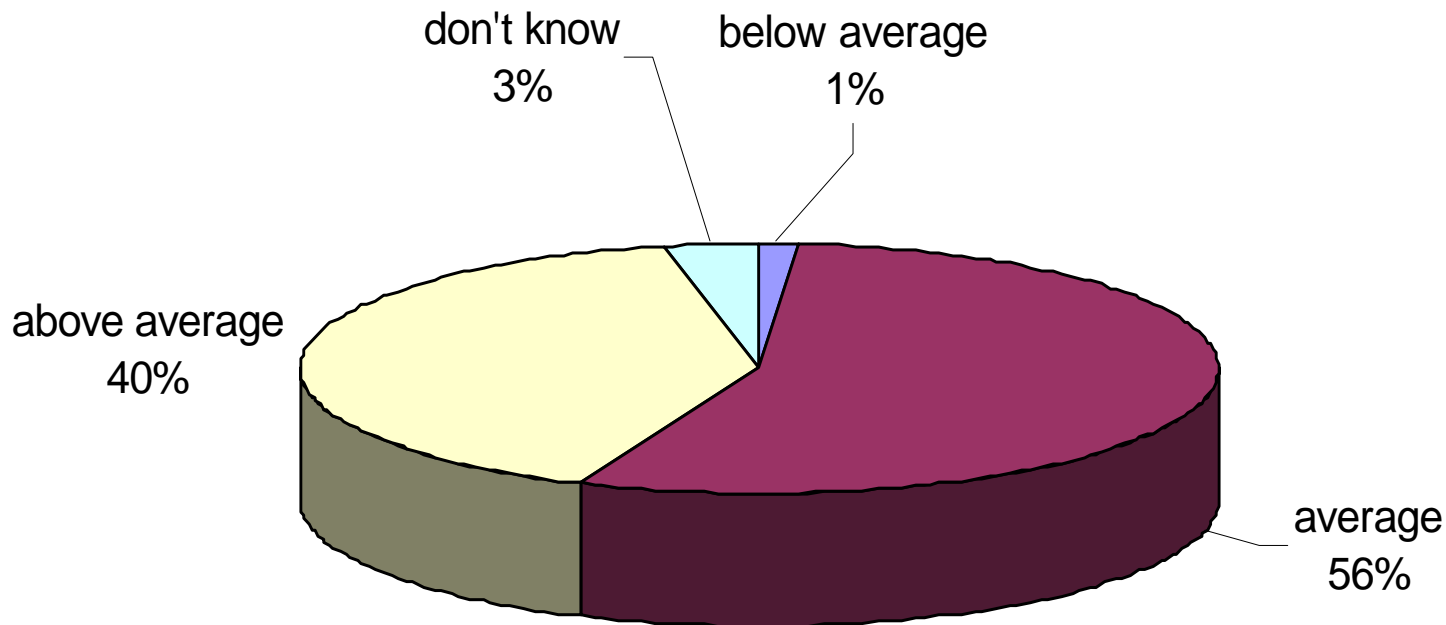
- Sample size: 436 students
- Survey timing: December 2008, February 2009
- Questionnaire topics:
 - Participation in and satisfaction with environmental education
 - Environmental awareness
 - Consumer behaviour

Breakdown of the sample according to student groups

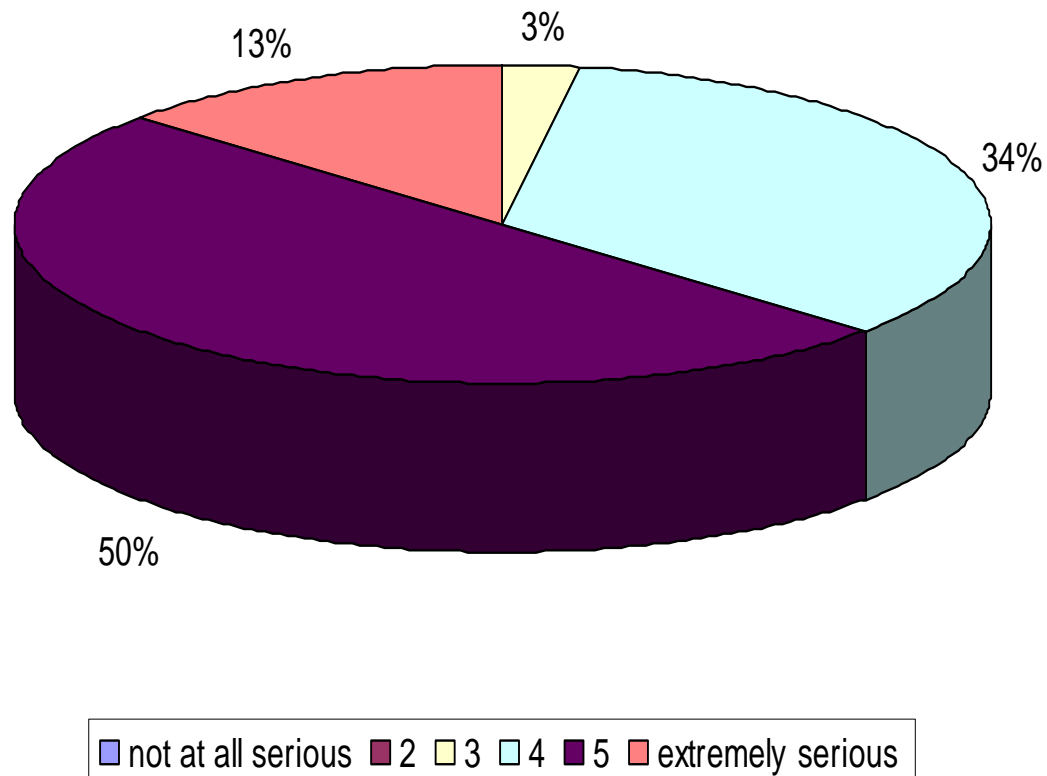


- graduate students specialising in environmental issues
- undergraduate students specialising in environmental issues
- graduate students taking a course on EM
- undergraduate students taking a course on environmental economics
- undergraduate economy students taking a course on environmental economics
- graduate students specialising in finance
- I. year students at the beginning of their (environmental) studies

