

Predicting Consumers' Intentions to Engage in Sustainable Clothing Practices: Moderating Role of Schwartz's Personal Values

Sonali Diddi, Brittany Bloodhart, Ruoh-Nan Yan, Vickie Bajtelsmit, Katie McShane
Colorado State University, USA

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Background and Purpose: Rising concerns with environmental degradation and societal inequality have resulted in a considerable shift in young consumers' personal values away from the self-centered to the more societal-centered (Zhou, Thøgersen, Ruan, & Huang 2013). Increasingly, young consumers are willing to adopt sustainable lifestyles (Cone, 2013), however, adopting sustainable consumption practices related to clothing is complex and difficult. Deciding to engage in SCC often results in trade-offs between conflicting issues based on one's personality traits and personal values, causing a "motivational and practical complexity of green consumption" (Moisander, 2007 p. 404). This complexity can be attributed to the unique nature of clothing as it extends beyond the utilitarian role to satisfy individual's need for identity formation, social acceptance and distinction (Niinimäki, 2010). Young consumers (aged 18 -24) are fashion conscious and often engage in impulse fashion buying to be trendy and fit in their peer group (Park, 2014). Previous research has shown that individuals engage in impulse buying behavior of clothing due to various reasons - mood states (e.g. excitement, power); wanting to reward; relieve a depressed mood. Impulse buying has also been associated with one's personality and may be a stable individual difference variable (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001) in the SCC context that express symbols of self-identity. Furthermore, consumers' personal value orientations are also known to influence their behavioral intentions as they are an inherent part of individuals' self-identity that help guide their decisions (Schwartz, 1992). Specifically, Schwartz self-enhancement values (achievement, power), promote dominance over people and resources, whereas self-transcendence values (universalism and benevolence), encourage beyond personal interest and consider the welfare of others. The interaction of these contrasting values in the SCC context along with personality traits, consumption value and self-identity is not well understood. Thus the purpose of the study was to 1) examine the influence of antecedents (shopping utilitarian values [SUV], impulsive buying tendency [IBT] and consumer self-identity [CSI]) on young consumers' intentions to engage in SCC practices 2) explore whether the consumers' value orientations (self-transcendence [ST] and self-enhancement [SE]) moderate the effect between antecedents and SCC behavioral intentions [BI].

Method: An online survey was used to collect data from college-aged students (n=160) at a large U.S. Western university ($M_{age} = 21.06$; 75% female). University students were chosen as the sample as previous research has shown that this cohort engage in overconsumption of clothing for increased social acceptance and elevated self-esteem which maybe conflicted with their own personal values (Niinimäki, 2010). The survey consisted of 24 items measuring SUV, IBT, CSI and personal values from previously tested scales adapted for this study. Seven items were developed based on literature to measure behavioral intentions to engage in SCC practices (e.g. buying clothes produced using ethical business practices; buying higher quality clothes).

Results: Regression analysis was conducted to test the influence of SUV, IBT and CSI on intentions to engage in SCC practices (see Table 1), and also to examine the moderating effect of ST and SE values between antecedents and intentions to engage in SCC practices. Cronbach's alpha for all constructs was above 0.70. Results of interactions that were significant are discussed. *Interaction term* between SUV and ST values was added to model 1, which accounted for a significant proportion of variance in BI ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1, 156) = 4.51$ $\beta = .18$ (2.122)*). Examination of scatterplot revealed that SUV lead to BI when ST was average (M) or high (+1), but there was no relationship when ST was low (-1). *Interaction term* between IBT and SE values was added to model 2, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in BI ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(1, 156) = 9.23$ $\beta = .22$ (3.038)*). Scatterplot revealed that IBT lead to decreased BI when SE is low (-1) and average (M) but did not predict BI when SE is high (+1). Lastly, *interaction* between CSI and ST was added in model 3, which also accounted for significant proportion of variance in BI ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(1, 156) = 12.33$ $\beta = .29$ (3.511)**). The stronger the ST values, the stronger positive relationship between CSI and BI.

Table 1: Regression Analysis Results (N=160)

Model	Paths	β	t-value
1	SUV \rightarrow SCC	0.17	2.824*
2	IBT \rightarrow SCC	-0.26	-3.157*
3	CSI \rightarrow SCC	0.45	6.368**

* $p \leq .005$; ** $p \leq .0001$

Conclusion and Implications: An important theoretical contribution of this study is that it extends the understanding of the moderating role of Schwartz's values in the context of SCC practices. Findings revealed that consumers' personal values influence their intentions to engage in SCC practices which may also be relevant to companies who want to promote SCC practices through their products. In an emerging young consumers market, who are increasingly pro-environmental and socially conscious, companies should direct their marketing strategies to consumers' whose value priorities fit the product. This study also showed that consumers' SCC decision-making strategy depends on their value priorities in conjunction to their consumption values, impulse buying behavior and self-identity. Limitations of the study include the student sampling strategy. Future studies can use a larger pool of young consumers to investigate the moderating role of personal values along with other consumption values (e.g. social, epistemic) and personality traits (e.g. extrovert, conscientious) in predicting intentions to engage in SCC practices.

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