

Impact of Irrational Consumption Intention on the Usage of Sanitizing Products during COVID-19 in Guiyang

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Abstract: This paper used literature research methods, questionnaire survey, and quantitative analysis methods to explore the mechanism of consumers' irrational consumption intention in buying sanitizing products under public health incidents. Using the theoretical basis of irrational consumption behavior and SPSS analysis, analyzed the relationship between demography, consumption intentions, behavior attitudes, and risk perceptions based on the list of influencing variables of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, time cost, economic cost, and product quality associating with attitudes and risk factor.

Keywords: Irrational Consumption Pattern; Usage of Sanitizing Products; COVID-19

1. Introduction

Major public health emergencies are the product of human lack of rationality. Their essence is that human beings cannot typically respond to high threats and public crises that endanger their safety, especially their lives, due to lack of understanding and lack of experience and knowledge. The sudden outbreak of public health incidents caused people to panic and purchase disinfection products. Especially during the “new crown” epidemic, many netizens have reported that they “cannot buy disinfection products,” that is, medical alcohol, 84 disinfectant, and so on. Affected by the new crown epidemic in 2020, the supply and demand of the disinfection product market are in a state of structural contraction, and prices have risen. According to data, among the disinfectants purchased by consumers during the new crown epidemic, 34% of products have increased in price by 20%-50%, 31% of products have increased in price by less than 20%, and 11% of products have increased in price by more than 50%; consumers bought Among disinfection equipment, 32% of products have a price increase of less than 20%, 28% of products have a price increase of 20%-50%, and 9% of products have a price increase of more than 50% (Farooq; et al. 2020)^[1]. This article discusses and analyzes consumers' irrational consumption willingness to disinfection products from public health incidents.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 The theory of consumers' irrational intention to consume

“Consumer Rights Protection Law” implements the principle of oblique protection of consumers. Its provisions on consumer rights and the obligations of operators are the embodiment of the focus of social interest. However, consumers must assume social responsibilities and make rational consumption colonial subjects. Consumers implementing rational consumption behaviors following the law and the principle of good faith need the balance and coordination of consumer sovereignty and the overall interests of society.

2.2 Theory of rational behavior

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is also translated as “Theory of Rational Behaviour.” It was proposed by American scholars Fishbein; & Ajzen (1975)^[2]. It is mainly used to analyze how attitudes are conscious. Influencing individual behaviors and focusing on attitude formation based on cognitive information, its basic assumption is rational. Various information will be integrated to consider the meaning and consequences of their behavior before making a specific behavior. Rational behavior theory believes that behavior can be reasonably inferred from behavior intention, which is determined by attitude towards behavior and subjective criteria.

2.3 Planned behavior theory

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) can help us understand how people change their behavior patterns. TPB believes that human behavior is the result of a well-thought-out plan. From the attitude-behavior theory, the intention of intermediary behavior and the subjective norms of independent variables are introduced to form the rational behavior theory. Then the cognitive behavior control of independent variables is trained to develop the theory of planned behavior (Li; et al. 2021)^[3].

2.4 Third-party effect theory

The theory of “the third-person effect” by Davidson (1983)^[4] believed that when people judge the influence of mass communication, there is a general perception stereotype, that is, they tend to think that the information of the mass media (especially persuasive information or propaganda and negative information) is against “me” or “you.” It may not have much impact, but it will have an immeasurable impact on “other” people.

3. Understanding the Influencing Factors of the Irrational Consumption Intention on the Usage of Sanitizing Products during COVID-19

3.1 Influences risk perception in the pandemic, and the mediating role of perceived uncertainty

Personal risk perception involves “personal contact or experience of results and the history of conditioning” (Loewenstein et al., 2001). Previous research has shown that how individuals respond to dangerous situations is influenced mainly by the vividness of visualizing the consequences (Weber, 2013)^[5]. Without much experience and vivid image, the “fear of the unknown” associated with COVID-19 may make the virus’s destruction still mysterious or imagined for consumers far from the area. Therefore, these consumers must rely on secondary sources (news, word of mouth) to obtain information.

3.2 Behavioral attitude and perceived risk influences individuals’ irrational consumption

In the context of COVID-19, we expect that increased risk perception will increase the dominance of emotional or illogical consumer decisions. As a result, unreasonable purchases may occur, such as impulsively purchasing the same product in excessive quantities (for example, storing too much toilet paper). Irrational buying involves consumption based on emotions, which is economically illogical). On the contrary, “irrational” refers to a heinous selection and action process rather than the essence and epitome of rational decision-making and action. Although wise choices focus on using logic to maximize utility, irrational personal behaviors stem from emotions.

4. The Conceptual Framework for the Research Study

First Based on the background, problems, meanings, and definitions of the terms of the research in this article, it can be seen that the logical framework of this article mainly revolves around consumers’ irrational consumption of disinfection products under public health incidents and discusses the consequences of public health incidents—the resulting influence of consumers’ irrational consumption willingness.

Second Empirical study of trust and perceived risk on consumers’ online purchase intention, the core construct of “consumption intention” is divided into two dimensions: behavioral attitude and risk perception. However, Zheng. (2020)^[6] said in a review of consumer behavior research at home and abroad that behavior attitude can be divided into two dimensions: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Some investigations divided the risk perception into three dimensions: time cost, economic cost, and product quality in analyzing agricultural consumer risk perception and influencing factors under the community economy.

5. The Countermeasures for the Irrational Consumption Intention on Usage of Sanitizing Products during COVID-19

5.1 Irrational consumption intention

Irrational consumption generally occurs when consumers consume without logical reasons or clear thinking due to little knowledge and understanding of the product.

5.2 Sanitizing product

Sanitizing products are important to kill germs and keep our hands or bodies away from possible contact with the virus.

5.3 COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention.

6. Conclusion

The results show behavioral attitude and perceived risk impact irrational consumption intention in sanitizing products during COVID-19 in Guiyang. During the pandemic, it is strictly forbidden to increase the price of masks, which will restrict market supply and affect people’s confidence in the market economy system; however, excessive price increases will not help a significant increase in market supply in the short term but will stimulate preventive demand and speculation in demand, leading to market failure and collapse. Moreover, some consumers and their friends, classmates, and relatives will also consume comparatively. Therefore, the instability of consumers’ psychological factors will also lead to irrational consumption behavior. The government should allow a moderate increase in the price of masks. When the price rises to a certain level, set the maximum price at government guidance prices, and supervise a crackdown on market behaviors that exceed the ultimate price. The price ceiling controls the increase in the price of masks and the timing of the rise within a specific range, changes the price increase expectations, avoids market panics, and prevents the market from getting out of control.

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