Predicting Behavioral Intentions toward Sustainable Fashion Consumption: A Comparison of Attitude-Behavior and Value-Behavior Consistency Models

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Keywords: Sustainable, fashion, attitude, value

Introduction

Sustainable consumption is defined as use of goods and services that caters to one's basic needs and to enhance quality of life while minimizing resources used, such that future generations' needs are not jeopardized (Dolan, 2002). Sustainable consumption has received great attentions in the fashion industry; given the substantial impact apparel production has on environmental pollution (Claudio, 2007). For example, Claudio (2007) cited the *Environmental Protection Agency Office of Solid Waste* report, which suggested that on average an American discards 68 pounds of textile and clothing every year. The present study is an effort to understand consumers' behavioral intention toward sustainable fashion consumption utilizing attitude-behavior and value-behavior consistency models. In particular, the predictive power of these models in the context of sustainable fashion consumption is analyzed, individually as well as in combination.

Conceptual background & hypotheses

Attitude-behavior consistency models. The assumption of these types of models is that attitudes predict behavior strongly (Maio, Olson, Bernard, & Luke, 2003). Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985) is one such example. According Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model—attitude (i.e., evaluation of the behavior in question), subjective norm (SN; i.e., perceived social pressure to perform the behavior in question), and perceived behavioral control (PBC; i.e., perceived control over the behavior in question) affect an individual's behavioral intention, which in turn guides an individual's behavior. Consistent with the TPB in a sustainable fashion products context, it is proposed that attitudes (*H1*), subjective norm (*H2*), and perceived behavioral control (*H3*) positively affect behavioral intention (BI) to purchase sustainable fashion product.

Value-behavior consistency models. The assumption of these models is that values (i.e., concepts or beliefs, pertaining to desirable end states [Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, p. 551]) influence behavior (Maio et al., 2003). The Fritzsche Model proposed by Fritzsche and Oz (2007) is one such example. According to the Fritzsche model, an individual's values are predictors of one's intention to engage in a particular behavior. Consistent with Fritzsche model, the present study employed Schwartz values (i.e., Biospheric, Egoistic, Traditional, and Openness to Change) to predict behavioral intention to purchase sustainable fashion product. Based on extensive literature review, it is proposed that biospheric (*H4*) and traditional values (*H5*) are positively related to behavioral intentions toward sustainable fashion product. Conversely, egoistic (*H6*) and openness to change values (*H7*) are negatively related to behavioral intention to purchase sustainable fashion product.

Method

An online survey was used to collect data. Respondents were college students (ages 18-25; mean = 22) enrolled at a major university. The total number of respondents were 684 (Males = 251). The survey consisted of standard scales related to attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, which were adapted for sustainable fashion context. Additionally, for values, shortened Schwartz value scale (Stern, Dietz, & Guagnano, 1998) was used. Demographic items were also included in the survey.

Results

Cronbach's *alpha* coefficients ranged from .68 to .93, supporting factor reliability. Furthermore, the average variance extracted for the factors ranged from 64% to 83%. For testing the proposed hypotheses, regression analyses was employed. For attitude-behavior consistency model (i.e., TPB), *H1*, *H2*, and *H3* were

supported. Behavioral intention to purchase sustainable fashion product was significantly positively related to attitude toward sustainable fashion product (β = 0.345, *p*=0.000), perceived behavioral control (β = 0.268, *p*=0.000), and social norms (β = 0.285, *p*=0.000). The R^2 for the behavioral intention in the present context for the attitude-behavior consistency model was 0.565 (*p*=0.000). The results are consistent with the previous findings (e.g., Bissonnette & Contento, 2001). For value-behavior consistency model (i.e., Fritzche model), only *H4* was supported, whereas, the relationship between openness to change value (*H7*) was statistically significant in the opposite direction. Behavioral intention to purchase sustainable fashion products was positively related to biospheric values (β = 0.593, *p*=0.000) and negatively related to openness to change values (β = -0.066, *p*=0.05). The R^2 for the behavioral intention in the present context for the value-behavior consistency model was 0.376 (*p*=0.000).

In the present study, attitude-behavior consistency model (i.e., TPB) had superior predictive power than value-behavior consistency model (i.e., Fritzche model). To test the combined predictive power, a hierarchical regression strategy was adopted. For the first step, behavioral intentions to purchase sustainable fashion products were regressed on TPB variables. After which four value constructs related to Fritzche model were entered in the second step. In the third step, an interaction term was included, which was the product of the attitude and personal values composite scores. The TPB constructs revealed significant main effect on behavioral intentions to purchase sustainable fashion products (R^2 = 0.565, *p*=0.000). Moreover, there was significant effect of values on behavioral intentions in step 2 (ΔR^2 = 0.057, *p*=0.000). Also, the interaction term was significant in step 3 (ΔR^2 = 0.004, *p*=0.008).

Conclusion

The present study suggests that attitude-behavior as well as value-behavior consistency models are successful in predicting behavioral intentions toward sustainable fashion consumption. Furthermore, the predictive power of these models increases significantly when the two models were used in conjunction. The finding of the present study has both academic and practical implications.

For example, Prakash (1986) suggested that personal values can be helpful in market segmentation and advertising campaigns. Therefore, from our study, we propose that, to promote sustainable fashion consumption among fashion consumers, firms should deliver messages that underscore biospheric values.

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