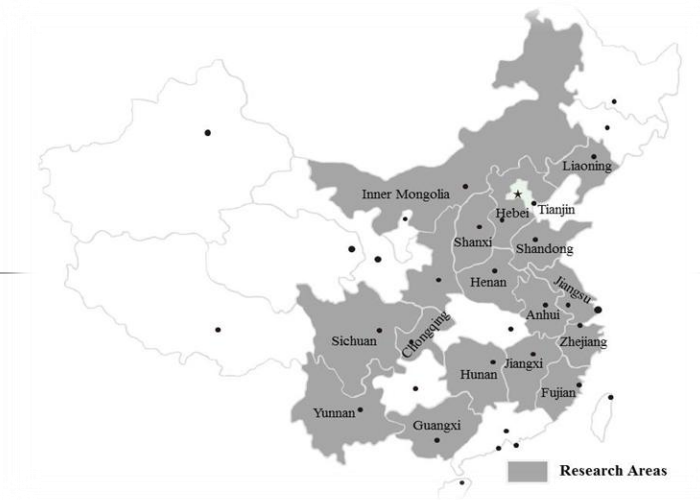


Factors Influencing Sustainable Consumption Behavior

(SCB) :

A Survey of the Rural Residents in China



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Outlines

Research Question

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Research Questions

Sustainable Production

Measures for promoting SCP in China have so far mostly focused on **cleaner production practices**, with an emphasis on technical end-of-pipe solutions to contain industrial pollution and address the intensity of industrial energy consumption .

The Chinese government has set the clear goal to boost domestic consumption . Consumption will account for 43 percent of China's total GDP growth by 2020, compared with a forecast contribution from investment of 38 percent.

According to the statistics, there is a sustainable upward trend in the total consumption of rural residents. Yet the construction of environmental infrastructure and the environmental governance are underdeveloped in rural areas. Obviously, the environmental pressure in the rural areas will be intensified in the future.

From the perspective of SCP , rural household consumption patterns will require more attention as they will pay an increasing important role in Chinese economy .

Sustainable Consumption

Research Questions

Developed Consumer societies

Governance for SCP, with a particular focus on SC, has received increased attention in developed consumer societies since the Rio Summit in 1992

There have been substantial researches concerning individual consumer's choice and behavior on the environment. By tailoring research designed for SCB and their antecedents, these researches could provide fundamental information and vital theoretical basis for promoting SCB in target areas.

China

Most of the studies in China are limited to the theoretical review and the introduction of experience from abroad.

Few researches are dedicated to the SCB of rural residents.

Research Questions

1

What is the current situation and characteristics of the SCBs of Chinese rural residents?

2

Is it possible to come up with a systematic tools to uncover the essential factors of the their SCBs ?

3

How does these factors block or benefit the SCBs?

4

How could the research findings support the environmental policy design in China?

