



The Specific Interrelation between Motivation, Emotions and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract: *The changes brought about by COVID-19 and digitalisation do not eradicate the genuine problems associated with sustainable consumer behaviour and achieving sustainable development in general. Consumer motivation and emotions are closely intertwined with achieving sustainable consumer behaviour. The research interest was sparked by the interrelation between motivation, emotions and sustainable consumer behaviour. It is specific and determines the extent to which consumers want and are motivated to consume sustainably and in parallel with what emotions they experience in the overall consumer decision-making process and their consumer journey. The research methodology includes presenting the relationship between the individual elements in the purchase, presenting different types of motivation that affect sustainable consumer behaviour, clarifying the different types of emotions in sustainable consumer behaviour and focusing on happiness as a leading emotion to achieve sustainable consumption. It is to the benefit of the readers to recognise the importance of the interrelation between emotions, motivation and sustainable consumer behaviour and build perfect strategies based on it.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Overall, achieving sustainability is influenced by many public actors, including government agencies, private companies, NGOs, local communities, etc. Individual actors can be formal or informative, but both sides are crucial to sustainability. Formal institutions offer significant potential for immediate reforms because, in reality, a number of political processes have been taking place in them. In contrast, various political instruments appear in informal institutions that directly influence human behaviour, including taxes, regulations, fines, educational programs, public disclosure, or threats of imprisonment (Dovers, S. 2005).

An essential positive direction in the creation and development of sustainability is the institutional reform at the state level which will actually provide significant benefits for achieving this sustainability, as there is significant juridical supremacy at this level. The introduction of environmental policy in companies and at national level is the core for achieving this sustainability (Lafferty W. and Hovden E., 2003).

Environmental issues are closely linked to other economic sectors such as finance, trade, energy, transport and urban development, where primary reporting is not linked to environmental performance. It is in these sectors that a number of measures need to be taken to ensure overall sustainability.

Following the UN Conference on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, measures have been taken for the complete transformation of people's attitudes and, hence, their behaviour to ensure the necessary changes. In reality, the conference proved to be the turning

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point in the discussion of environmental and developmental issues as significant ones in the public space. Through the use of various mechanisms, sustainability considerations can become a core business in a number of policy sectors.

Next, systemic policy instruments and actions taken can address the causes rather than the symptoms of not using certain unacceptable behaviours. System tools include market mechanisms and environmental budget review. At the same time, there has to be a redistribution of natural resources, which requires changes in the legal framework (Connor and Dovers 2004).

Although there are many opportunities for change at national level, there are many other public actors that play a key role in achieving sustainability (Sassen 2006). For example, institutional reform can be difficult in countries where corruption is widespread and where formal institutions are weak, and strong decisions are made by other bodies. In these situations, civil society plays a particularly important role.

It is especially important to achieve sustainable development, as a basis, by changing the thinking and behaviour of consumers and transforming it into a sustainable one. The behaviour of consumers during the entire purchase process contains the following basic elements: activation, emotions, motivation, attitude, involvement, shared values and lifestyle, satisfaction and loyalty.

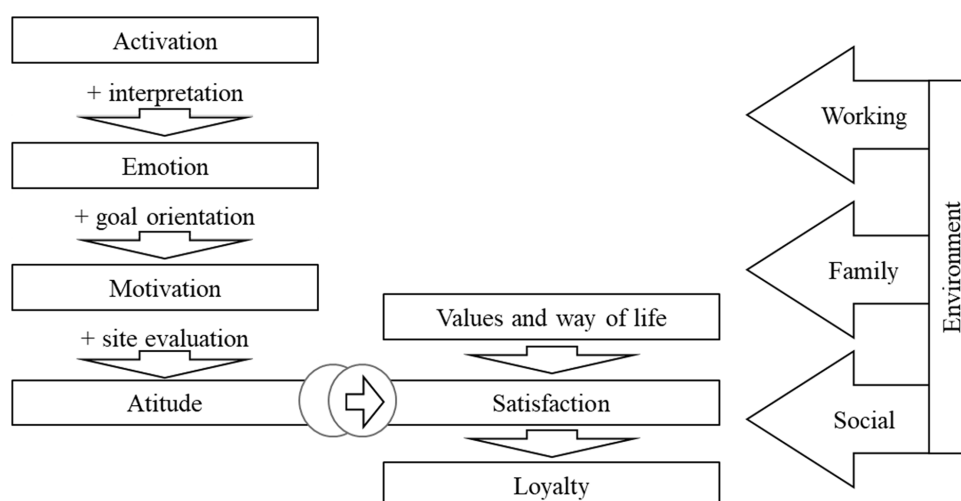


Figure 1. Relationship between the individual elements in the purchase

Source: Krastevich, 2018.