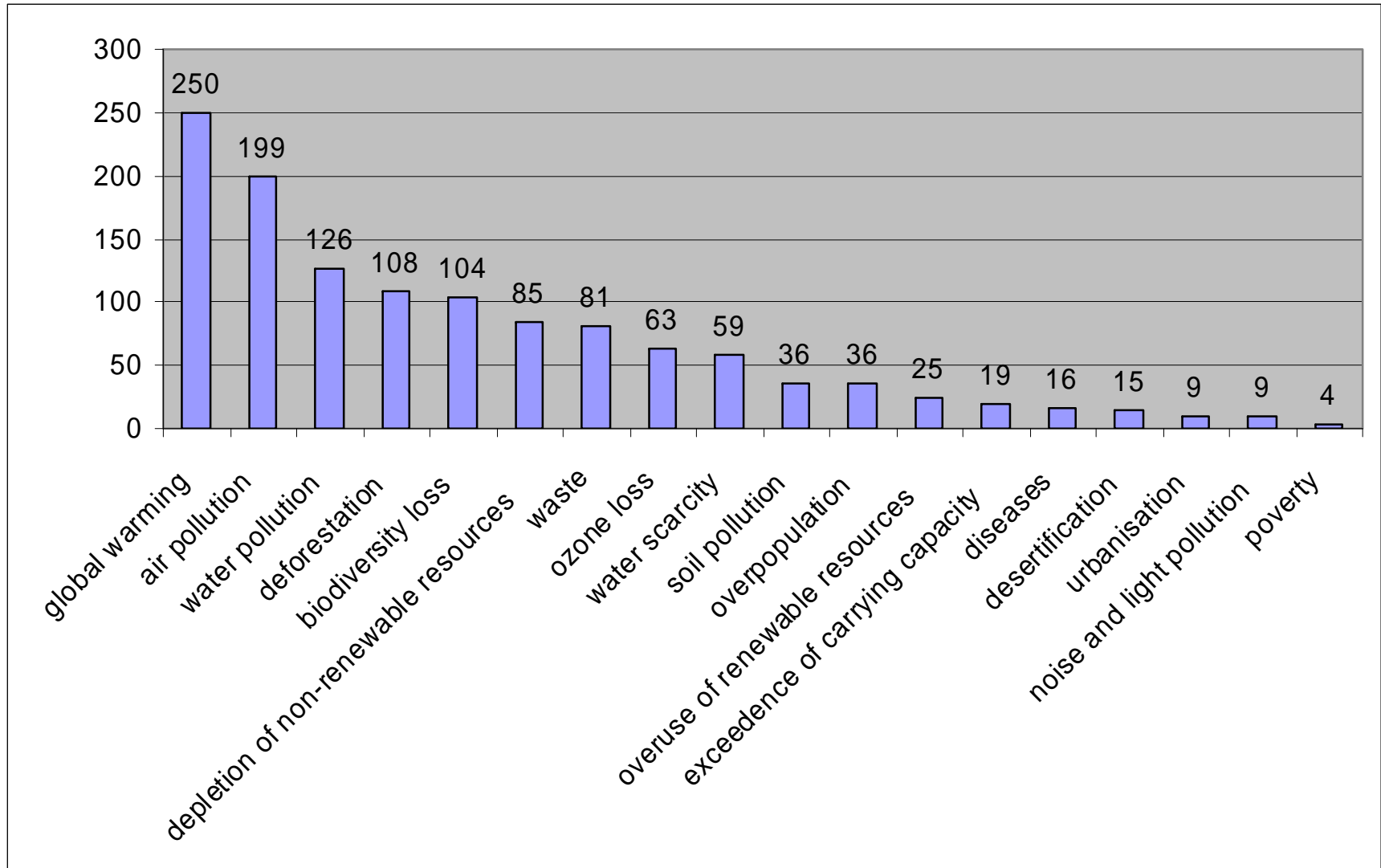
Students' views on their own environmental consciousness



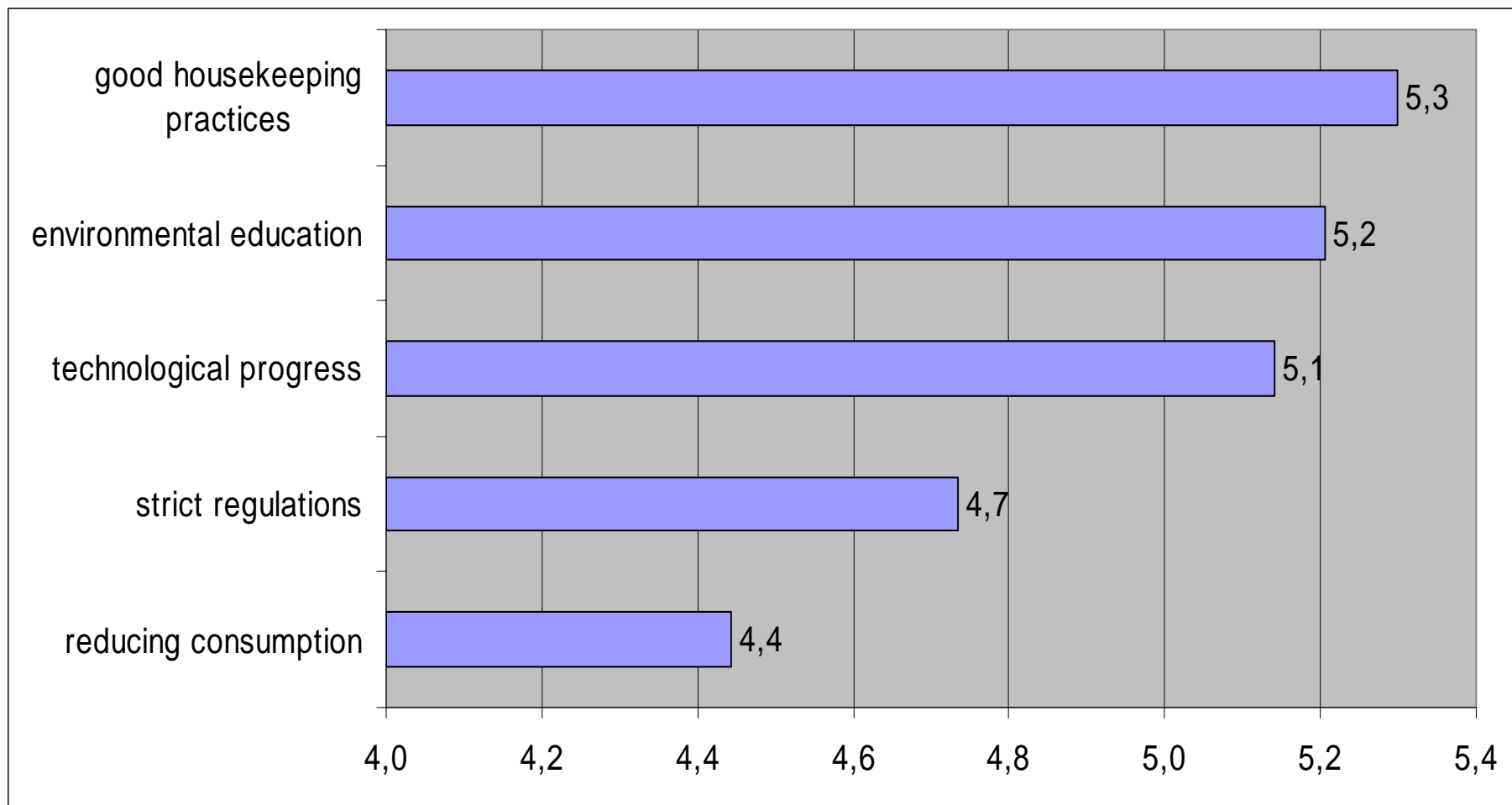
Opinions regarding the seriousness of environmental problems