Outlines

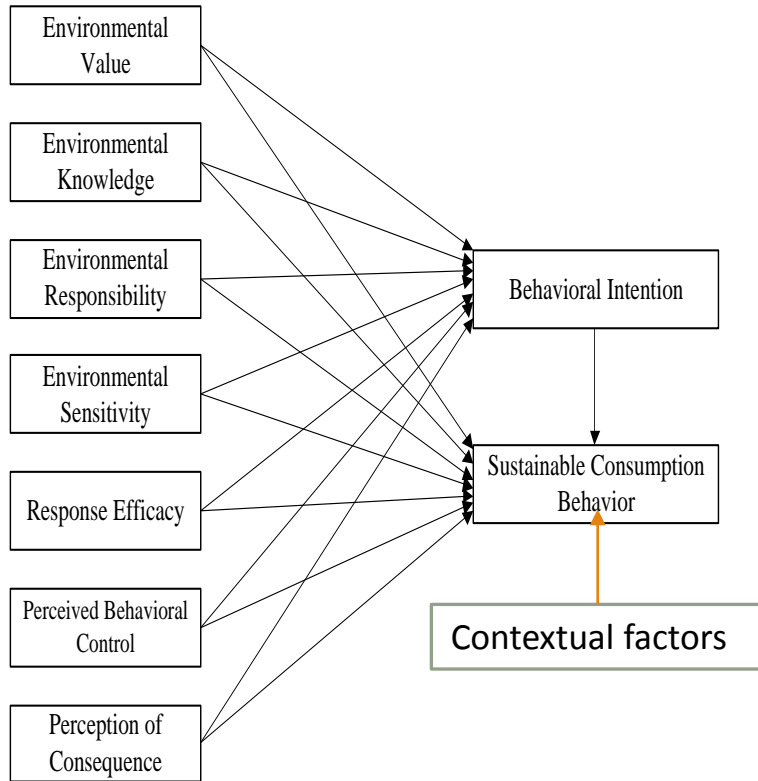
Research Question

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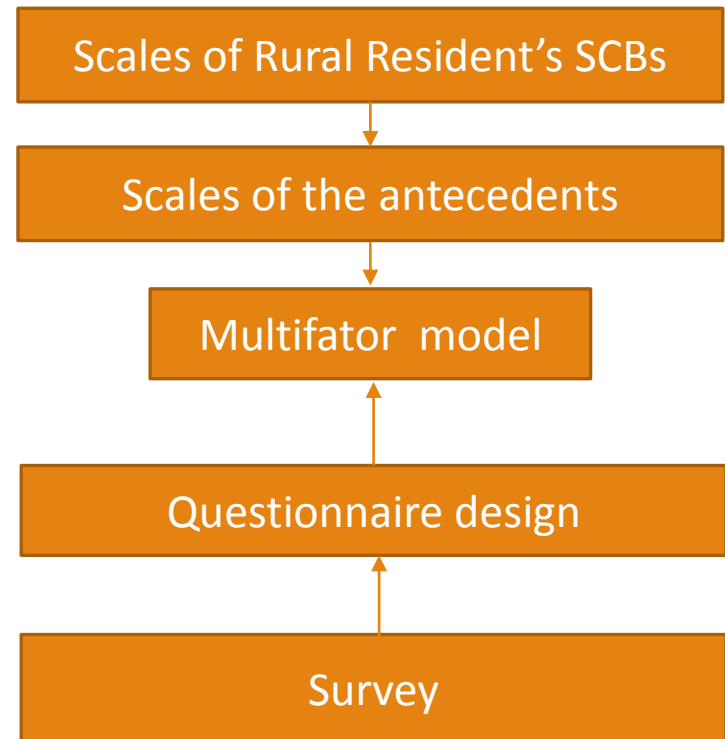
Modification and the future research