This study focuses on two of the main elements, i.e. emotion and motivation, which, in our opinion, are highly structural and interrelated with sustainable consumption. Taking historical perspective, we turn to the Theory of Evolutionary Life, which explains that when consumers are confident that they will have enough resources available in the future, they tend to be less impulsive about food consumption and other resources (Griskevicius *et al.* 2012). The difference lies in the temporal orientation or abundance and at present can indeed lead to increased consumption due to the cognitive belief that resources are abundant. The main thing is realistically achievable, the prospect of future abundance to be implied by sustainable production, which in turn activates consumer behaviour aimed at prosocial behaviour (Farmer *et al.*, 2017)

On the other hand, motivation itself is a rather complex task. Large companies quite skillfully combine different marketing approaches to motivate consumers to buy their products.

According to Temelkova (2018), human motivation is a dynamic process that is influenced by changes in the environment, changes in public attitudes and public opinion, which is strongly related to the level of knowledge and experience, social status, age and economic and political factors. She claims there is motivation even when choosing a tourist destination. Motivation is a dynamic process that changes on the basis of the level of awareness achieved through the media and different presentation of destinations and tourist sites of cultural and historical heritage. In a more general context, there are three motivating goal frames in the scientific literature embedded in Locke's Goal-Setting Theory of Motivation that influence sustainable consumer behaviour (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007), namely - gain, hedonic and normative.

1.1. Gain Goals

In their conceptual arguments, Lindenberg and Steg (2017) define gain goals as preserving and improving the use of resources. The authors emphasise the view that they force people to be more aware of their personal resources. They are medium to long-term, through which consumers seek to increase efficiency or reduce their financial costs.

1.2. Hedonic Goals

The conceptual arguments of the Goal-Setting Theory of Motivation define hedonic goals as the main tool to make people enjoy themselves or feel better right now (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). These goals are related to people's self-confidence, excitement and pleasure, as well as express an attempt to avoid different types of effort. Recent studies of resilience have shown that positive emotions have a positive effect on intentions (Rezvani et al., 2018; Khan & Irfan, 2019). Miao and Wei (2013) also claim that hedonic goals are a prerequisite for sustainable consumption. The proposed concept is related to human feelings and when the feelings are positive, the intentions to buy such products are positive and vice versa.

1.3. Normative Goals

The third motivating goal frame used for the purposes of this study is normative goals. Lindenberg and Steg (2017) define normative goals as the basis for acting appropriately. In their view, the Goal-Setting Theory of Motivation borrows this concept from the well-known Norm Activation Model (NAM) (Schwartz, 1977).

Initially, the concept was applied to general categories, but later it was successfully applied to sustainable research (Thøgersen, 1999). The emphasis in the model is that when people are aware of the negative consequences for the environment, their personal and moral norms are activated. Personal norms are related to an individual, while moral norms are related to society as a whole.

In various scientific studies, the direct and indirect link between normative goal frame and consumer intentions is tested and proved that it has a positive and strong role in influencing consumer behaviour (Rezvani et al., 2018; Khan & Hameed, 2019).

The other emphasis in our development are the emotions, which, in addition to being closely related to motivation, are also structurally determining for sustainable consumer behaviour.

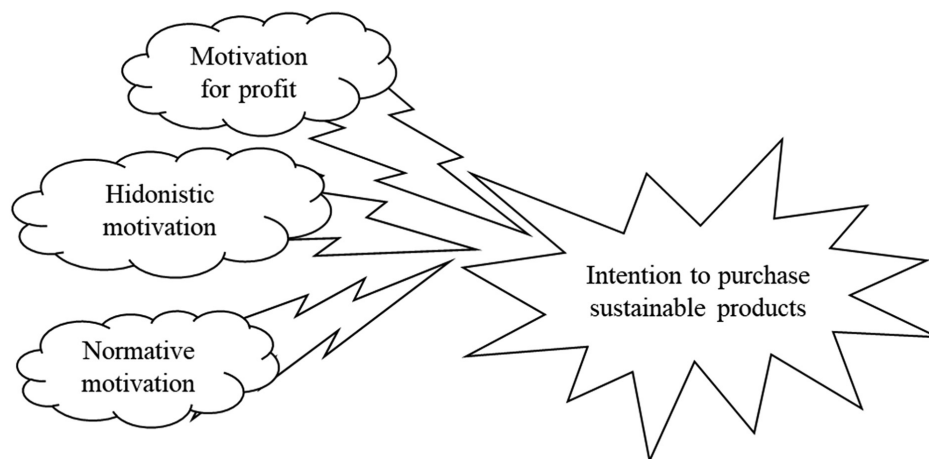


Figure 2. Relationship between the motivating goal frames and the intention to purchase sustainable products

Source: Khan & Hameed, 2019.

The dynamics of the science of shopping poses a new challenge to marketers - the time consumers spend in stores depends on how comfortable and fun it is to experience in them, that is, the emotions that will be evoked in them.

At the heart of the science of shopping is the paradigm that there are certain anatomical features, limitations, needs, desires and trends that are common to all consumers and which managers should take into account in the construction and operation of retail.

