

Theoretical Analysis of Consumers' Purchase Motivation in the Context of Environmental Protection

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Abstract: Through reviewing and summarizing the existing research on consumer motivation, and combining the characteristics of human behavior and the objective needs of environmental protection, this paper analyzes and defines consumers' purchase motivation. In the context of environmental protection, purchase motivation is divided into demand motivation, value recognition motivation, recognition motivation, and interest motivation. Their definitions are given in this paper, which provides a conceptual basis for further research on the influence of purchase motivation on consumer behavior in the context of environmental protection.

Keywords: Environmental protection; Purchase motivation; Demand motivation; Value recognition motivation; Recognition motivation; Interest motivation

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1. Introduction

As the problem of environmental pollution has worsened, a safe and sustainable living space has become a necessary commitment for human behavior^[1]. Consumer behavior affects the environment^[2]. Motivation is the driving force behind human behavior, so purchases are catalyzed by motivation. It is significant to analyze the essence of purchase motivation in the context of environmental protection to study the ecological impact of consumer purchase psychology and behavior.

2. Review of the concept of purchase motivation

2.1. Purchase motivation from the demand perspective

The hierarchy of needs theory divides human needs into five levels^[3]. The first level is physical needs, such as the desire for food and water. The second level is security needs, such as the pursuit of property and jobs. The third level is love and belonging, such as the need for relationships. The fourth level is the need for respect, that is, the

need for others to recognize their abilities. The fifth level is the meta-needs, embodied as the realization of self-value.

The achievement motivation theory further proposed by McClelland ^[4] classifies individual needs into three categories, namely, achievement needs, power needs, and affiliation needs. The achievement need is the inner driving force for individuals to pursue success and a sense of achievement. The power need is an individual's desire to control people and the surrounding environment. The affiliation need, also known as the need for intercourse, is to establish and maintain close relationships.

The hierarchy of needs theory and achievement motivation theory reveal the motivation behind individual behavior from different perspectives ^[5]. Demand stimulates individuals' behavioral motivation to a certain extent and has a profound impact on their choice of behavior ^[6]. Merchants formulate marketing strategies according to the characteristics of consumers' demand hierarchy to stimulate their purchase motivation ^[7].

2.2. Purchase motivation from the achievement goal perspective

The achievement goal theory was studied and proposed by Dweck *et al.* on the basis of the achievement motivation theory ^[8]. It is an individual's perception of the meaning of behavior, emphasizing the role of cognitive factors in stimulating behavior. This motivation especially motivates individual behavior in the field of education and work ^[9]. Dweck ^[10] believed that the growth mindset and the fixed mindset directly affect the setting of achievement goals and the execution of behaviors.

Achievement goals are divided into mastery goals and performance goals. Mastery goals focus on the process of self-growth and learning ^[11], prompting people to choose challenging tasks and self-evaluation. Performance goals focus on comparison and results ^[11] and encourage people to set goals that reflect their own abilities and hope to be recognized by others. Achievement goals are an individual's perception of what is known as motivational peaks ^[12] and serve as a motivational driver ^[13].

2.3. Purchase motivation from the self-determination perspective

Self-determination theory points out that people are born with the motivation to create self-happiness and growth, and different motivations are the basis of human behavior. The study of intrinsic motivation directly contributed to the formation of this theory ^[14], emphasizing people's intrinsic motivation rather than catering to external expectations. This theory emphasizes autonomy, the idea that an individual's psychological need for competence recognition is as important as an individual's need for survival. Self-determination theory proposes that individual behavior is driven by high-intensity internal motivation ^[15], meaning that individuals make free choices without being interfered with by external factors.

The freedom of behavior depends on people's inner self-satisfaction ^[16]. Fernandes and Matos ^[17] used self-determination theory to investigate the intrinsic motivation for volunteering. Rahi *et al.* ^[18] predicted the impact of users' subjective motivation on their intention to continuously use online banking. Satisfying people's need for autonomy and recognition is the motivation type studied by this theory ^[19], so it is well applied to the relevant research of consumers.

Appolloni *et al.* ^[20] applied this theory to study the motivation of online consumers' electronic shopping behavior. Other studies have investigated the intrinsic motivation of consumers to purchase food ^[21,22]. Gilal *et al.* ^[19] proposed that consumer behavior is influenced by extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

2.4. Purchase motivation from the consistency perspective

Consistency theory emphasizes the logical principle of keeping all components in sync and discusses the self-consistency and ideal consistency of individuals ^[4]. Self-consistency expresses the purpose of one's actions.

