

Journal of Consumer Behaviour Special Issue

Environmental Values and Sustainable Consumption

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Summary

When engaging in sustainable consumption practices (SCP) consumers usually exert an effort to minimise or avoid the adverse effects of consumption on environmental wellbeing. It requires consumers to prioritise environmental wellbeing over personal comfort and voluntarily engage in environmentally friendly consumer practices (Connolly & Prothero, 2008). Environmentally conscious consumers usually buy products with favourable environmental effects (e.g., products that claim zero CO2 emissions, ethically and sustainably sourced or higher level of biodegradability) (Nguyen & Johnson, 2020). Among other factors such as health concerns, environmental values are also found to be positively related with consumers' willingness to purchase these products (Liu, Yan, & Zhou, 2017; Thøgersen, Haugaard, & Olesen, 2010; Van der Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2014). In contrast, some research finds no direct association between environmental values and SCPs (Röös & Tjärnemo, 2011; Shao, Taisch, & Ortega-Mier, 2016) and perceptual differences in how individuals relate to nature cannot also be ignored (Kunchambo, Lee, & Brace-Govan, 2017; Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009)

Classified into three distinctive elements (egoistic-self concerned, altruistic-others concerned, and biospheric-nature concerned) (Schultz, 2001), environmental values are defined as affective environmental concerns (Schultz et al., 2005). They are beliefs about the significance of wellbeing of the natural environment and how the natural environment is regarded by humans (Reser & Bentrupperbäumer, 2005). Drawing from Schwartz's norm-activation model of altruism (1981), Stern, Dietz and Kalof (1993) also propose three types of environmental values. They are altruistic, egoistic, and biospheric values that are correlated and influence SCP (González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández, & Font, 2020). It is, however, found that positive effects of altruism on SCP (Tan, Abd Aziz, & Ngah, 2020) are countered by negative effects of egoism (Sharma & Gupta, 2020; Tolppanen & Kang, 2020), which inhibits willingness to incur extra costs associated with SCP (Stern, 2000; Khachatryan et al., 2014) as consumers downplay egoism when they engage in SCP (Guagnano, 2001). On the contrary, some research finds that the altruistic values are not widely shared among sustainable consumers, egoism still plays a significant (Soper, 2004; Subiza-Pérez et al., 2020) or even a greater role in SCP

(Sarpong et al., 2021) and influence consumers to purchase environmentally sustainable products at premium prices (Binney & Hall, 2011).

With respect to SCP, believing that nature should be preserved and protected because of its utility value for humans is referred to as anthropocentric (Turner et al., 2003) or instrumental values (Dunlap, 2008) whereas believing that nature should be preserved and protected because of its inherent value regardless of its utility for humans is referred to as eco-centric (Bailey & Wilson, 2009) or intrinsic values (Justus, Colyvan, Regan, & Maguire, 2009).

According to systematic reviews of previous research, (e.g., De Groot & Steg, 2007; Dietz, Stern, & Guagnano, 1998; Hawcroft & Milfont, 2010), there is no universally agreed definition of environmental values that are multifaceted and terms such as environmental concerns, environmental ethics, environmental paradigms, environmental values, value orientations are used interchangeably in previous studies. The debate on the relationship between multifaceted environmental values and SCP therefore, still exists in the literature (Halkos & Matsiori, 2017; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2020). This could have led previous researchers to investigate environmental values from multiple perspectives (e.g., general concerns, environmental beliefs, environmental ethics, environmental knowledge or specific actions) and hence to report inconsistent findings. Extending the understanding of the multifaceted environmental values; two value constructs (eco-centric and anthropocentric values) proposed by Thompson and Barton (1994) and the three environmental values (egoistic, altruistic and biospheric) proposed by Schultz (2001), recent literature reaches some level of convergence by confirming the existence of the three distinguishing environmental values; anthropocentric dimension (instrumental value of environment), biospheric dimension (value environment for its own sake) and ecobiocentric dimension (value the human being within nature as a whole)(Navarro, Olivos, & Fleury-Bahi, 2017) . Further, given this background, it is reasonable to assume that the debate on the influence of environmental values on SCP has not yet been appropriately settled (Nisbet et al., 2009) and is worthy of a special scholarly conversation.

Keywords: Role of Environmental Values; Environmental Values from Theocratical Perspectives; Impact and Intent of Sustainable Consumption Practices; Willingness to Purchase Environmentally Sustainable Products.

Possible topics might cover:

- Sustainable Consumption Practices
- Environmental Concerns
- Environmental Ethics

- Environmental Values
- Environmental Attributes
- Environmental Beliefs
- Anti-consumption
- Minimalistic Life Styles
- Nature Perceptions
- Climate Change Related Behaviour
- Consumer Social Responsibility

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