

Study on The Influence of Consumers' Environmental Responsibility on Green Consumption Intention

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Abstract

In recent years, academic research on the factors influencing green consumption has made great progress. However, relatively little research has been conducted on the influence of consumers' sense of environmental responsibility on green consumption and how this influence is mediated by environmental attitudes and moderated by product knowledge. This study examines the mechanisms by which consumers' sense of environmental responsibility influences green consumption intentions based on the theory of planned behavior..

Keywords

Environmental responsibility; Green consumption intention; Environmental attitudes; Product knowledge.

1. Introduction

With the rapid economic development and technological progress, unsustainable development and consumption patterns have had many negative impacts on the environment, and the high input and consumption of energy and resources have gradually increased the impact of pollution on the environment, and the pressure on the environment has increased. The strategic task of ecological civilization construction has become more and more urgent. In recent years, with the deepening of the "Five-in-One" construction, green development and environmental protection have been incorporated into the medium and long-term economic development strategy in the context of ecological civilization construction and beautiful China construction.

In promoting green development, Mcdougall (1993) argues that the role of consumers is crucial and that 30-40% of environmental degradation is caused by household consumption activities (Grunert, 1993). Further practice of green development is inevitable to address the challenge of green consumption. Green consumption is not only an inevitable choice for the construction of ecological civilization, but also an important way to achieve green development. Therefore, how to guide consumers to produce pro-environmental green purchasing behavior is a real problem for ecological civilization construction and green development (Chan, 2010). The responsible environmental behavior model suggests that personal responsibility is an important psychological factor for individuals to engage in pro-environmental behavior, and that consumers' sense of environmental responsibility will drive them to pay high attention to environmental issues and actively practice pro-environmental behavior. Therefore, consumers' sense of environmental responsibility and green consumption intention have become a hot spot for research (Chen, Deng, 2016). In this paper, we explore the influence of consumers' sense of environmental responsibility on green consumption intention from these two variables, with environmental attitude as a mediating variable and product knowledge as a moderating variable.

Environmental responsibility originates from the normative activation model in social psychology and has been applied to several disciplines such as environmental education,

environmental sociology, and consumer behavior (Slavoljub et al., 2015). Stone et al. (1995) proposed that environmental responsibility refers to an individual's strong willingness to protect the environment-not from his or her economic interests, but rather to consider social and environmental well-being. At the same time, it is generally accepted that environmental responsibility is an individual's sense of responsibility to take active measures to solve environmental problems based on a full awareness of the welfare brought by the environment, a moral quality that combines environmental problem awareness, environmental behavioral attitudes, and environmental emotions, and an individual's tendency to take the initiative to take responsibility for social norms and internalize them into personal norms. It is expressed as an individual's positive attitudinal orientation toward pro-environmental behavior and has a positive role in motivating and inspiring individual pro-environmental behavior. by meta-analysis of 128 pro-environmental literatures, Hines et al. (1987) et al. proposed a model of responsible environmental behavior and concluded that individuals' sense of environmental responsibility is an important psychological variable of pro-environmental behavior. Consumers with high environmental responsibility perceive that protecting the environment is their responsibility and are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior than those with low environmental responsibility.

Intention is the tendency of an individual to adopt a particular behavior and is a psychological expression of that behavior before it has occurred (Ajzen, Fishbein, 1975). In the theory of rational behavior, Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) defined behavioral intention as the subjective probability that an individual will engage in a particular behavior in the future, extending this concept to consumer behavior as the subjective tendency of consumers to plan to purchase a product. Dodds et al. (1991) suggested through empirical studies that consumer behavior intention is very much influenced by consumers' subjective attitudes that Blackwell and RogerD (2001) proposed that intention is a subjective judgment of consumers' decision to purchase a product in the future. shen et al. (2012) suggested that green consumption intention refers to consumers' willingness to purchase green products, which is mainly reflected by thinking about reducing pollution. Green consumption intention can be measured in three ways, i.e., purchase of less polluting products, willingness to switch product brands for ecological reasons, and consideration of products based on a green perspective. Based on literature combing, this paper argues that green consumption intention refers to the possibility of consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products.