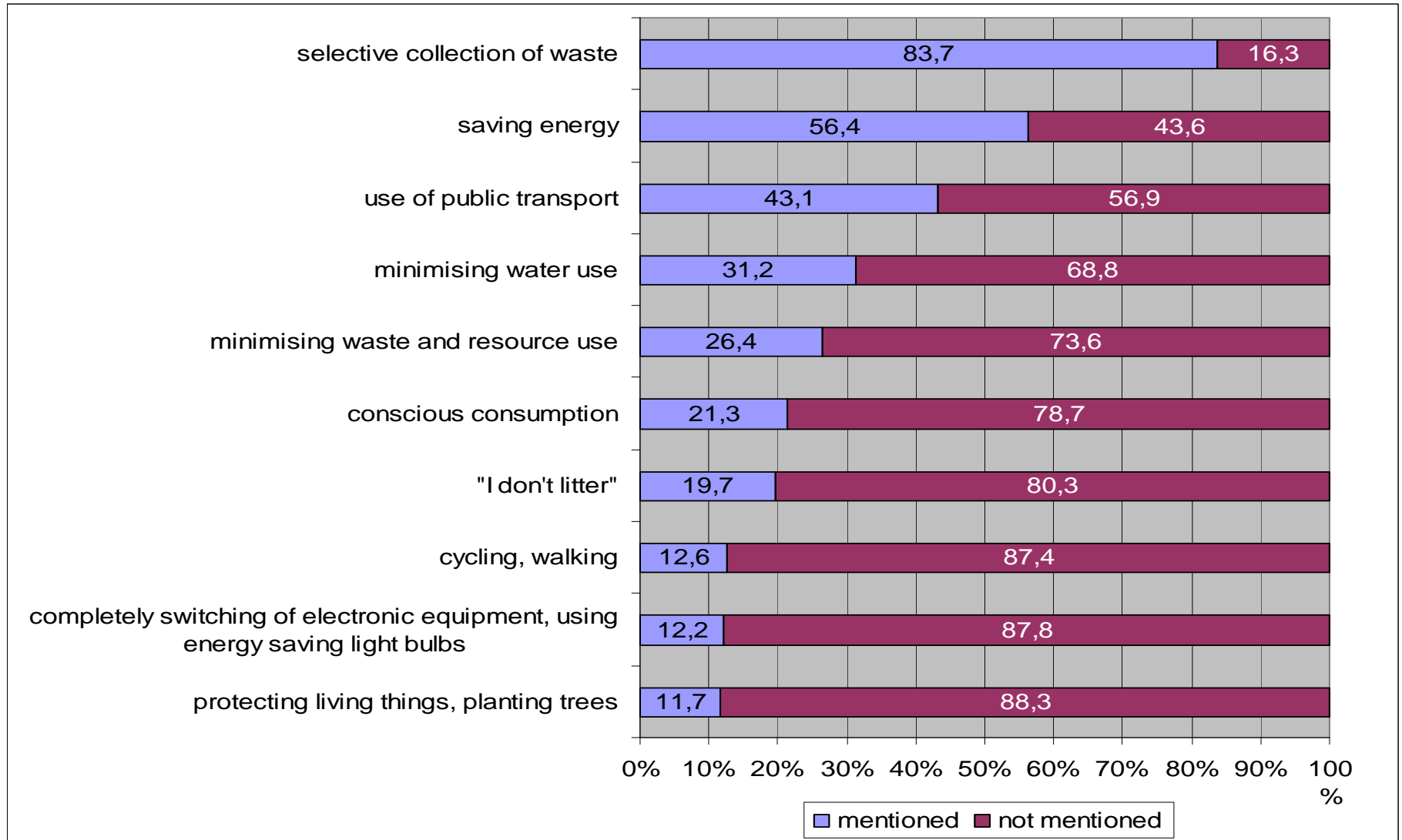
Frequency of **environmental** problems metioned as serious