According to Nakova (2020), consumer loyalty is especially important. According to her, there is still no consensus on the term loyal customers, although most researchers have agreed that the loyal customer is the one who has made more than one purchase from a brand. Another problem is the way of measuring loyal consumers, and in the scientific community there are two common ways of measuring: through consumer behaviour and consumer attitude (Nakova, R., 2020).

On the other hand, some people question the ethics of manipulating consumers through their emotions. If emotions are used to persuade customers to buy, we could conclude that this is unethical. However, when quality and reasonably priced products are offered, it is not unethical to use consumers' emotions to buy the product and the situation is different. We must not forget that as human beings we have emotions and everything we do has an emotional component.

Truly great marketers need to know the emotions of consumers. They learn to work in sync with the needs and emotions of consumers and, at the same time, to "turn on" or "turn off" those emotions. This is the most profitable art formula in the field of marketing and will always be. In practice, there are a number of examples of advertisements and commercial messages that are professional, credible and reliable, and at the same time illustrate the incredible power of emotional marketing (Dimova, 2013).

Emotions are specific and especially strong when there is sustainable consumer behaviour. They are important components of consumer response that affect their judgments, evaluations and decisions. They are accepted as causes, effects, mediators and moderators of consumer behaviour (Williams, 2013; Bagozzi *et al*, 1999).

The classic view of the types of emotions is that they are innate and acquired. There are six basic emotions innate: joy, sadness, anger, fear, happiness, wonder and disgust. The second large group are acquired emotions, which are numerous, such as jealousy, guilt, shame, horror of seeing suffering, pleasure of seeing justice, aesthetic pleasure of poetry and music, religious empathy, wounded pride, harmony in scientific knowledge and others. Another set of emotional experiences accompanying fatigue, emotions caused by a sense of well-being, etc. is defined (Piryova, 2011).

The focus of this article will be on one of the main emotions that sustainable consumer behaviour should evoke, namely happiness. According to O'Brien, happiness can be used to promote sustainable consumption. The natural desire of the individual for happiness becomes an entry point for discovering the fact that his well-being is inextricably linked with the well-being of other people and the environment. This concept can challenge the common misconception that living in a sustainable way leads to a decline in quality of life.

The concept of happiness is used in various occasions and ways. In the broadest sense, it is an emotion that is associated with all that is good. In this sense, it is often used interchangeably with terms such as 'well-being' or 'quality of life' and refers to both individual and social well-being. Synonymous with total happiness is "life satisfaction". This use of words shows that there is the ultimate good and it obscures the differences of interest between people and society. In a more limited context, happiness can be used as "subjective satisfaction with one's life as a whole" (Gregory & Rutledge, 2016).

In reality, in the context of sustainable marketing, happiness has two main components, i.e. an affective component (hedonic level of influence) and a cognitive component (satisfaction) (Veenhoven, 2009).

Sustainable happiness offers opportunities to improve the quality of life and contributes to individual community and global well-being. It represents the evolution in happiness that is needed to give the world a more sustainable trajectory. In turn, this makes sustainable happiness an indispensable concept that fits perfectly into the concept of sustainable marketing and at the same time contributes to the overall concept of modern future companies.

Niyazieva claims that "sustainable marketing is a holistic approach in order to meet the wishes and needs of customers while giving equal importance and emphasis to environmental and social issues, thus generating profit for the organization in a responsible way".

At the national level in the Republic of Bulgaria, the goals of sustainable development emphasise achieving positive emotions, motivation and satisfaction as well as ensuring that by 2030 all people are to have access to relevant information and have their awareness raised on the issue of sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature (<https://nsi.bg/bg>).

A more general point of view is presented by Nikolova (2020), who claims that among the priorities for the country's development are the ones that meet the European priority and promote economic development, namely maintaining sustainability in the regulatory framework in terms of amending the normative acts and regulations. The lack of transparency and especially the frequent and unjustified change of basic laws and regulations lead to increased levels of political risk and change in the business climate for economic entities in the micro economy. In

addition, when a normative act is changed for a specific person or company, a precondition is created for a further change, especially when it is not justified (Nikolova, 2020).

The interrelation between motivation and emotions leading to sustainable consumer behaviour is a strategic and important step in building an excellent sustainable marketing strategy. The role of company leadership, even now, is based on the creation and development of overall sustainable development that meets all social, economic and political rules and laws.

2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, achieving a specific interrelation between motivation, emotions and sustainable consumer behaviour depends largely on the genuine desire and ability of companies to redirect their resources and reshape their marketing strategies in accordance with the changes taking place which are both environmental and digital challenges. The real achievement of sustainable consumer behaviour will inevitably lead to the achievement of overall sustainable development and preservation of the good life of future generations. Only the future will show whether the actions the companies have been taking are adequate and appropriate to achieve not only survival but also a basis for the development of all stakeholders.

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