2. Research Model

2.1. Environmental responsibility and green consumption intention

Environmental responsibility refers to the sense of responsibility and obligation that individuals have when they are willing to make efforts to solve ecological and environmental problems or to make efforts to solve ecological and environmental problems, and it is expressed as the positive attitude orientation of individuals toward pro-environmental behaviors. According to the previous section, an individual's sense of environmental responsibility can have an impact on pro-environmental behavior. The theory of planned behavior suggests that behavior arises depending on the effort one is willing to put into performing the behavior, i.e., behavioral intentions, and that all factors that may influence behavior do so indirectly through behavioral intentions. Consumers with a high sense of environmental responsibility will correctly understand their relationship with the environment, consider it their obligation to solve environmental problems, and are more likely to adopt environmentally responsible behavior and more likely to intend to choose more environmentally friendly consumption than consumers with a low sense of environmental responsibility. According to previous studies, it is known that a strong sense of environmental responsibility drives individuals to engage in

more green consumption behaviors (Stern et al., 1999). Meanwhile, Nyborg et al. (2006) found that consumers with a stronger sense of environmental responsibility are more willing to purchase green products. Since a sense of environmental responsibility can drive individual pro-environmental behavior, it may also drive consumers' green purchasing behavior, which in turn affects their green consumption intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study.

H1: Consumers' environmental responsibility positively influences green consumption intention.

2.2. Environmental responsibility and environmental attitudes

Environmental attitudes refer to a relatively persistent tendency of people to protect the environment and to act in a way that takes environmental protection as a starting point. (Corraliza, Berenguer, 2000). Since the first Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, people have become increasingly concerned about environmental problems, and the study of environmental attitudes and behaviors has become a hot topic of research in academia. A sense of environmental responsibility is not the same as an attitude, but a sense of responsibility acts on individual cognition and consciousness, influencing the formation of specific attitudes and specific behaviors. Modern consumption emphasizes human-centeredness, which is conducive to the overall development of people themselves and does not pose any harm to others or society, nor does it pose any harm to the natural environment. In other words, in the field of consumption, the sense of environmental responsibility guides consumers in the process of consumption to achieve people-oriented, moderate consumption and seek harmony between people and nature, people and society. The sense of environmental responsibility can inspire individuals to have pro-environmental attitudes and thus implement more low-carbon emission reduction behaviors. This paper argues that environmental responsibility is an intrinsic driver of environmental attitudes, and that consumers with a higher sense of environmental responsibility have more positive environmental attitudes. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H2: Consumers' environmental responsibility positively influences their environmental attitudes.

2.3. Environmental attitudes and green consumption intentions

Attitudes reflect the individual's cognitive and affective tendencies toward a particular thing, reflecting the individual's overall evaluation of that thing (Ajzen, 2001), and are an important factor influencing intentions. According to the theory of planned behavior, the best way to predict whether people will behave in a certain way is to understand their behavioral intentions, which are influenced by three factors: behavioral attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, Fishbein, 1975). Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior, this study concluded that environmental attitudes have significant predictive power for green consumption intentions; green consumption beliefs have strong explanatory power both for green purchases in general and for green consumption intentions. Therefore, environmental attitudes, as the antecedents of environmental behavior, are the necessary mental and psychological conditions for implementing green purchasing behavior. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Consumers' environmental attitudes positively influence their green consumption intentions.

