

Literature review on influencing factors of green consumption behavior

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Abstract

Green consumption behavior is one of the key means to achieve sustainable development, and its influencing factors are complex and diverse. Through literature review, this paper summarizes the existing research on the influencing factors of green consumption behavior, and focuses on the analysis of the impact of individual factors and social factors on green consumption behavior. Although some achievements have been made in the existing research, there are still some shortcomings, such as the lack of cross-cultural comparison, the unclear interaction mechanism between individual and social factors, etc. Future research should deepen the discussion of these aspects in order to understand green consumption behavior more comprehensively and provide strong support for policy formulation and market strategy.

Keywords

Green consumption behavior ; individual factors ; social factors.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, resources are facing serious overdraft, environmental pollution is becoming more and more serious, and global warming is becoming more and more serious. The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China formally incorporated the concept of " ecological civilization " into the overall layout of the " five in one " of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, making its strategic position reach an unprecedented height. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China once again emphasized that the construction of ecological civilization is a new direction and new act for the Communist Party of China to seek happiness for the people, to seek rejuvenation for the nation, and to seek harmony for the world. Respecting nature, conforming to nature and protecting nature are the inherent requirements of building a modern socialist country in an all-round way^[1]. In order to realize the vision of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and unswervingly move towards the road of sustainable development, in addition to the " green " development strategy advocated at the national level as a macro guide, in micro practice, enterprises must deeply embed the green concept in their business philosophy and production methods, and consumers also need to accelerate the transformation to green consumption patterns. Green consumption, a new consumption concept born in response to the challenges of the ecological environment, is gradually becoming a new consumption paradigm leading the trend.

Therefore, this paper mainly systematically reviews and analyzes the influencing factors of green consumption behavior. At the theoretical level, we can clearly see the historical context, main viewpoints, research methods and theoretical models of green consumption behavior research, so as to build a complete theoretical system and provide a solid foundation for subsequent theoretical research. At the practical level, we can better understand the needs and

preferences of consumers, so as to formulate green products and services more in line with the market demand, so as to guide consumers to carry out green consumption, promote the popularization and deepening of green consumption behavior, and promote the sustainable development of society.

2. Definition of the concept of green consumption behavior

The concept of 'green consumption' can be traced back to the 1970s. At that time, people gradually realized that although industrial civilization greatly improved the standard of living, it also caused serious environmental problems caused by high pollution and high energy consumption. Therefore, the concept of green consumption began to be widely recognized and respected. From a narrow perspective, green consumption is usually regarded as an integral part of sustainable consumption; in a broad sense, green consumerism covers sustainable consumption, green consumption, mindful consumption, moral consumption, government green procurement and all consumption behaviors related to environmental friendliness.

In recent years, the concept of green consumption behavior has been widely discussed by many scholars at home and abroad. They have given a variety of definitions of this behavior from different angles. Carlson et al. (1993) defined green consumption behavior as the potential impact of consumers' consumption behavior on the environment during the whole process of purchasing, using or eventually processing products, and based on this, making decisions aimed at maximizing social and long-term interests^[2]. Peattie (1992) regards it as a sustainable consumption pattern, emphasizing that consumers, aware of environmental issues, strive to achieve purchase goals while minimizing negative impacts on the environment^[3]. J. Connolly et al. (2008) further proposed that green consumption behavior not only reflects consumers' awareness of environmental protection in choice, but also clearly assigns responsibility for solving environmental problems to consumers, thus driving them to take environmentally friendly actions.^[4] L. Steg (2009) described green consumption as an environmental action aimed at minimizing the negative impact of consumption on the natural environment and even seeking to bring positive ecological benefits.^[5] Ying et al. (2020) summarized green consumption behavior into a series of consumption behavior patterns aimed at maintaining consumer health, promoting efficient use of resources, and strictly following human health and environmental protection standards^[6].