Research Designs

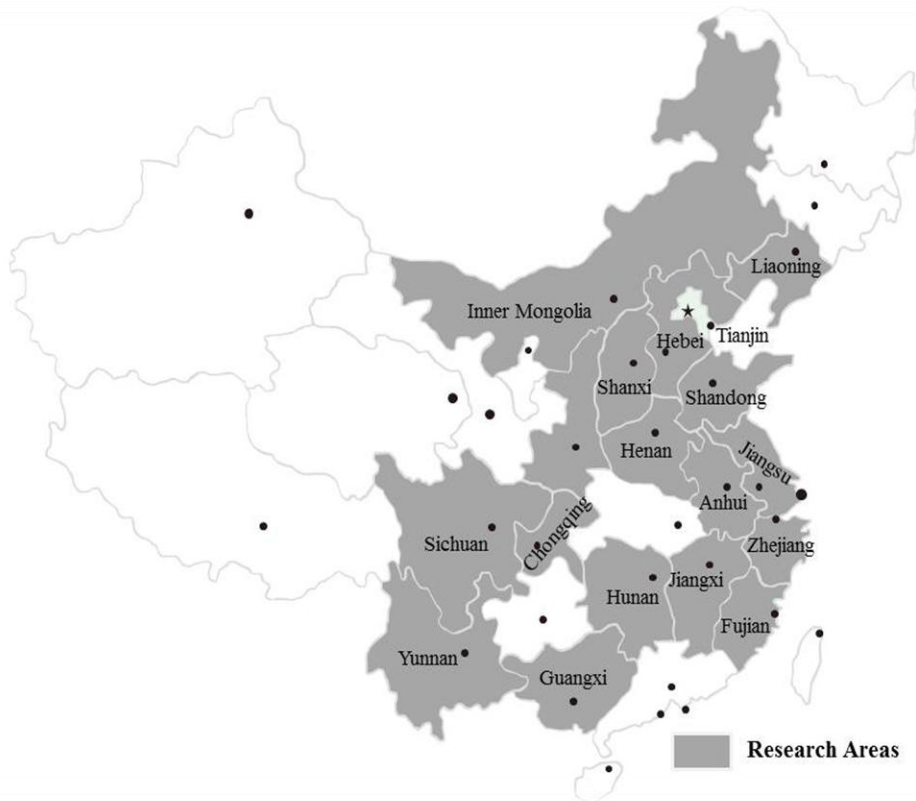


8 internal indicators

Analytical framework of this study



Research Designs



The final questionnaires were distributed by 50 undergraduates from the College of Environmental Science and Engineering of Nankai University. These students from rural areas were asked to finish 50 interviews each in their villages. The students came from 17 provinces in China. A total of 1403 valid questionnaires were collected (1700 issued), with a response rate of 82.5%, involving approximately 50 villages from 35 municipalities or counties.

Regional distributions of samples

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Mine Results

Descriptive analysis

1

Rural residents are more likely to conduct egoistic SCB rather than altruistic behaviors, since egoistic ones can save the living expenses and bring a noticeable amount of extra income.

SCB_{egoism} =Practice level of SCB items for private interests

$SCB_{altruism}$ =Practice level of SCB items for others' interests

Sustainable consumption behavior of rural residents	Mean	Max
Choose high active, low toxic pesticides (SCB1)	2.70	5
Use renewable energy (methane tank or solar water heater) (SCB2)	2.56	5
Save water (reuse water, use drip irrigation under mulch) (SCB3)	2.77	5
Recycle scrap metal and waste plastic bottles (SCB4)	3.36	5
Use agricultural film as little as possible (SCB5)	2.85	5
Repair damaged products and use them until can't be repaired (SCB6)	3.63	5
Adopt new building materials to construct energy and land saving house (SCB7)	2.14	5
Purchase the China Environmental Label and Green Food labeling products (SCB8)	2.34	5
Purchase the less packaging product (SCB9)	2.73	5
Return decomposed straw to the fields instead of burning (SCB10)	3.04	5

Mine Results

Descriptive analysis

2

They realize the seriousness and urgency of environmental problems and they do worry about the environment faced by the future generation. Most of the respondents favoring the idea that a balance between economic development and environmental protection can be achieved. And they believe that science and technology can solve all the environmental problems.

3

They have very strong responsibility and feelings for their environment but have no confidence in whether they have the ability to conduct SCB or whether their efforts can bring about changes.

4

They think that the rural areas lack the infrastructures (e.g. the sewage treatment facility and waste collection system), the supportive environment (e.g. the approval from the around and material and spiritual support from the government) and the sufficient supply (e.g. more sustainable products to choose from), which undermine the practice of SCB.

Mine Results

Descriptive analysis

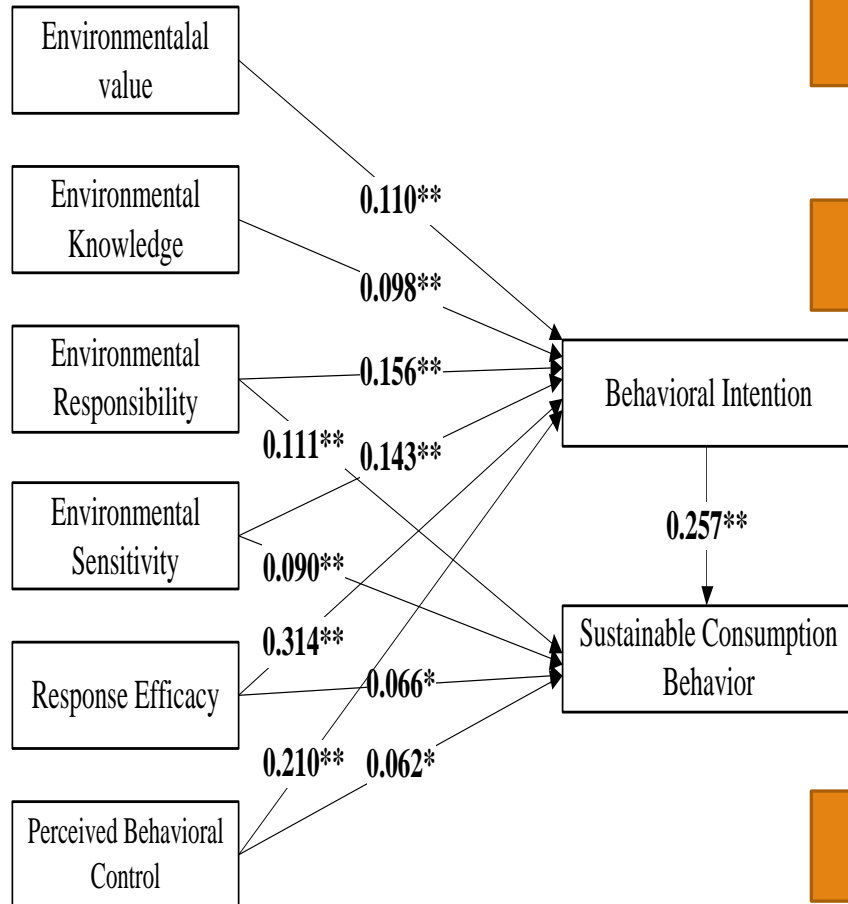
5 Most respondents agree that the guidance from agricultural technicians and the benefit of selling the waste can encourage their SCB.