2.4. The mediating role of environmental attitudes

Environmental issues are directly related to consumption. A sense of environmental responsibility is a sense of responsibility that individuals have when looking at environmental issues. This sense of responsibility can drive individuals to be more concerned about

environmental issues, to have a more positive attitude toward environmental issues, and to be more ecologically conscious when shopping. In the area of consumer behavior, it can influence individual consumer behavior, attitudes, and their decisions. For example, Kahle (1980) showed that variables such as attitudes have a mediating or moderating role between individuals and behavior. Miniero et al. (2014) argued that consumers are intrinsically driven by a sense of environmental responsibility when evaluating green products, which in turn influences the willingness to purchase green products. Positive environmental attitudes and green purchase attitudes are important prerequisites for green purchase intentions and consumption compared to consumers with negative attitudes, and consumers with positive attitudes toward the environment value environmental quality more and are more concerned about the benefits that green consumption can bring to the environment. Consumers with positive attitudes toward the environment believe that green consumption can improve the natural environment in which they live, and this belief not only brings them spiritual satisfaction but also motivates them to increase their green purchasing intentions (Hartmann, Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012). Meanwhile, White and Simpson (2013) found that when consumers are aware of their responsibility for the fragile ecological environment, they become more environmentally conscious and choose greener lifestyles, consumption patterns and solve environmental problems. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H4: Environmental attitudes play a mediating role in environmental responsibility and green consumption intentions.

2.5. Moderating role of product knowledge

Product knowledge summarizes consumers' feelings about a product, including all their direct or indirect experiences with the product, and refers to consumers' overall perception of a product. Consumers' product knowledge directly affects their perception of product attributes and evaluation criteria, which in turn affects consumers' ability to collect and process information (Barrutia, Gilsanz, 2013). Product knowledge is a prerequisite for consumers to purchase green products, and knowledge leads to a certain level of understanding of the product they are buying, which influences attitudes and thus purchase intentions. Consumers with high product knowledge have better memory, identification and analysis of products than those with low product knowledge (Sanggor et al., 2018). If consumers know more about a product, then they are more likely to purchase that product (Le et al., 2017). Synodinos (1990) has suggested that increased product knowledge promotes consumers' willingness to purchase green products (Synodinos, 1990). For individuals with high environmental attitudes, when they recognize their low product knowledge, they will actively search for information and continuously improve their cognitive level to facilitate the purchase of green products, and thus their environmental willingness is not much different from when they have high product knowledge; unlike individuals with low environmental attitudes, who are less concerned about the environment and have no preference for the purchase of green products, such consumers may show less consumption intentions and have greater differences from those with high product knowledge. Based on this, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H5: Product knowledge plays a positive moderating role between environmental responsibility, environmental attitude and green consumption intention.

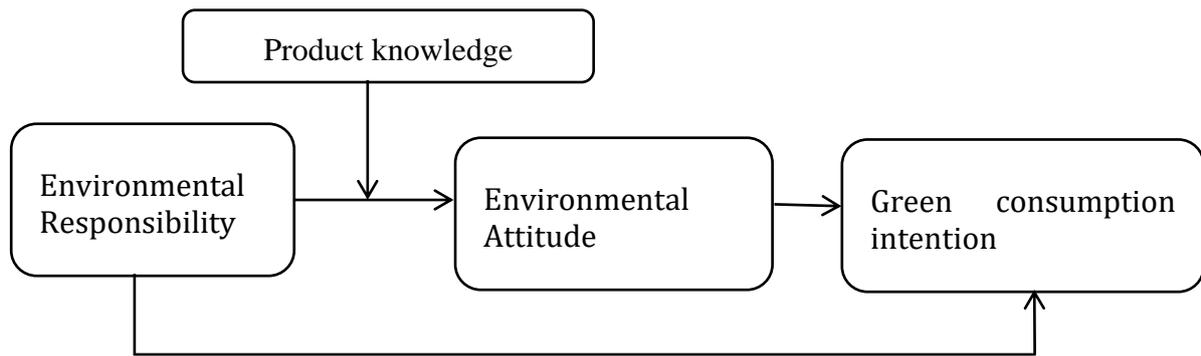


Figure 1 Study model

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