In the domestic academic circles, some scholars have defined the concept of green consumption behavior in detail from the individual perspective. Ning Xueping and Wen Qixiang (2008) interpreted green consumption as a consumption pattern in which individuals not only take into account the protection of ecological environment in consumption activities, but also ensure the efficient and rational use of resources.^[7] Wang Jingjing (2015) focuses on the practical level of green consumption behavior, which is defined as the behavior of consumers to actively choose and purchase environmentally friendly and pollution-free products. This behavior occurs in the private sector and is a special form of pro-environmental behavior. It aims to promote environmental protection^[8]. Some scholars have defined the concept of green consumption behavior from the overall level of consumers. Chen et al. (2012) believed that green consumption is that consumers prefer green products that are beneficial to health in their purchase decisions, and actively practice garbage classification and environmental protection measures in daily life, so as to promote the realization of sustainable consumption goals^[9]. Wu Bo (2014) emphasized that green consumption is a practical activity in which consumers pursue personal interests while not forgetting to consider social interests and achieve environmental protection through purchasing behavior^[10]. Laukov (2013) further elaborated that green consumption behavior is a consumption pattern in which consumers actively take measures to protect the environment and strive to minimize environmental damage when

purchasing, using and disposing of waste products. [11]. Sheng Guanghua et al. (2019) defined green consumption behavior as consumers pay attention to environmental protection in the process of product consumption, use and subsequent processing, and minimize the adverse effects of individual consumption behavior on the environment. [12]. Luo Shanshan (2020) defines green consumption behavior as a new consumption mode that not only meets people 's growing demand for a better life, but also minimizes the loss to the environment. It adapts to the current level of economic and social development and the carrying capacity of the ecological environment. [13]. The above scholars ' research generally defines green consumption behavior from a broad perspective. They agree that green consumption behavior is not only limited to the purchase of green products, but also covers the environmental protection behavior reflected in the process of product use and waste disposal.

3. Influencing factors of green consumption behavior

3.1. Individual factors

In the study of the relationship between green consumption behavior and demographic factors, the study reveals that multiple factors such as gender, age, income level and education level can have a significant impact on green consumption behavior to varying degrees. In particular, the study reveals that the higher the level of education of consumers, the higher the socio-economic status, they will pay more attention to environmental issues, and thus more likely to carry out green consumption. Granzin & Olsen 's (1991) research reveals that women show a higher tendency than men in green consumption. At the same time, married individuals are more willing to save energy, and there is a positive correlation between the number of children in the family and the number of green products purchased. [14]. Balderjahn (1988) [15] and Lee (2008) [16] hold a similar view that consumers ' positive attitude towards environmental protection and positive views on green products can significantly promote green consumption behavior. He Zhiyi et al. (2004) showed that the green consumption behavior tendency was more obvious in the younger, higher income, higher education level of married women [17]. Wang Guomeng et al. (2010) explored how personal environmental values shape consumers ' green purchase behavior in the context of China, and verified the moderating effect of environmental attitudes in this process [18]. Zhang (2010) also pointed out that consumers ' perception of the environment and their understanding of green products are important driving forces for their green consumption behavior [19]. Based on the value-belief-norm theoretical framework, Wang Jingjing (2015) constructed an analytical model to explain the internal relationship between environmental values and green consumption behavior [8]. Qu Jitong (2016) turned his perspective to Chinese traditional Confucian culture, studied how Zhongyong values affect consumers ' green consumption intention by influencing lifestyle, and constructed a model including Zhongyong values, lifestyle and green consumption intention [20]. Zhang Tianshu (2017) empirically investigated how consumer values, environmental awareness and green consumption psychology work together on their green consumption willingness in the context of Chinese culture. In international studies. [21]. Bamberg (2003) revealed that positive environmental attitudes can significantly enhance individual environmental behavior intentions, and consumers with strong environmental attitudes are willing to pay a higher environmental premium for green products [22]. Verplanken & Holland (2002) also showed that when consumers ' environmental values are activated, they are more inclined to choose green products. [23]. Zhang et al. (2011) believed that increasing consumers ' environmental self-perception can make consumers more aware of the value and importance of environmental protection, so as to spontaneously make more efforts to enhance their environmental protection motivation [24].