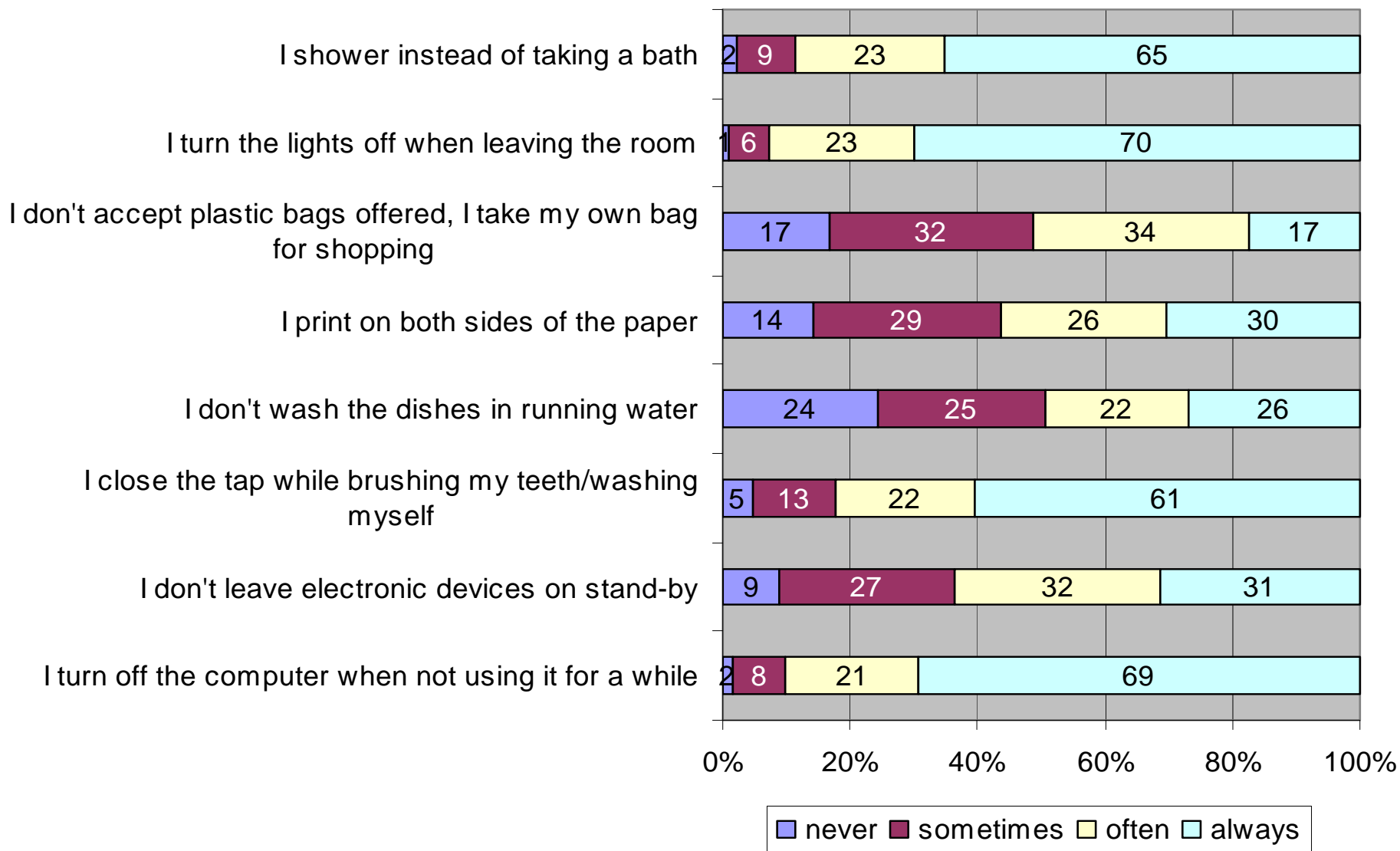
Role of certain factors in solving environmental problems (average)



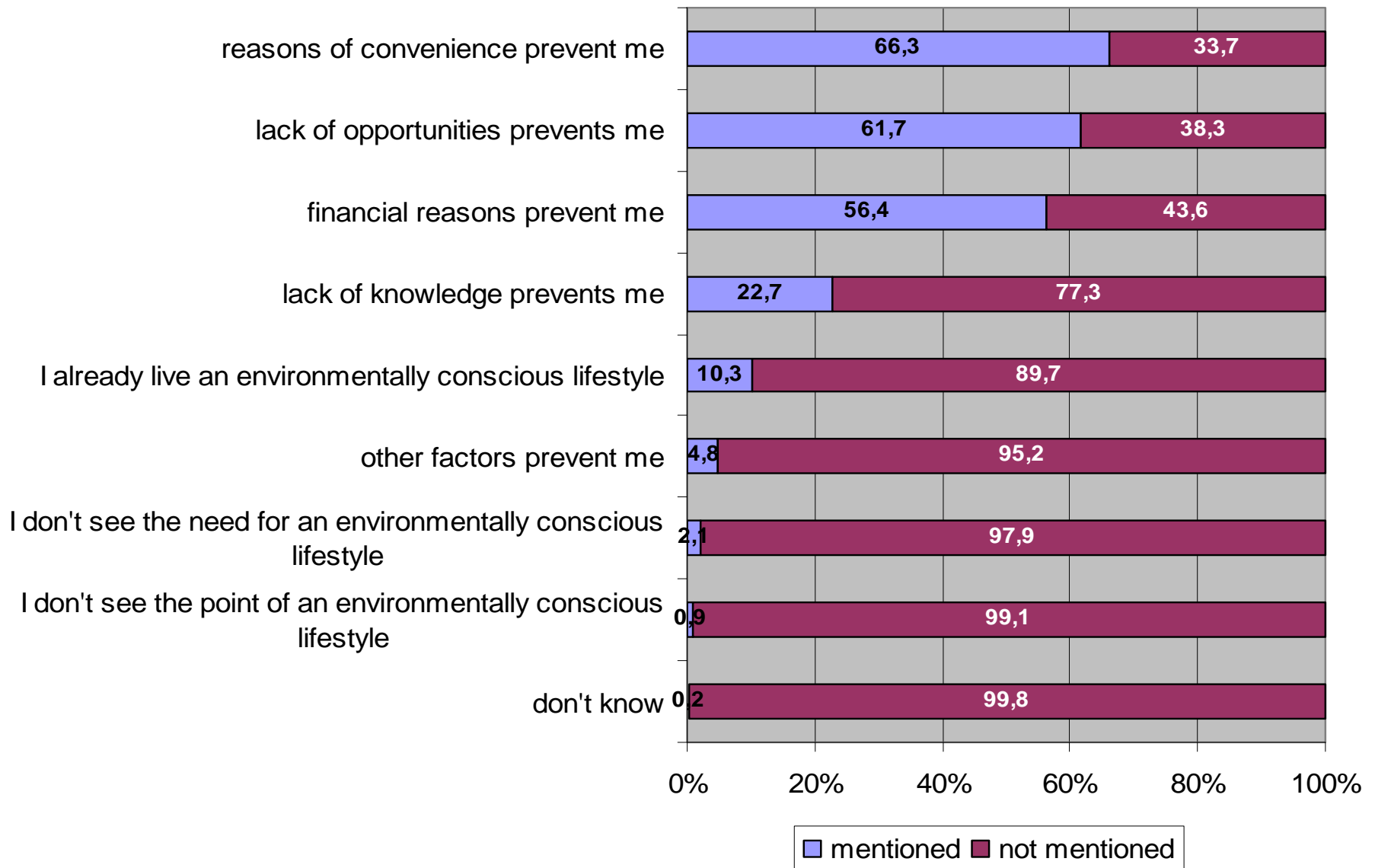
What environmental friendly practices/forms of behavior do you know and to what extent do you practice them?



