

The impact of ecological values on the consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers

VICTOR SOEJANTO

School of business management, Henan Polytechnic University, Jiao Zuo City, China

Email: ssonfire6270@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Soejanto, V. (2025). The impact of ecological values on the consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers[J]. *Economics & Business Management*, 1(2), 13–22. ISSN Print: 3079-5214; ISSN Online: 3079-5222.

<https://doi.org/10.63313/EBM.9036>

Published: 2025-04-29

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Abstract

Young consumers, particularly millennials and generation z, have become the main force in the global consumer market, expected to account for over 50% of the global consumer population by 2025. They value personalization, digitalization, and socialization, while also showing a high level of concern for environmental protection and sustainable development. They are more inclined to choose eco-friendly products and support sustainable brands, and their consumer behavior is reshaping the global market landscape. Therefore, researching the ecological values and consumer behavior of young consumers is of significant value for businesses in formulating marketing strategies and promoting sustainable development.

Based on the theory of planned behavior, this article collected 256 valid questionnaires and used spss 27.0 software to verify data validity through reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Direct and mediating effects were constructed to explore the impact of ecological values on the green consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers. The research conclusions are as follows: 1. Impact of ecological values on green consumer behavior: The total effect of ecological values on green consumer behavior is positive, and the direct path is significant, supporting hypothesis h1. 2. Chained mediating effect: Ecological values indirectly influence green consumer behavior through consumer attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, supporting hypotheses h2, h2a, h2b, and h2c, manifesting as a complex chained mediating effect. 3. Influence of mediating effects: (1) The three chained mediating paths—ecological values → consumer attitude → green consumer behavior, ecological values → subjective norm → green consumer behavior, and ecological values → perceived behavioral control → green consumer behavior—are all significant. (2) The perceived behavioral control effect accounts for the largest proportion (28.88%), followed by the subjective norm effect (25.56%), and the consumer attitude effect is the smallest (18.57%). Enhancing perceived behavioral control levels and increasing the prevalence of subjective norm can effectively stimulate green consumer behavior among young Indonesian consumers.

Keywords

Ecological values; Young Indonesian consumers; The theory of planned behavior; Green consumer behavior

1. Introduction

In recent years, the global ecological crisis has become increasingly severe. Climate change, resource depletion and environmental pollution have posed a great threat to human society and the natural environment. According to the sustainable development goals (SDGS) released by the United Nations, it is urgent for countries around the world to take action to promote sustainable development to achieve an economic, social and environmental balance. In this context, ecological values (such as environmental protection, resource conservation, and sustainable development) have gradually become the focus of global attention. As an important participant in economic activities, consumer behavior has a direct impact on the ecological environment. Therefore, the article of consumer ecological values and their impact on consumer behavior is of great significance for promoting global sustainable development.

Young consumers, especially millennials (born in 1981-1996) and generation z (born in 1997-2012), have become the main force in the global consumer market. According to report, millennials and gen z will account for more than 50 percent of the world's consumer population by 2025. This group not only has strong consumer power, but also has distinct consumer characteristics: They pay attention to personalized, digital and social, while showing high attention to environmental protection and sustainable development. Research shows that young consumers are more likely to choose environmentally friendly products and support sustainable brands, and their consumer behavior is reshaping the global market landscape. Therefore, the article of the ecological values of young consumers and their consumer behavior is of great value for enterprises to develop marketing strategies and promote sustainable development.

Indonesia is the largest economy in southeast Asia, with a population of 270 million, of which young consumers (aged 18-35) account for more than 40 percent. With the rapid development of Indonesia and the acceleration of urbanization, the consumer market shows a booming trend. However, Indonesia also faces serious environmental problems, such as deforestation, plastic pollution and air pollution. In recent years, the Indonesian government and non-governmental organizations have actively promoted environmental education and sustainable development policies, and young consumers have gradually increased their acceptance of ecological values. Research shows that young Indonesian consumers are increasingly concerned with the environmental attributes of products in their purchase decisions and are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products. However, the research on how ecological values specifically influence the consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers is still relatively limited. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of this issue not only helps to understand the behavior patterns of young Indonesian consumers, but also provides important practical guidance for businesses and policy makers.