6 The consumption behavior of neighbors or families can have great influence on many respondents' consumption choice.

7 Interestingly, the mean score of “If there is government subsidy, I am willing to purchase environment-friendly products, despite of their higher prices (CF10)” is higher than “If there exist the government legal and regulatory requirements, I will change my consumption style to confirm them (CF11)”, which shows the subsidy is better than restrictions. Because they can gain tangible benefits from the behavior and are motivated to change their behavior.

Mine Results

Path analysis



1

The explanatory variable accounts for nearly 20 percent ($R^2=.200$) of the variance of the overall SCB at 1% significance level.

2

Behavioral intention plays the most important role in the explanation of the level of the SCB. Besides, environmental responsibility, environmental sensitivity, perceived behavioral control and response efficacy are significant for explaining the SCB ($p<0.01$). In particular, these four variables also affect SCB indirectly through behavioral intention.

3

However, the result also indicates the low explanatory power of SCB level by these psychological variables.

Outlines

Research Question

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Questions and thoughts

Questions and thoughts

These research brings me and my partner lots of questions and thoughts during the whole process. We need more discussion and investigation to improve our research in the future.

1

The first question is how to define “sustainable consumption ” in rural china, the wide geography, diversities of lifestyle and production habits make us rethink of the list of the behavior we want to test all the time. Could we have the selecting criteria or choice form of SCBs for our research in the future ?

The second question raised when we make research designs mostly according to the lifestyle of the developing countries. For example, in China ,the recycling of the furniture , the applicants and clothe are mostly through sharing or pass on to the relatives, not depending on the recovery system provided by the private company , the communities or the government. Which kind of SCB should we guide and nurture in rural area in the future?

Questions and thoughts

2

The scale of Environmental Value in our research comes from the modified NEP ([Hong and Xiao, 2007](#)), which is based on the repeated tests in cities of China. Our research only makes some subtle alterations on this Hong's scale.

We think its necessary to add more traditional Chinese view of nature or the traditional rural view about the conservation of local ecosystem into the environmental value testing scale in the future research.

Questions and thoughts

3

In future researches, typical area should be selected for a more detailed study after the in-depth observation and investigation of their living and production patterns.

Questions and thoughts

4

There is a need to bring researcher from different angles or disciplines to discuss and working together to clarify the elementary concepts and discuss the research framework SCB together. Accordingly , researcher from different part of the China could share and compare their analysis and results.

How to make the academic research and thinking more contribute to the policy design of central and local government is another extremely important issue.

As in Europe, SC are fostered along the way of shifting the political authority away from the state to private actors and civil society.

China get used to applying the “top-down environmental cadre evaluation” as an essential environmental governance mechanism to alter the low priority governmental leaders had long placed on environmental objectives.

So, how could our research design and research results get the government attention?

Low participation by civil society

Lack of transparency of information

Need for greater policy coherence and planning capacity

The low engagement of the private sector are key governance shortcomings...

How should we come up with new way of governance based on the organization pattern of our society? And these in turn, will definitely influence the design of our research...