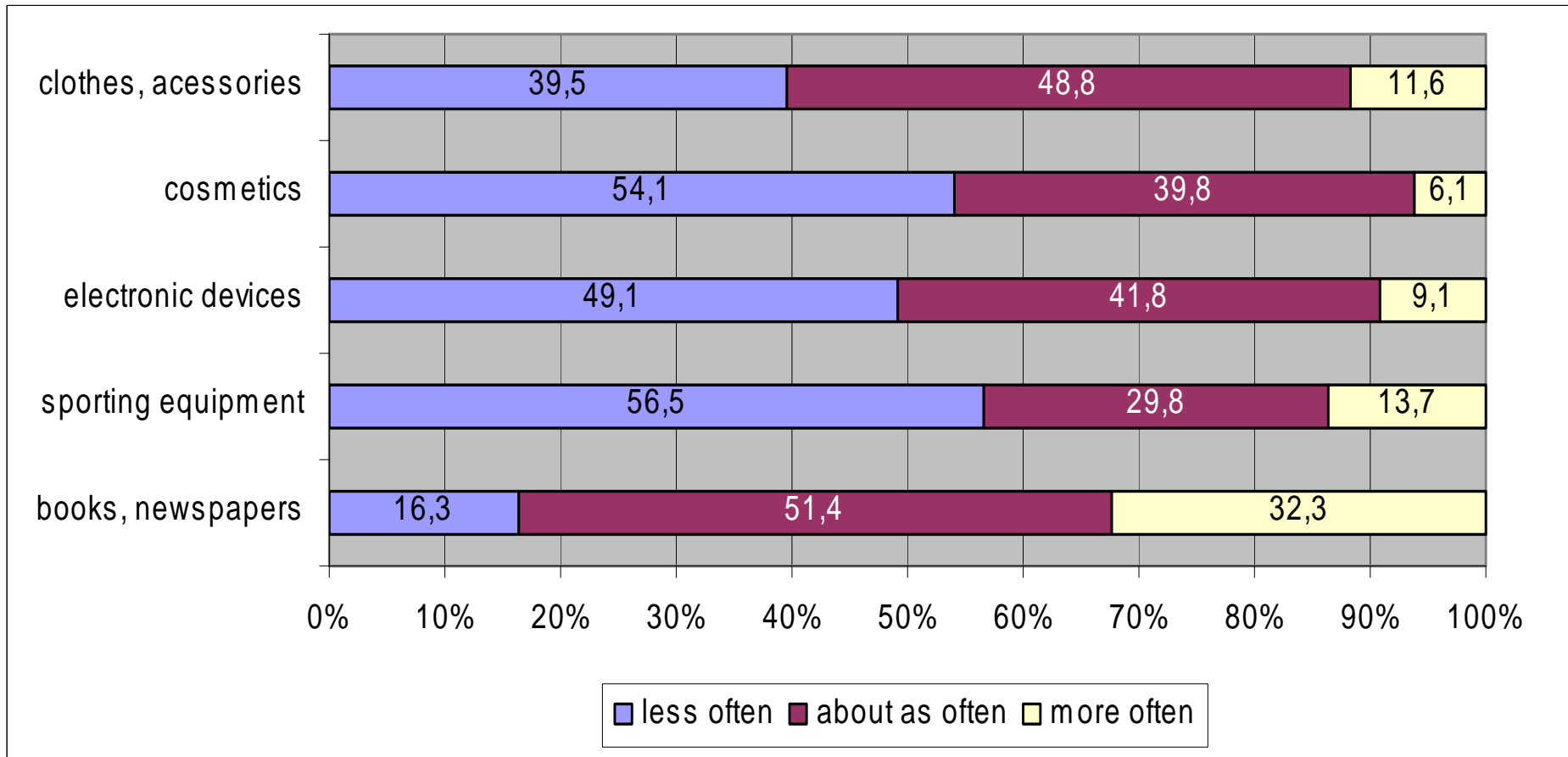
Practice of various activities



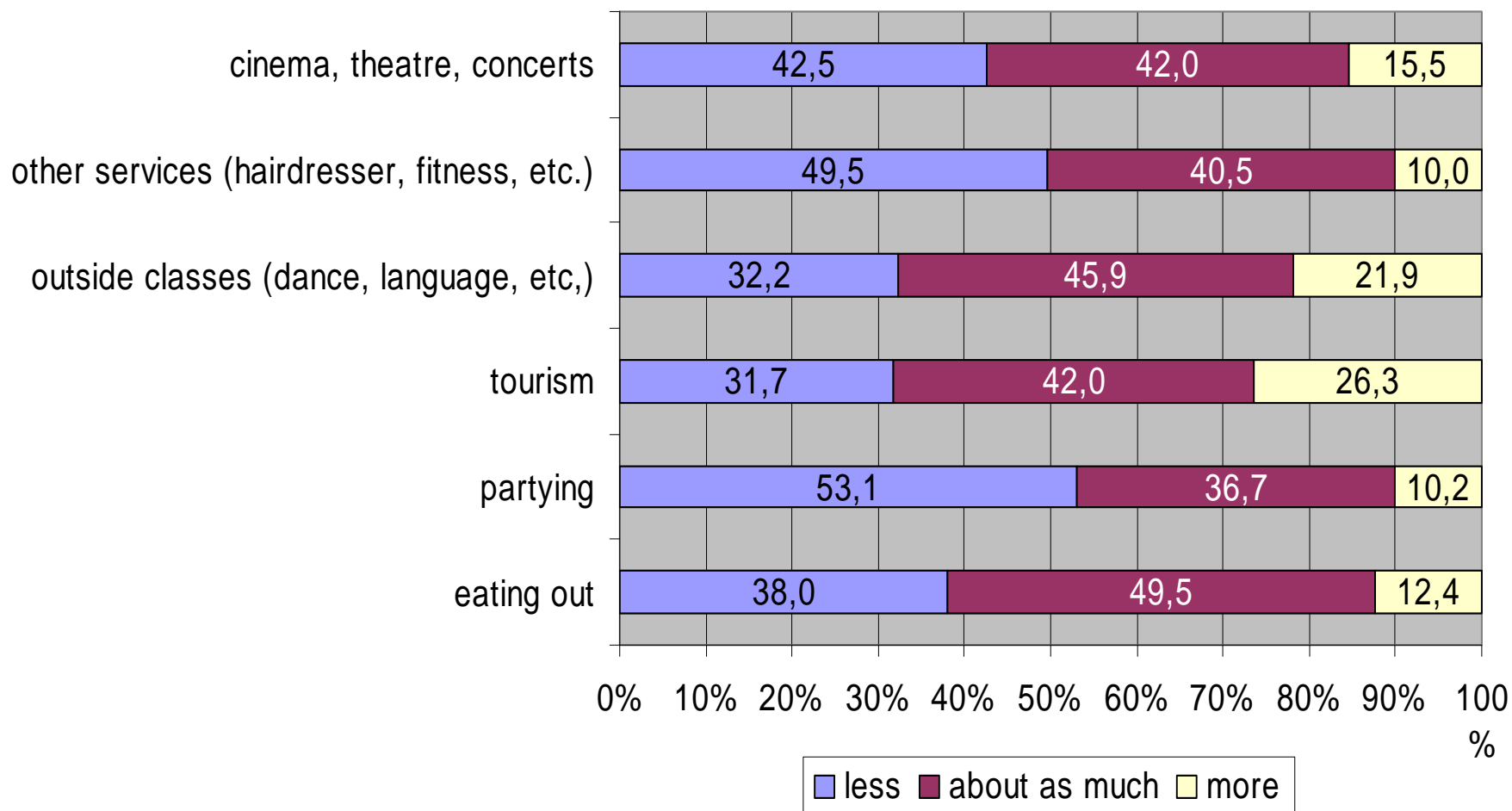
Barriers to environmentally friendly behaviour