Individuals maintain consistency and stability of behavior in different times and situations, as well as consistency of behavior with internal cognition and emotion. Munson ^[23] argued that the relationship between product reputation and social class moderates the relationship between self-image consistency and product preference.

Ideal consistency emphasizes that human ideals are synchronized with behavior and social expectations. Belch ^[24] believed that consumers with high social needs are more affected by ideal consistency than by self-consistency. Munson ^[23] described self-consistency as having a greater impact on motivation than ideal consistency. Sirgy ^[25] emphasized that consumers distinguish the different relationship between self-consistency and ideal consistency and purchase motivation.

3. Summary of research review on purchase motivation from different perspectives

Other researchers also analyzed purchase motivation from the internal and external perspectives of consumers ^[26,27]. Both internal and external factors affect motivation ^[28]. Clear motives are easy to understand ^[29].

Firstly, purchase motivation from the demand perspective emphasizes consumers' needs for products. Purchase motivation caters to human survival and emotional needs ^[5]. Secondly, the achievement motivation theory emphasizes the spiritual satisfaction of individuals, in which the need for achievement indicates that the sense of achievement can stimulate strong motivation ^[8]. Education needs to evaluate effectiveness and establish clear goals, so this motivation is often applied in the field of education. Motivation from the above perspective emphasizes self-interest or value. In the first perspective, purchase motivation is driven by demand. Motivation under the second view is rarely used by scholars to analyze consumption behavior, because people do not pay attention to the sense of achievement brought by consumption behavior.

Moreover, motivation under self-determination emphasizes the autonomy of behavior. Some scholars insist that self-determination is free, while others are aware of external stimuli. Deci and Ryan believed that people's need for autonomy is the original desire for behavior, while ability requires people to interact with the environment. The need for relevance is how individuals feel about social relationships ^[30]. Scholars began to pay attention to the influence of both internal and external factors on motivation. Furthermore, self-consistency and ideal consistency fully consider the role of consumers, products, situations, and other factors in purchase motivation. Purchase motivations in different theoretical contexts are not necessarily chronological, but there is a crossover between them (**Figure 1**).

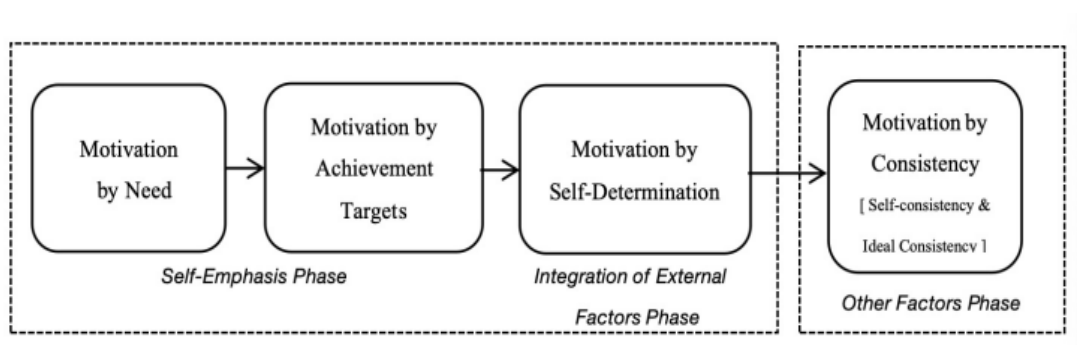


Figure 1. Motivational development from different perspectives

4. Purchase motivation model in the context of environmental protection

Many companies' excessive use of natural resources poses a threat to the living environment of human beings ^[31]. Leclercq-Machado *et al.* ^[32] studied the purchase motivation of Peruvian consumers to choose environmentally

friendly clothing due to their concern for environmental issues. Motivation is a psychological characteristic unique to humans and is related to the degree to which people keep their promises. According to the existing research results, this paper makes a new classification of consumers' purchase motivation under the background of environmental protection, namely, demand motivation, value recognition motivation, recognition motivation, and interest motivation (**Figure 2**).

