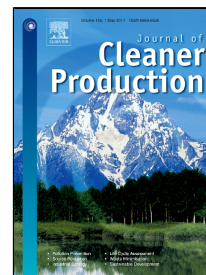


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Examining drivers of sustainable consumption: The influence of norms and opinion leadership on electric vehicle adoption in Sweden

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Abstract

Transportation accounts for a large and growing part of carbon dioxide emissions. With an increasing vehicle fleet worldwide private car use is becoming an acute problem in need of urgent attention and action. Policy interference and cleaner cars are not enough; alternative fuel vehicles such as electric vehicles need to be adopted by consumers as well. Previous research on pro-environmental consumer behavior and sustainable consumption has proven the importance of norms and pro-environmental attitudes. However, little research has focused on understanding interpersonal influence found influential in consumer behavior research relating to innovation adoption. Consumer opinion leading and opinion seeking are two such interpersonal influence attitudinal constructs that have not been empirically analyzed in relation to sustainable consumption and alternative fuel vehicles. The main aim of this study is thus to analyze the influence of a set of attitudinal constructs on electric and flexfuel vehicle adoption: personal norms, social norms, ecological attitudes, opinion leading, and opinion seeking. Data from a questionnaire survey on three groups of electric vehicle adopters and non-adopters is used (N=1,192). The results confirm the importance of personal norms, opinion leading and opinion seeking in the three groups also when controlling for socio-demographic factors. The main contribution of this study is that it shows the importance of both interpersonal influence and attitudinal factors as drivers for eco-innovation adoption. The study also contributes in showing that electric vehicle and flexfuel vehicle adopters differ in relation to non-adopters on several factors.

Keywords

Consumer behavior, interpersonal influence, sustainable consumption, eco-innovation adoption, flexfuel vehicles, electric vehicles

Highlights

- Highlights the importance of personal norms in electric and flexfuel vehicle adoption.
- Opinion leading is significantly positively related to electric vehicle adoption.
- Opinion seeking is significantly negatively related to electric vehicle adoption.
- Eco-innovations such as electric vehicles would benefit from being marketed not only as cleaner, but also as socially desirable products.
- A suggestion is to label cleaner cars visibly to show others the owner's environmental responsibility taking.

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