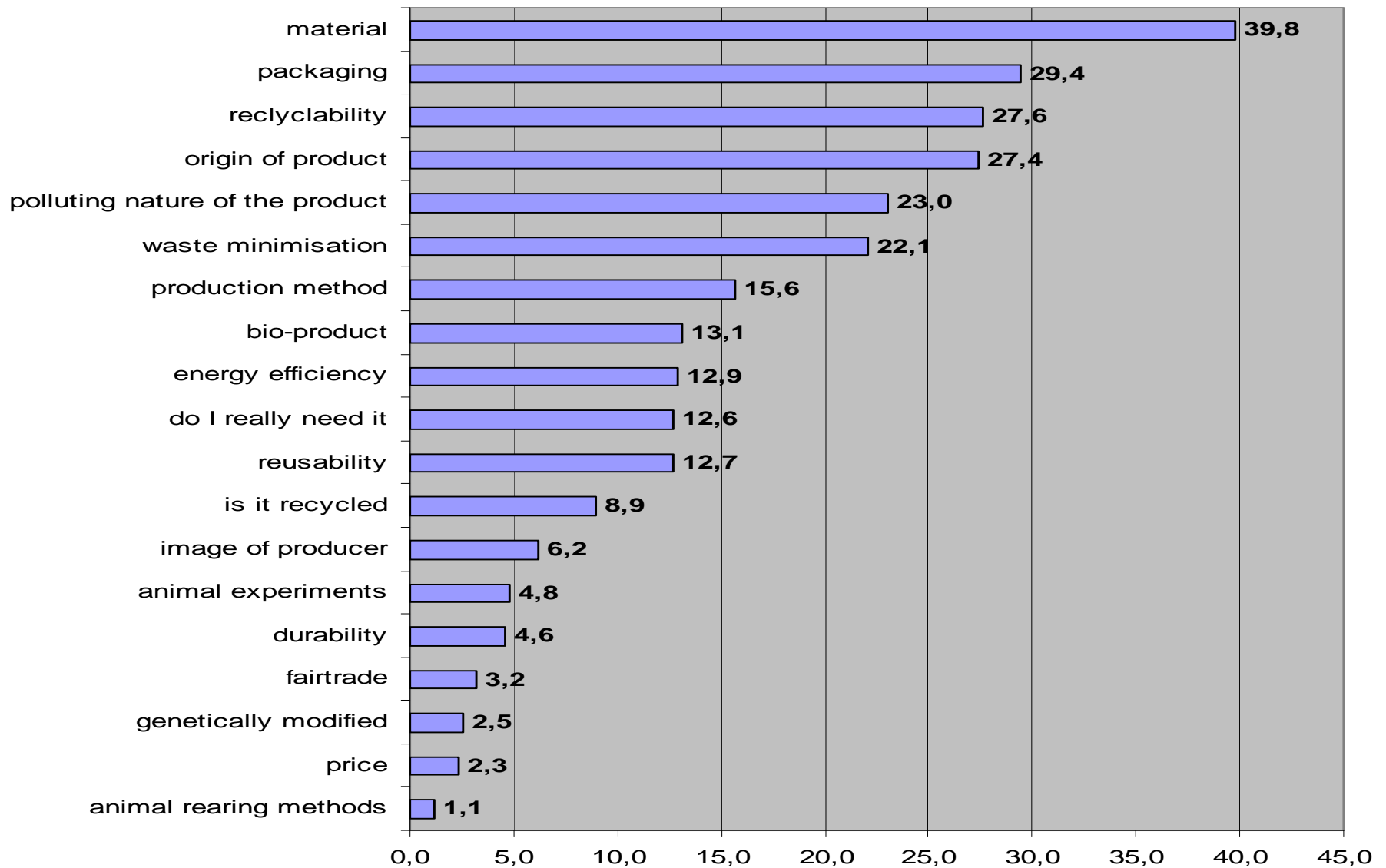
Compared to other university students, how often do you buy ...



Compared to other university students, how much do you spend on...



