Doing Non-Transcendent Go Green: the Moderating Role of Identity on Value-Behavior Relationship

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Values theory predicts that non-transcendent (vs. transcendent) consumers search for self oriented goals and prefer self than collective rewards (e.g. environmental cause) (Schwartz, 1992). When can non-transcendent people go green? Using the identity-based motivation model (Oyserman, 2009) to investigate how identity moderates the impact of values on behavioral intentions. The results show that when a personal identity is primed, transcendent (vs. non-transcendent) values result in more green consumption. However, in a social identity, transcendent and non-transcendent values lead to similar green consumption levels. These findings extend past research by showing identity-based motivation as a boundary condition for the value-behavior relationship.

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suggesting that excluded consumers selectively align their product preferences to their potential affiliations’ in the specific product domain that communicates their identity most effectively. In future studies, we plan to use different social exclusion manipulation methods to test the robustness of the hypothesis in the first study. We also intend to further explore excluded consumers’ consumption behaviors in addition to conformity in the value expressive product domain.

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VALUES–BEHAVIOR AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF IDENTITY-BASED MOTIVATION

Values are preceded by culture, society and personality, and extant research has shown that value leads to behavioral outcomes (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992, 1994). Although numerous empirical studies support a value–behavior relation (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1996) the variability of this relationship may be impacted by facilitating or impeding factors, such as construal level (Torelli and Kaikati, 2009). According to situated social cognition perspective, cognition and action are dynamically shaped by contexts (Schwarz, 2007, 2009). In this sense, we argue that the value–behavior relation maybe affected by evoked identities.

Identity-based motivation is the readiness to engage in identity-congruent action (Oyserman, 2007), using identity-congruent mindset sets in making sense of the world (Oyserman et al., 2009). As part of the self-concept, the identity presents a basis for making predictions about oneself and about others’ response to the self. Personal identities focus on traits, characteristics and goals that are not connected to a social group. The salience of a personal identity facilitates one to construe the situation in terms of values that are relevant to the self, leading to value-congruent judgments and behaviors (Oyserman, 2009). In contrast, when the social identity is salient, the self is contextualized and linked to a social group, which in turn downplay the personal values and increase in-group conformity (Briley, 2001).

DOING NON-TRANSCENDENT PEOPLE GO GREENER

The present study examines the interactional effect of identity and self-transcendence values on green consumption. We suggest that the fit between values and evoked identities can influence green consumption of non-transcendent values. Specifically, we expect that in social (vs. personal) identity situation, people will increase their pro-social evaluations and intentions. This mechanism will change values influence on behavior, doing non-transcendence values take into green consumption.

One hundred and fifty three participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions of a 2 values (transcendent vs. non-transcendent) x 2 identities (personal vs. social) between-subjects design. In this study, evoked identities were manipulated using as priming, similarities and differences between family and friends – SDFF (Oyserman and Lee, 2007). Values were chronically accessed by values index: transcendence ($\alpha$ = 0.714) - Non-transcendent values ($\alpha$ = 0.640; Schwartz, 1992). Transcendence and non-transcendence values were obtained by median split of composite values index. The main dependent variable is the preference for green products. This DV has been
computed by asking subjects to indicate their preference for a green or a non-green option for three product categories (batteries, lamp and backpack) (adapted from Griskevicius et al., 2010).

Manipulation checks were made by self-construal index (Singelis, 1994). A 2x2 ANOVA interaction between values and identity for the manipulation checks was significant (F (1,154) = 6.35, p < .05).

Results show that values and identity have an interactional effect on green consumption, as predicted (F (1, 153) = 10.36, p < .01). As expected, when personal identity was salient, transcendent participants reported more green consumption than non-transcendent participants (Mtranscendent = 4.92, Mnon-transcendent = 3.48; p < .001). More interesting though, when social identity was salient, participants in both transcendent and non-transcendent values reported similar green consumption intention (M = 4.69, Mnt = 4.56; n.s.). That is, in a social identity, congruent and incongruent values took into more green consumption.

**IMPLICATIONS**

Our findings indicate the hypothesized moderating role of identity on value-behavior relationship. First, we show that identity salience can change values influence on behavior, increasing green consumption in non-transcendent values condition. In doing so, provide new evidence for values-behavior relation strengthen or weaken factors, using identity-based motivation as a boundary condition (Briley and Wyer, 2001; Torelli and Kaikati, 2009).

Second, although past research indicates that values-behavior congruence will lead to action-readiness (Allen et al., 2008), our results demonstrate that people can take action even under incongruent values-behavior situations. Specifically, we show that non-transcendent values can increase green consumption, when the social identity is activated.

Third, we highlight a new path for research, the value-identity-behavior approach. Specifically, we suggest that personal identity salience reinforce the role that values will have on intention formation. In contrast, social identity reinforces social context, increasing social action-readiness. That can result in more positive green consumption even when values and behavior are incongruent.

One alternative explanation for this mechanism is that social identity can place in evidence the social values systems (Rohan, 2000), increasing social value priorities attachment. Further studies can investigate this possibility.

**REFERENCES**