2. Literature review

2.1.1. Definition of relevant concepts

2.1.2. The theory of planned behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) originated from the theory of rational behavior (TRA), which was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. Rational behavior theory holds that human behavior is driven by behavioral intentions, which in turn are influenced by attitudes and subjective norm. However, the theory of rational behavior assumes that individuals have complete control over the execution of their behavior, which does not always hold true in reality. For example, some behaviors may be limited by external conditions (such as resources, opportunities, or capabilities). In order to compensate for this deficiency, Ajzen (1991) introduced the concept of perceived behavioral control (PBC) based on the rational behavior theory, thus forming the the theory of planned behavior (TPB). Perceived behavioral control reflects an individual's perception of the difficulty of performing a given behavior, and its sense of control over both internal and external factors.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) model is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

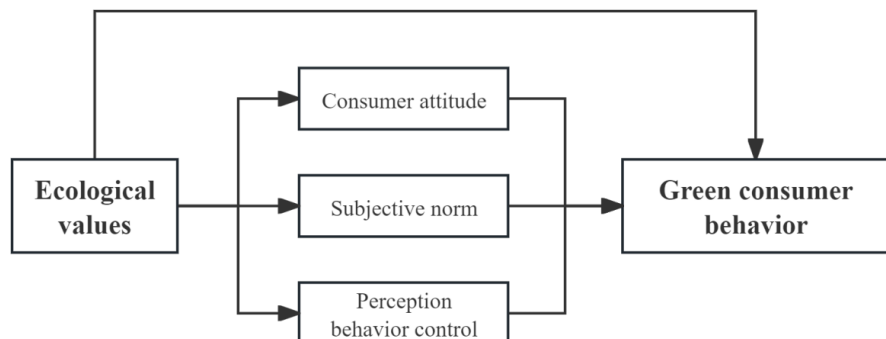


Figure 1. the theory of planned behavior (TPB) model

2.1.3. Theoretical hypothesis

Based on the previous literature review and theoretical model, the following research hypotheses are proposed (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Theoretical hypothesis

H1: Ecological values have a direct and positive influence on green consumer behavior

H2: Ecological values indirectly affect consumers' green consumer behavior

H2a: Ecological values indirectly have a positive impact on green consumer behavior through green consumer attitude

H2b: Ecological values indirectly have a positive impact on green consumer behavior through the subjective norm.

H2c: Ecological values indirectly have a positive impact on green consumer behavior through the perceived behavioral control.

2.2. Literature review

2.2.1. The connotation of ecological value

Ecological values refer to the attitudes, beliefs and behavioral tendencies of individuals or groups towards the natural environment and the ecosystem, emphasizing environmental protection, resource conservation and sustainable development. According to the value theory of Schwartz (1992), ecological values belong to the category of "Self-transcendence" values, which reflect human beings's sense of responsibility and moral obligation to the natural environment. In recent years, with the aggravation of the global ecological crisis, ecological values have gradually become an important issue in the academic and practical fields. Studies have shown that ecological values have a significant impact on consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (Stern, 2000). Consumers with strong ecological values are more likely to choose environmentally friendly products, reduce waste, and support sustainable brands (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

2.2.2. Characteristics of young consumer behavior

Young consumers, especially millennials and gen z, have distinct consumer characteristics. First, they focus on personalization and experience, and tend to choose products that fit their own values and lifestyles (Bilgihan, 2016). Second, young consumers are highly dependent on digital platforms to access information and make consumer decisions through social media (Smith, 2019). In addition, young consumers show a high concern about environmental protection and sustainable development. According to Nielsen (2015), 73% of millennials are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products. Gen z is more likely to express its support for ecological values through practical actions (e. G., reducing the use of plastic and supporting environmentally friendly brands) (Mckinsey, 2020). These characteristics make young consumers an important force driving sustainable consumerism.

2.2.3. The relationship between ecological values and consumer behavior

The influence of ecological values on consumer behavior has been extensively studied. According to Ajzen's the theory of planned behavior (1991), consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control jointly determine their behavioral intentions. Ecological values, as an attitude variable, significantly affect consumers' intentions and actual environmental behavior (Bamberg & Moser, 2007). Consumers with strong ecological values are more likely to buy environmentally friendly products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006), reduce the waste of resources (Thøgersen & Olander, 2003), and support sustainable brands (De pelsmacker et al., 2005). Research shows that young consumers access environmental information through social media and are influenced by their peers and opinion leaders (Haw-

kins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

2.2.4. Current status of relevant research in Indonesia

In Indonesia, research on ecological values and young consumer behavior in Indonesia is still in its infancy. Existing research mainly focuses on the attitudes and purchase intentions of young Indonesian consumers towards environmentally friendly products. For example, Suryani et al. (2018) found that young Indonesian consumers have low awareness of environmentally friendly products but are willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. Another study showed that young Indonesian consumers are more receptive to sustainable brands, but their purchasing behavior is limited by price and availability (Wijaya, 2020). However, the research on how ecological values specifically influence the consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers is still relatively limited. In particular, as the largest economy in southeast Asia, the ecological values and behavior patterns of its young consumers are unique and representative, which deserve further discussion.