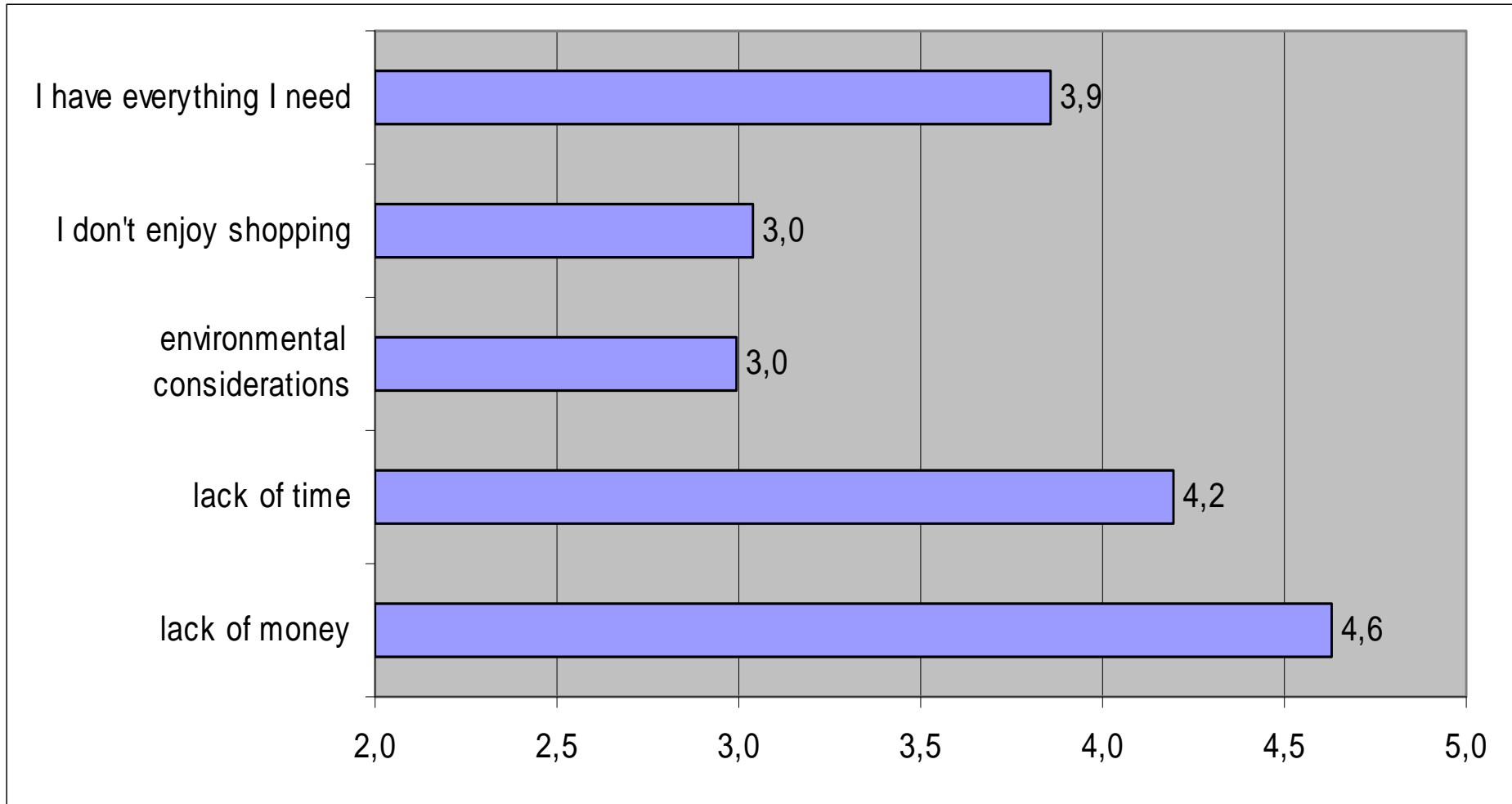
Incidence of factors to be considered during shopping



