

Water Conservation and Culture of Indifference among College Students: The Nexus of Descriptive Norms

Kevin Onyenankeya^{1*}, Marc Caldwell² and Anthony Okoh³

^{1,2}*Department of Communication, University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa*

E-mail: ¹<onyenankeyakevin@gmail.com>, ²<mcaldwell@ufh.ac.za>

³*Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa*

⁴*SAMRC Microbial Water Quality Monitoring Centre, University of Fort Hare, Alice, South Africa*
E-mail: aokoh@ufh.ac.za

KEYWORDS Attitude. Behavior. Indifference. Norm. Water Conservation

ABSTRACT South Africa is engaged in a vigorous campaign to rein in commercial and domestic water users to embrace water conservation practices. While the water conservation drive appears to have gained traction among commercial and urban water users, experts insist that a 'culture of indifference' toward water conservation still persists. The main objective of this paper was to determine the attitude and behavior of South African college students towards water conservation, and establish the linkages between college students' water conservation behavior and descriptive norm. The questionnaire survey was used to explore college students' water conservation attitudes and behaviors. Data analysis reveals a significant attitude of indifference, as college students do not appear to consider water conservation an overarching social issue. The results also show a positive relationship between social pressures, descriptive norm particularly and college students' water behavior and intentions. The paper concludes that college students are generally indifferent to water conservation.