3. Research design

3.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire mainly consists of four parts: One is the ecological values of young Indonesian consumers, which aims to understand the ecological values of the personal consumerism of the respondents; the indirect factors — consumer attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control, aiming to measure the green consumerism cognition of the respondents; the explained variable — green consumer behavior, covering their clothing, food, shelter and transportation; the fourth is the demographic characteristics of young Indonesian consumers, including gender, education level, occupation and monthly income level.

3.2. Data collection

This article conducted the distribution of online questionnaires to young Indonesian consumers. A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed and 256 questionnaires were collected, with a recovery rate of 91.43%. Among them, gender accounted for 42.19%, women, accounting for 57.81%; age of 18-25 years, 51.95%, 25-35 years old accounted for 48.05%; the educational level of primary school accounted for 19.14%, junior high school, 16.02%, high school / technical secondary school: 15.23%, junior college, 25.39%, undergraduate: 14.06%, master's degree and above: 10.16%; the occupation of enterprise employee accounted for 39.45%, government staff, 23.44%, self-employed accounted for 17.97%, freelancer for 19.14%; monthly income level the less than 1 million proportion is 18.75%, 1 million-3 million accounted for 20.31%, 3 million-5 million accounted for 20.31%, 5 million-10 million accounted for 18.75%, more than 10 million accounting for 21.88%.

4. Empirical analysis

4.1. Reliability analysis

4.1.1. Ecological values (A1-A5)

Citc values (ranging from 0.740 to 0.783), indicating strong correlations with the overall construct. Item-deleted α coefficients are consistently high (ranging from 0.883 to 0.892), suggesting that each item contributes significantly to the reliability of the construct. The overall β coefficient is 0.907, indicating excellent internal consistency.

4.1.2. Consumer attitude (B1-B5)

Citc values are high (ranging from 0.743 to 0.781), showing strong item-total correlations. Item-deleted α coefficients are also high (ranging from 0.877 to 0.885), indicating that each item is important for the construct's reliability. The overall β coefficient is 0.903, reflecting high internal consistency.

4.1.3. Subjective norm (C1-C5)

Citc values are slightly lower compared to other constructs (ranging from 0.685 to 0.773), but still within an acceptable range. Item-deleted α coefficients are relatively high (ranging from 0.850 to 0.870), suggesting that each item contributes to the construct's reliability. The overall β coefficient is 0.886, indicating good internal consistency.

4.1.4. Perceived behavioral control (D1-D5)

Citc values are high (ranging from 0.736 to 0.783), indicating strong correlations with the overall construct. Item-deleted α coefficients are consistently high (ranging from 0.881 to 0.890), suggesting that each item is important for the construct's reliability. The overall β coefficient is 0.906, reflecting excellent internal consistency.

4.1.5. Green consumer behavior (E1-E5)

Citc value for E1 is 0.773, indicating a strong correlation with the overall construct. Item-deleted α coefficient is 0.889, suggesting that the item contributes positively to the construct's reliability. The overall β coefficient is 0.910, indicating excellent internal consistency. The data suggests that all constructs have high internal consistency, as indicated by the β coefficients (all above 0.88). The citc values and item-deleted α coefficients further confirm that each item within the constructs contributes positively to the overall reliability. This analysis supports the use of these constructs in measuring the respective dimensions in the article.

4.2. Factor analysis

4.2.1. KMO measure (0.754)

The KMO value of 0.754 indicates that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. A KMO value above 0.7 is considered acceptable, and this result suggests that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

4.2.2. Bartlett's test of sphericity

The approximate chi-square value is 160.610, with 10 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000.

The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, and there are significant correlations among the variables. This supports the appropriateness of factor analysis.

4.2.3. Factor analysis results

Factor 1 has an eigenvalue of 2.166, explaining 43.327% of the total variance. This is the most significant factor, as it accounts for the largest portion of the variance.

Factor 2 has an eigenvalue of 0.839, explaining 16.782% of the variance, and the cumulative variance explained after this factor is 60.109%.

Factor 3 has an eigenvalue of 0.732, explaining 14.632% of the variance, and the cumulative variance explained after this factor is 74.741%.

Factor 4 has an eigenvalue of 0.658, explaining 13.162% of the variance, and the cumulative variance explained after this factor is 87.903%.

Factor 5 has an eigenvalue of 0.605, explaining 12.097% of the variance, and the cumulative variance explained after this factor is 100.00%.

The KMO measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity confirm that the data is suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis results reveal that factor 1 is the most significant, explaining the largest portion of the variance. The first two factors together explain a substantial amount of the variance, and all five factors collectively account for the total variance in the data. This suggests that the underlying structure of the data can be effectively represented by these factors.