3.2. Social factors

Social factors pay more attention to the influence of others on individuals' green consumption. Social factors mainly involve impression management motivation and social norms. When individuals engage in prosocial behaviors such as green consumption, they often think that they can leave a good impression on others. Therefore, consumers will naturally engage in such behaviors more for impression management motivation.

The study found that when consumers are in the absence of others, they are more inclined to choose ordinary products, and once there is someone around them, they are more inclined to choose green products [25] [26]. (Luchs, Naylor, Irwin, & Raghunathan, 2010; Peloza & Shang, 2013). In addition, consumers' beliefs in social norms are also an important social driving force that cannot be ignored in promoting green consumption [27] (Nolan, P Wesley, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Vlasas, 2008). In order to comply with social norms, consumers will carry out impression management to show positive recognition and preference for green products [28] (Auger, 2007). Griskevicius et al. (2010) pointed out that in public, consumers may be inclined to buy green products, even if the prices of these products are usually higher. The driving force behind this is consumers' motivation to satisfy their social status and enhance their personal image, prompting them to choose more expensive green products [29]. Yan Jin and Lou Chunhua (2013) have shown that when consumers' self-regulation ability is enhanced, they are more likely to comply with ethical norms, improve self-control ability, and promote ethical consumption behavior [30]. In social activities, people leave a positive impression on others in certain ways [31] (Wan & Wyer, 2015). Zhang (2019) proposed a two-component model of impression management, that is, impression motivation and impression construction, which reflect consumers' psychological activities and real behaviors respectively [32]. Impression motivation refers to the individual's motivation to control his image in the hearts of others through specific behaviors; impression construction refers to the individual's determination of what impression he wants to leave in the hearts of others. Previous studies have confirmed that impression management motivation has an impact on individual green consumption behavior. Bai Yu (2021) explored the impact of impression management motivation on employees' green behavior. The empirical results show that impression management motivation has a positive impact on employees' green behavior, and self-efficacy can positively regulate the relationship between acquired impression management motivation and employees' voluntary green behavior [33]. Chen (2016) explored the influence of advertising appeal and impression management motivation on green purchase intention. The results showed that the intensity of impression management motivation could affect consumers' preference for green products [34]. Wu Bo (2014) explored the influencing factors of consumers' green product preference, and the results showed that consumers' green product preference was influenced by normative beliefs, self-efficacy and impression management motivation [35]. Harland et al (1999)'s research clearly pointed out the significant effect of subjective norms in promoting energy conservation and emission reduction behavior, which is manifested in reducing the frequency of use of private cars and increasing the penetration of energy-saving light bulbs [36]. In addition, other studies have confirmed that subjective norms can significantly affect individuals' behavioral attitudes, which can not only stimulate individuals to form positive behavioral attitudes, but also may promote individuals to produce negative attitude responses. Lee (2010) deeply analyzed the influencing factors of consumers' green consumption behavior from two dimensions of individual and situation, and pointed out that the influence of parents and friends has a significant impact on consumers' green consumption behavior. Based on the theory of planned behavior, [37]. Zhang et al. (2013) explored the psychological motivation of consumers' green consumption through empirical research. The results showed that the subjective norms perceived by consumers had a significant impact on the consumption intention of their green products [38].

