

Research on the Influence of Busy and Productivity Orientation on Consumers' Anti-hedonic Consumption Preferences

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Abstract: Based on the social background of the rise of anti-hedonic consumption, this paper conducts a study on the factors affecting consumers' anti-hedonic consumption preference. This study used the empirical research method, through the literature combing found that productivity orientation and busy vs leisure state interaction affected consumer emptiness, and then affect anti-hedonic consumption preference. The high productivity makes consumers feel empty in their leisure state and prefer anti-hedonistic consumption. Subsequently, this paper verifies the hypothesis by data analysis methods including experiment and variance analysis, simple slope analysis and regulatory mediation analysis. The conclusions of this study enrich the studies on the anti-hedonic consumption dependent variables. It also provides a reference for the government departments to improve the well-being of different productivity-oriented groups and the anti-pleasure consumption marketing of enterprises. It has a high theoretical value and practical value.

Keywords: Busy, productivity-oriented, emptiness, anti-hedonistic, consumption.

1. Foreword

Busy people often spend their leisure time to relieve stress, and we used to think that consumers tended to buy hedonic products or services for a positive emotional experience. However, in recent years, consumer demand has become more diversified, and more and more people begin to be interested in haunted house adventure, escape room, script killing, bungee jumping, mountain climbing and other negative emotions. These products and services are designed to evoke negative emotions among consumers, and are therefore called anti-hedonic consumer goods. Consumers buy these products and services no longer to enjoy themselves, but to experience inverse emotions such as fear and anxiety. (Yang H, 2021). This anti-hedonic consumption has attracted the attention of marketers and scholars, who began to explore the reasons affecting consumers' anti-hedonic consumption. Some scholars believe that consumers' anti-hedonic consumption is affected by resource scarcity (Yang H, 2021), while others believe that consumption pain can arouse the self and satisfy the tendency to escape (Scott R, 2017).

However, none of these studies take into account an important feature of modern social consumers- busyness. With the advent of the information age and the acceleration of the pace of life, people are becoming more and more busy. "Why are people being so busy?" has also become a hot topic. Accordingly, consumption for busy people has rising. In practice, we often see more and more consumers experiencing anti-hedonistic consumption such as mountain climbing, playing haunted house and escape room in this busy era.

Anti-hedonic consumption rises in this busy age. Does that mean that busyness will affect the anti-hedonic consumption tendency of consumers in modern society? No study has been found to explain these problems. Therefore, this paper conducts a study on the impact of busyness on consumers' anti-hedonic consumption preferences to try to fill this gap.

This study used the empirical method, first, through the literature combing, we found that busyness is divided into

active and passive busyness, which is driven by productivity orientation. High productivity oriented consumers are willing to get busy and improve their efficiency, but they will feel empty when they are free. The immersive experience, novelty and self-realization brought by anti-hedonic consumption can fill the void, and then verify the hypothesis through experimental investigation and data analysis. This study explains the psychological characteristics of busy consumers through the mediation mechanism of productivity orientation, explores the influencing factors of anti-hedonic consumption preference, and enriches the research on the dependent variables before anti-hedonic consumption. It also provides enlightenment for the government departments to improve the well-being of different productivity-oriented groups and the anti-hedonic consumption marketing of enterprises, which has high theoretical and practical value.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Derivation

2.1. Busyness

Busyness is often used to describe the relationship between the number of tasks people need to complete and the time it takes to complete them (Gershuny, 2005), which means long hours of work and less free time (Bellezza, 2017). Busyness refers to people's subjective feelings of the tasks and density they need to accomplish in their lives. According to the type of busy, it can be divided into active busy and passive busy. Active busy emphasizes busyness comes from active work plan, while passive busyness comes from external mandatory work requirements.

Busy is a double-edged sword, which can have an impact on consumers' psychology and behavior, which may be either positive or negative. Being busy brings stress and anxiety (Roxburgh, 2004), but it also makes people feel valuable and needed by society, creating a sense of pride (Bellezza, 2017). In the marketing field, many studies have shown that busyness affects consumer behavior. For example, busy

consumers pay more attention to face, preference for face consumption, pay attention to long-term interests, and curb indulgent consumption.

2.2. Productivity orientation

However, according to the reasons of busyness, we find that some people are busy because of external coercion, for example, employees who are asked to work overtime, but others are busy because they want to be subjective: for example, college students who take the postgraduate entrance examination. The main factor that inspires them to be busy is productivity orientation. Productivity-oriented means that consumers constantly focus on production capacity, make progress, and do more work in a shorter period of time (Keinan, 2011). Productivity and time efficiency have become an important focus of concern in contemporary society. (Rifkin, 1987), people increasingly regard time as a scarce resource (Liu and Aaker 2008). Improving productivity orientation plays an important role in improving people's happiness and social wellbeing. For the unemployed, unemployment can significantly reduce happiness and mental health (Clack and Oswald 1994; Feather 1990). The relevant literature on leisure and work found that people's happy experiences mainly came from work rather than leisure. These studies explain why some people are willing to be busy while being free.