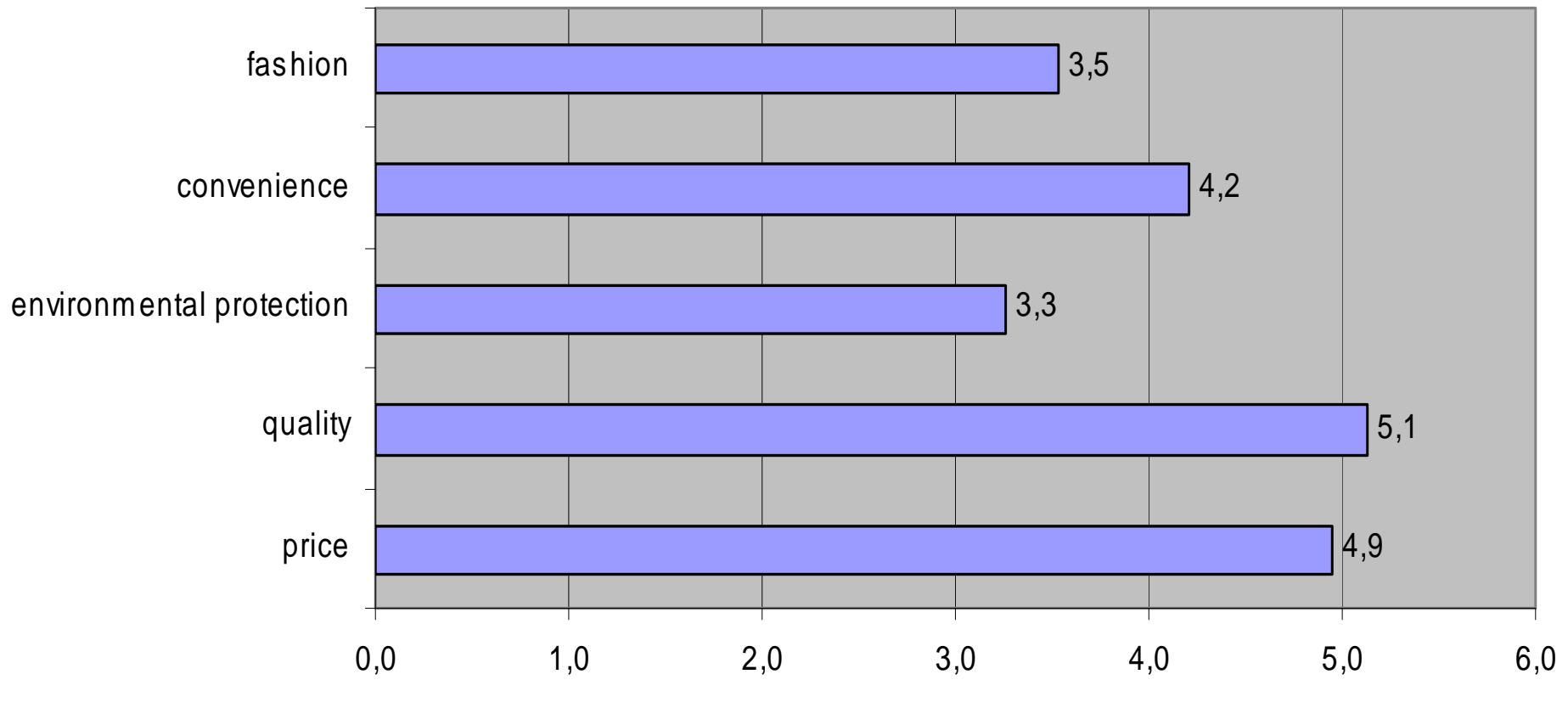
Description of shopping habits



Barriers to higher consumption



The role of various factors in shopping decisions



Factors of behavior patterns

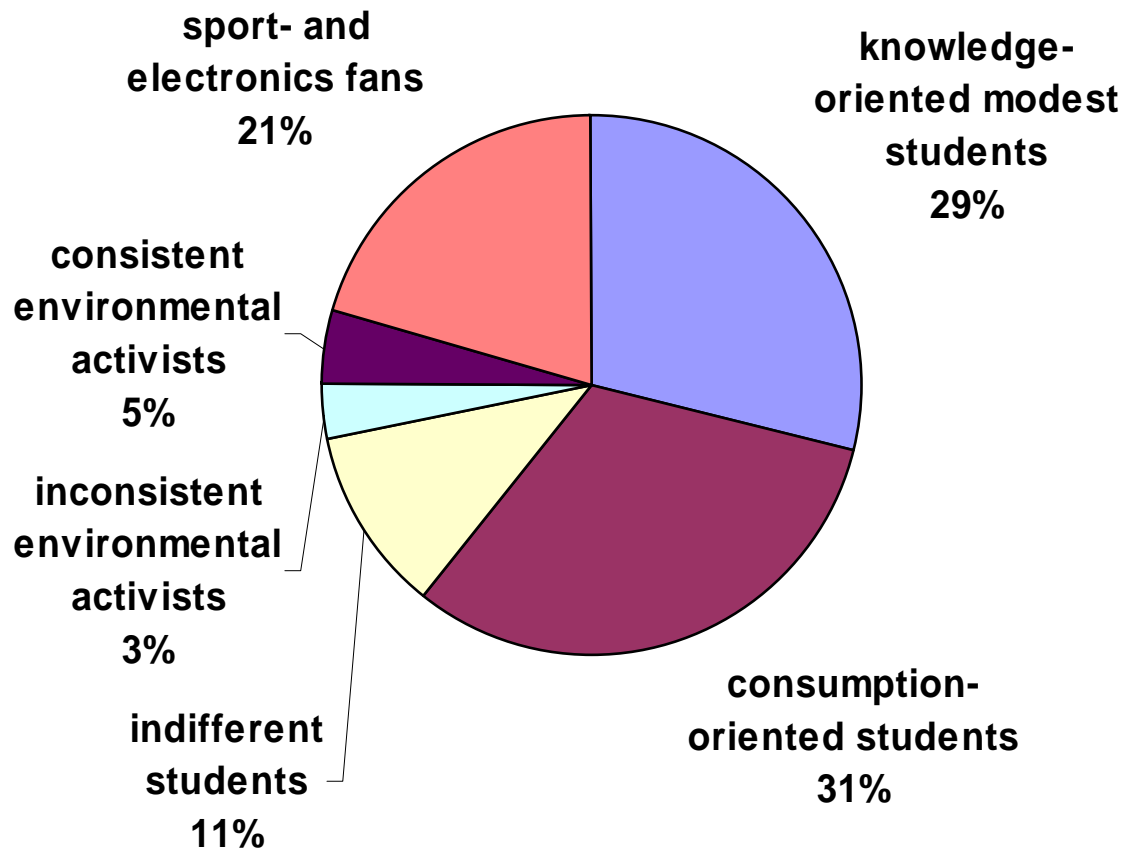
1. Hedonistic consumer behavior
2. Environmental activist behavior
3. Increasing environmental knowledge
4. Buying sporting equipment and electronic devices
5. Supporting environmental NGOs
6. Good housekeeping practices
7. Not keeping electronic devices on stand-by

KMO: 0,75,

Bartlett test of sphericity: 1640,

Explained variance: 62,5%

Cluster membership based on factors



Knowledge-oriented modest students

- 114 respondents, who
- read significantly more environment-related books, journals, internet-sites than the average and are eager to go to environmental conferences
- are often members of environmental organizations or support them financially, but
- do not take part in environmental activities and demonstrations
- are not hedonistic in their consumption, do not like shopping
- buy sports- and electronic equipments very rarely
- consider environmental aspects when shopping
- Students with environmental specialization overrepresented

Consumption-oriented students

- 125 respondents, who
- show significantly „heavier“ consumer behavior, which is primarily reflected in
 - frequent purchase of cosmetics, clothes, accessories,
 - shopping and spending money with enthusiasm,
 - being lured by discounts,
 - following fashion trends, no environmental aspects when shopping
- but: buy sport and electronic equipments very rarely
- are not interested in environmental issues regarding direct activities for a cleaner environment, or seeking environmental information, or pursuing good housekeeping practices, but
- are sometimes members of environmental organizations and support them financially

- Girls are overrepresented

Indifferent students

- 43 respondents, who
- pay slightly more attention to not keeping electronic devices on stand-by
- do not support environmental organizations at all
- do not buy sports- and electronic equipment very often
- are indifferent both regarding consumption and interest in environmental issues
- consider price very consciously when shopping
- perceive their environmental awareness as sufficient
- Undergraduate economy students are overrepresented

Inconsistent environmental activists

- 13 respondents, who
- show a quite active behavior at environmental demonstrations and in pro-environmental activities,
- often go to environmental conferences
- are members of environmental organizations and also support them financially
- are interested in environmental issues, reading journals, magazines, books and internet pages,

BUT

- are more active in their consumer behavior than the sample average (regarding clothes, cosmetics, sport and electronic devices), follow fashion trends
- are not the pioneers of good housekeeping
- graduate students with environmental specialization are overrepresented

Consistent environmental activists

- 18 respondents, who
- Participate in environmental demonstrations and actions much more actively than the sample average,
- are members of environmental organizations, support them financially, and undertake volunteer work for them,
- are not really motivated by knowledge-building,
- are not interested in consumption at all, they feel they have everything they need
- do not keep electronic devices on stand-by

- Graduate students with environmental specialization and those studying environmental management are overrepresented, while members of the control group (students not having studied environmental issues before) are underrepresented

Sports and electronics fans

- 85 respondents, who
 - enthusiastically buy sports equipment and electronic devices, BUT
 - behave like the average (or even more modest) in other features of consumption
 - do not concern themselves with environmental issues at all: neither in their reading, or regarding activist behavior
-
- Proportion of boys is double the sample average
 - I. year students overrepresented, students with environmental specialization underrepresented

Conclusions

- Consumer behaviour is influenced by several factors.
- Even people interested in environmental issues may show intensive consumer behaviour, and vice versa:
- Fans of some products (here: sports and electronics) may be normally modest consumers.
- Environmental awareness appears rather selectively; compensating behavior is quite frequent.
- Tools of motivation towards a more sustainable consumer behaviour should be considered and adapted to the features of the different clusters.

Examples to motivate clusters towards sustainable consumption

- Knowledge-oriented group: Practical information about „how to do“-s
- Consumption-oriented people: appealing alternatives (products or services) with no or small need of sacrifice
- Inconsistent environmentalists: realistic alternatives at the points of inconsistencies + information
- Consistent environmentalists: positive feedback
- Special product-fans: appealing environmental alternatives in the product group
- Indifferent group: most difficult to motivate (lack of interest)

**Thank you
for attention!**