3.3. Other factors

In addition to the individual factors and social factors mentioned above, some scholars have conducted in-depth analysis of the relationship between other factors and green consumption behavior. Variables such as price sensitivity, advertising appeal, lifestyle, involvement, consumer innovation, health awareness, and questioning of environmental issues. For example, Sun Jian et al. (2010) used green food as a case to explore how value attributes affect green consumption behavior, and subdivided these values into functional value, social value, novelty value, emotional value and conditional value ^[39]. Xue Jiayu et al. (2019) further explored the effect of regulatory focus in green advertising, and found that when products focus on the promotion of green features, consumers with prevention focus are more likely to be persuaded by advertising information than consumers with promotion focus. ^[40] Chen Kai et al. (2016) ' s research is further subdivided, pointing out that the cost-saving characteristics (reflecting personal interests) and environmental attributes (reflecting social welfare) emphasized by product advertising can have a differentiated impact on different types of consumers ^[34]. Sheng Guanghua et al. (2017) also found that consumer innovation, as a positive factor, can positively promote the practice of green consumption behavior in the field of green consumption behavior research ^[41].

4. Literature review

In recent years, with the increasingly serious global environmental problems, green consumption behavior has gradually become the focus of academic and practical circles. Through the combing of relevant literature, it can be seen that green consumption behavior is affected by many factors. From the individual level, consumers ' gender, age, marriage, education level, values and other factors will have an impact on green consumption behavior. From the social level, social culture, peer pressure, media publicity and so on will have an impact on green consumer behavior. Although the existing research has extensively discussed the influencing factors of green consumption behavior, there are still some shortcomings.

The existing research is more about the pre-influencing factors of green consumption behavior, and there are few studies on it as an independent variable. Moreover, the current research mainly focuses on the influence of psychological variables on green consumption behavior, while the consideration of external factors is relatively less, which may make the research results seem not comprehensive enough. In addition, although existing studies have explored the impact of situational factors on the transformation of green consumption attitudes into behaviors, few studies have deeply analyzed the key factors of individual attitudes into actual behaviors under specific green consumption behaviors based on the actual situation of domestic consumers, and constructed a complete research framework. As well as the current research, when discussing the influencing factors, it often focuses on a single dimension, such as individual psychology, socio-economic status or policy environment, and less considers the interaction and cross-impact between these factors. Green consumption behavior is a complex social phenomenon, and its formation and change are influenced by many factors. In addition, there may be differences in green consumption behavior in different cultural and social backgrounds, but the existing research is relatively few in cross-cultural comparison. Therefore, future research needs to pay more attention to green consumption behavior in different cultural and social backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding. Finally, the existing research mostly adopts questionnaire survey and data analysis. Although these methods can provide a lot of data support, it is often difficult to reveal the internal mechanism and dynamic changes of green consumption behavior. Therefore, future research needs to introduce more research methods.

5. Future outlook

In the research field of green consumption behavior, the future development direction will focus on deepening the understanding of influencing factors and the application of innovative research methods.

The future research on the influencing factors of green consumption behavior will pay more attention to multi-dimensional, interactive and dynamic analysis. It not only focuses on the impact of single factors such as economic costs, environmental awareness or policy incentives on green consumption behavior, but also aims to reveal the interaction and common effects between these factors. In addition, the formation and change of green consumption behavior is a dynamic process. Therefore, future research will use more time series analysis and dynamic models to capture this change process.

In terms of research methods, future research will pay more attention to the application of hybrid methods. In addition to the traditional questionnaire survey and data analysis, the research can use more experimental methods, case studies, in-depth interviews and other qualitative research methods to better understand the internal mechanism and influencing factors of green consumption behavior. The application of this hybrid method will make the research results more comprehensive, accurate and in-depth.

In addition, with the rapid development of big data and artificial intelligence technology, future research on green consumption behavior will use these advanced technologies for data collection and analysis. Researchers can more accurately understand consumers' green consumption behavior and preferences, so as to provide more powerful support for policy formulation and enterprise marketing.

The research on green consumption behavior will continue to deepen and expand. With the increasingly serious global environmental problems, green consumption will become the choice of more and more people. Therefore, we expect that future research can further explore the formation mechanism, influencing factors and intervention strategies of green consumption behavior, and provide more powerful support for promoting the popularization and deepening of green consumption behavior.

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