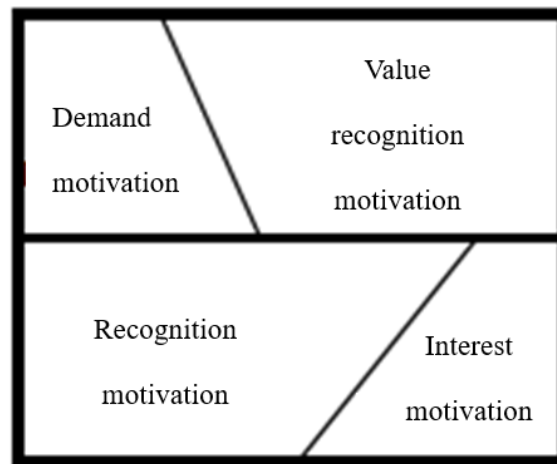


Figure 2. Model of purchase motivation in the context of environmental protection

To a certain extent, demand motivates individuals to purchase ^[6]. This paper defines demand motivation as consumers' demand for commodity value. People's desire for environmentally friendly products stems from their pursuit of healthy living. A study investigated whether consumers' purchase of green tourism services ^[33] or ride-sharing services after the epidemic was influenced by self-protection motivation.

The growing environmental awareness promotes people's perception of the green value of goods. This makes it necessary for people to consider whether the environmental value of goods is recognized when purchasing ^[5]. The value recognition motive is defined as the consumer's satisfaction that a commodity provides value in the cause of environmental protection. Satisfaction will affect whether consumers continue to purchase goods ^[34]. Consumers pay attention to the green value of goods, so the role of value motivation is gradually increasing ^[35]. Some literature sources supporting these motivations are presented in **Table 1**.

Generally, some external standards affirm the environmental protection achievements achieved by consumers to stimulate their recognition motivation. External motivations emphasize the situational factors of the consumer, such as the approval of those around them ^[19]. External incentives to promote individual purchase motivation need to be recognized in the context of environmental protection ^[36]. The need for belonging reflects an individual's feeling of receiving care and connection from people around them ^[37].

The interest motive is defined as the material or spiritual benefits that consumers perceive from goods. The purchase motivation of online consumers is influenced by utilitarianism and hedonism, while social factors are the stimulus factors of utilitarian shopping, and environmental factors are more important in hedonistic shopping ^[38]. Kumar and Pandey ^[39] studied altruistic and egoistic motives and argued that social media plays an important role. "Prosocial" is based on collectivist and altruistic motives ^[40], and it represents an individual's concern for the well-being of others when performing an act ^[41]. In the context of environmental protection, consumers' pursuit of commodity consideration still needs to be considered ^[42].

Table 1. Support from literature

Support for demand motivation		
1	To a certain extent, needs motivate individuals to act.	McLeod (2007)
2	The characteristics of demand motivate consumers to purchase.	Taormina & Gao (2013)
3	Purchase motivation satisfies all kinds of human needs.	Noltemeyer et al. (2012)
4	The motivation of consumers to purchase environmentally friendly goods comes from the need for health.	Leclercq-Machado et al. (2022)
5	Self-preservation motivation motivates purchase behavior.	Cheng et al. (2021); Maggiore et al. (2022)
Support for value recognition motivation		
1	Achievement goals are an individual's perception of motivational peaks.	Ames (1992); Dweck & Leggett (1988)
2	Motivation is related to the degree to which a person keeps a promise.	James & Stoner (2009)
3	The increasing environmental awareness has promoted the need to consider whether the environmental value of goods is recognized when purchasing.	Asioli et al. (2023); Chen et al. (2022)
4	Satisfaction affects whether consumers continue to purchase goods.	Ghani et al. (2017)
5	Consumers gradually recognize the green value of goods.	Ojiaku et al. (2018); Choi & Johnson (2019)
Support for recognition motivation		
1	Autonomy is a psychological need for people to be recognized.	Deci & Ryan (1985)
2	Satisfying people's autonomy needs and recognition needs are well applied to the relevant research of consumers.	Gilal et al. (2019)
3	Consumers with high social needs are more affected by ideal consistency.	Belch (1978)
4	The sense of accomplishment that comes from being recognized can inspire strong positive behavioral motivation.	Eubank & Gilbourne (2003); Georgiadis et al. (2001)
Support for interest motivation		
1	Utilitarianism, hedonism, egoism, and altruism stimulate the sense of personal benefit and promote the generation of behavioral motivation.	Kumar & Pandey (2023); Demoulin & Willems (2019)
2	Prosocial is based on collectivist and altruistic motives.	Batson (2022)
3	Prosocial represents a state of concern for the well-being of others in which individuals perform their actions.	Grant (2007)

5. Conclusion

Different motivations can coexist^[43]. This paper puts forward a four-point model of consumer purchase motivation under the background of environmental protection, which divides the purchase motivation into demand motivation, value recognition motivation, recognition motivation, and interest motivation. It should be emphasized that this study only discusses the formation of purchase motivation in the context of supporting environmental protection, and the limitation is that the negative side is not discussed^[27]. It is hoped that further study will be carried out to improve this limitation.

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