



The Role of Values in the Theory of Planned Behavior: An Organic Apparel Context

Sheng-Chen Lin and Joan Ellis, Washington State University, USA

Keywords: values, organic, behavior

Consumers are growing increasingly more concerned about ethical consumption and the impact individuals can have on the environment (Bray, 2009). This growing concern leads to consumers taking ethical issues into consideration when making purchase decisions. Purchasing apparel made from organically grown fiber is one way consumers can act in an environmentally conscious manner (Hustvedt, 2006). Having a better understanding of organic apparel consumers and their intent to purchase organic apparel is important for a number of reasons. Exploring consumers' intent to purchase organic apparel and antecedents to this behavior can help companies gain a competitive advantage when selling organic apparel products, better meet their target market needs, improve inventory control and ultimately increase profits.

Conceptual Framework and Relevant Literature

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) includes attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. The model has been utilized in various areas of research to predict consumers' purchase intention and ultimate behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Sparks & Shepherd (1992) and Fielding, McDonald & Louis (2008) found that the TPB significantly predicted the intention toward green consumerism. De Canniere, De Pelsmacker, and Geuens (2008) determined that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavior control were predictors of purchase intention for apparel consumption. Limited research has been conducted applying the TPB to predicting consumers' behavior towards organic apparel products. Therefore, this study adopted the TPB to predict consumers' purchase intentions for organic apparel. Better understanding consumers' personal values may also help to predict their purchase intention of organic apparel products. Research suggests that personal values can be important elements that influence consumers' motivations for environmentally conscious consumption (Ha-Brookshire & Norum, 2011, Homer & Kahle, 1988). Several studies however, did not find values to have a direct effect on consumer purchase intention, rather an indirect effect through attitudes (Dickson, 2000; Maio & Olson, 1995). No study has been found that has identified values as an added variable to the TPB for organic apparel purchase behavior. Accordingly, this study aimed to examine the role of values in the purchase intention of organic apparel. The hypothesized relationships in this study were:

H1-H2: Consumers' values will positively influence their attitudes toward organic apparel consumption and their attitudes toward the environment.

H3-H6: Consumer's positive attitudes about organic apparel, positive attitudes about the environment, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control will have positive influences on their purchase intention for organic apparel.

Method

A survey was administered through Amazon Mechanical Turk and a national sample was resulting in 319 participants was collected to measure the relationships among the six variables in this study.

Results and Conclusions

The resulting sample was predominantly white (80%), 40 years of age or younger (75%) with a balanced gender (48% male). The sample was educated with 60% having graduated college with at least a bachelor's degree and just over 60% had an annual income of less than \$60,000. Factor analysis using varimax rotation on the nine question value measure yielded three factors; "belonging" which focused on external values such as relationships with others and a sense of belonging; "self-respect", which focused on internal values such as accomplishments and a sense of fulfillment; and "fun" which focused on values of fun and excitement. Multiple regression results indicated a significant relationship between the self-respect value factor and attitudes toward organic apparel ($\beta=.137, p<.05$) partially supporting hypothesis one. Additionally, the self-respect ($\beta=.211, p<.001$) and the belonging ($\beta=.179, p<.01$) value factors significantly predicted attitudes toward the environment partially supporting hypothesis two. The value factor of fun was not a significant predictor of either attitude toward organic apparel or attitude toward the environment. Variables in the TPB were found to be significant predictors of the purchase intention of organic apparel ($R^2=.66, F(11,304)=54.141, p<.000$) supporting hypothesis 3-6. Attitudes toward organic apparel, attitudes toward the environment, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control significantly predicted 66% of the variability in purchase intention of organic apparel.

- Bray, J. (2009). Ethical dimension in clothing purchase. *First Annual Ethics in Everyday Life Conference*. Salzburg: Bournemouth University.
- De Canniere, M. H., De Pelsmacker, P., & Geuens, M. (2008). Relationship quality and the theory of planned behavior models of behavioral intentions and purchase behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 62*(1), 82-92.
- Dickson, M. A. (2000). Personal values, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes relating to intentions to purchase apparel from socially responsible businesses. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 18*(1), 19-30.
- Fielding, K. S., McDonald, R., & Louis, R. W. (2008). Theory of planned behaviour, identity and intentions to engage in environmental activism. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 28*, 318-326.
- Ha-Brookshire, F. E., & Norum, P. S. (2011). Willingness to pay for socially responsible products: Case of cotton apparel. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 28*(5), 344-353
- Homer, P., & Kahle, L. R. (1988). A structural equation test of the value-attitude-behavior hierarchy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 638-46.
- Hustvedt, G. (2006). Consumer preferences for blended organic cotton apparel. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal 32*(5), 1-187.
- Maio, G. R., & Olson, J. M. (1995). Relations between values, attitudes, and behavioral intentions: The moderating role of the attitude function. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 31*, 266-285.
- Sparks, P., & Shepherd, R. (1992). Self-Identity and the theory of planned behavior: Assessing the role of identification with "green consumerism". *Social Psychology Quarterly, 55*(4), 388-399.