The results highlight that subjective norm and perceived behavioral control are the most influential factors in promoting green consumer behavior. Additionally, ecological value and consumer attitude also play significant roles, though to a slightly lesser extent. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at promoting green consumer behavior should focus on strengthening subjective norm, enhancing perceived behavioral control, and fostering ecological values and positive consumer attitudes.

4.3. Model testing

4.3.1. Indirect effects

Ecological value indirectly influences green consumer behavior through consumer attitude, with a significant mediation effect of 0.0537 (95% ci: 0.0141 to 0.1040), accounting for 18.57% of the total effect, as indicated by the confidence interval and a standard error of 0.0236.

Ecological value indirectly influences green consumer behavior through subjective norm, with a significant mediation effect of 0.0739 (95% ci: 0.0285 to 0.1301), accounting for 25.56% of the total effect, as indicated by the confidence interval and a standard error of 0.0258.

Ecological value indirectly influences green consumer behavior through perceived

behavioral control, with a significant mediation effect of 0.0835 (95% ci: 0.0371 to 0.1447), accounting for 28.88% of the total effect, as indicated by the confidence interval and a standard error of 0.0277.

4.3.2. Direct effects

The direct effect of ecological value on green consumer behavior, without considering the mediators, is significant with an effect size of 0.2056 (95% ci: 0.0822 to 0.3289), accounting for 71.12% of the total effect, as indicated by the confidence interval and a standard error of 0.0626.

4.3.3. Total effects

The analysis reveals that all three mediators (consumer attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control) significantly mediate the relationship between ecological value and green consumer behavior, with perceived behavioral control showing the strongest mediation effect (28.88%), followed by subjective norm (25.56%) and consumer attitude (18.57%). Additionally, the direct effect of ecological value on green consumer behavior is substantial (71.12%), highlighting its strong independent influence. The total effect (0.2891) is significant, confirming that ecological value is a key predictor of green consumer behavior, both directly and indirectly through the mediators.

5. Conclusion and suggestion

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the theory of planning behavior, collect 256 effective questionnaires, using spss 27.0 software, through reliability analysis, the validation factor analysis to prove the effectiveness of the data, by constructing the direct effect, mediation effect analysis, explore the influence of ecological values on the green consumer behavior of young consumers in Indonesia, expand the transmission mechanism between ecological values and green purchase intention.

First, the influence of ecological values on green consumer behavior. The total effect of ecological values on green consumer behavior is positive, that is, ecological values have a positive effect on green consumer behavior. The direct path between ecological values and green consumer behavior is very significant, that is, positive ecological values have a positive impact on the green consumer behavior of young Indonesian consumers, assuming that h1 is established.

Second, the chain mediation effect of ecological values and green consumer behavior. Ecological values can indirectly influence green consumer behavior through consumer attitude, subjective norm and perceptual behavior control, that is, assuming h2, h2a, h2b, h2c are established, this effect is not directly linear, but a complex chain mediation effect.

Third, the mediation effect. Research shows that: (1) From the intermediary effect test, ecological values consumer attitude green consumer behavior, ecological val-

ues subjective norm green consumer behavior, ecological values perception behavior control green consumer behavior three chain intermediary are significant, have good ecological values, can shape the positive consumer attitude, make the individual more identity and observe the social expectations of green consumerism, strengthen the individual control of green consumer behavior and confidence.(2) From the point of effect proportion, ecological values of green consumer behavior control effect size (28.88%), the perception of behavior control for ecological values and green consumer behavior, the individual for perceived behavior control, the more likely to occur, so can improve the level of individual perception behavior control to stimulate Indonesia young consumer green consumer behavior. Ecological values subjective norm green consumer behavior (25.56%), ecological values consumer attitude green consumer behavior (18.57%), compared with Indonesia young consumers personal consumer attitude on green consumer behavior, Indonesia young consumers are more vulnerable to the influence of subjective norm, so can improve the incidence of subjective norm, young consumers to promote Indonesia young consumers green buying behavior.

5.1. Suggestion

Individuals play an important role in spreading ecological values and influencing young consumer behavior. Through education, advocacy, and leading by example, individuals can effectively promote the popularization of ecological values. Companies play an important role in spreading ecological values and influencing young consumer behavior. Through product design, marketing strategies, corporate social responsibility and supply chain management, enterprises can effectively promote the popularization of ecological values. Government plays an important role in spreading ecological values and influencing the behavior of young consumers. Through policy making, education promotion, regulatory implementation, and public participation, the government can effectively promote the popularization of ecological values.

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