Therefore, for high-productivity-oriented consumers, they tend to improve themselves by being busy, and research shows that these high-productivity busy groups who get timely and unexpected free time will also devote this time to work and utilitarian activities. When high productivity-oriented groups choose busy, their productivity-oriented needs are met and, therefore, they feel fulfilled. When high productivity-oriented consumers are leisure, their capacity needs are not met, so they feel empty. But for low-productivity consumers, they do not focus on production capacity, so when low-productivity groups are at leisure, they feel relaxed and comfortable. But when low-productivity-oriented groups are busy, they feel stressed and anxious.

Feeling empty is not a pleasant experience for consumers, and can even trigger suicide. According to compensatory consumption theory, when consumers feel empty, they tend to consume products or services that can relieve the emptiness. For example: products designed with high visual density.

2.3. Anti-hedonic consumption

Hedonism consumption refers to people pursuing happiness and avoiding pain in the process of consumption. However, there are consumers who spend a lot of time and money experiencing products and experiences that evoke negative emotions. This type of consumption that aims to evoke negative emotions such as pain and fear is anti-hedonic consumption. Currently, the type of anti-hedonic consumption has attracted wide attention in academic circles. Tamborini and Stiff (1987) Study believes that consumers like to watch horror movies because they expect to see the ending they like and want. In the field of consumer behavior, some studies have found that consumers have both positive and negative emotions when watching horror movies, Andrade and Cohen (2007). However, there are few studies on the influencing factors affecting consumer anti-hedonic consumption.

Although anti-hedonic consumption can arouse negative emotions such as consumer fear, previous studies can be

inferred that anti-hedonic consumption can fill the inner emptiness of consumers. There are three main reasons: First, in the process of anti-hedonic consumption, consumers have an immersive experience, which makes consumers temporarily divorced from reality. Engaging in an exciting anti-hedonic consumption, such as skydiving ((Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993) or rafting (Arnould and Price 1993), can help consumers escape the boring life and the boring repetition of daily life (Scott et al. 2017). Therefore, anti-hedonic consumption can help consumers get rid of boredom and fill the emptiness through immersive experience. Secondly, anti-hedonic consumption is a special type of consumption. These specific consumption can increase consumer collecting experiences —, the process of positively and selectively acquiring memorable experiences as part of a range of different experiences (Keinan, 2011). Studies have shown that collecting experience is beneficial to increasing the consumption experience, making consumers feel efficient, productive (Keinan, 2011) and fulfilling (Belk, 1995), so anti-hedonic consumption compensates for emptiness by increasing the consumer experience. Finally, after consumers successfully complete the anti-hedonic consumption, they will have a sense of achievement in overcoming fear and frustration. The sense of emptiness is accompanied by the lack of meaning of life, and self-achievement and self-realization are important means to increase the meaning of life. Research on well-being suggest that achieving sexual pleasure is essential for well-being. Therefore, the sense of accomplishment and sexual pleasure of completing anti-hedonic consumption can help remedy the emptiness.

To sum up, high productivity-oriented consumers will feel empty in their leisure time, and emptiness will drive consumers to make compensatory consumption to make up for the inner emptiness, thus preferring the anti-hedonic consumption that can make up for the inner emptiness. Given this, the following assumptions are made:

H1 There is an interactive effect between busy leisure and productivity-oriented on anti-hedonic consumption preference, and high productivity-oriented consumers in the leisure state favor anti-hedonic consumption

H2 emptiness mediates the interactive effect of busy leisure and productivity orientation on anti-hedonic consumption. High productivity-oriented consumers in the leisure state have higher emptiness and prefer anti-hedonic consumption

3. Experimental Design

3.1. Design

We surveyed 1,219 participants, choosing stratified sampling, first answering the productivity-oriented scale: "I feel upset and upset when I feel wasting my time"; "Life is important to me"; "I'm an ambitious person" and "I've been working hard to be one of the best in my line.(1-very disagree, 7-very agree), the experiment asked the participants of the busy group to fill in the three things that made them feel busy recently, asked the leisure group and write down the three things to kill time during the leisure period. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the experimental stimulation, we set the shortest answer time of this module to 60s. Subsequently, participants answered the scale of emptiness, namely, "I feel empty inside," "I think something is missing from this life," and "I think nothing was done during this period" (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree; $\alpha = .90$; (Hazell 1984; Poreh et al, 2006). Next, the participants answered a 7-point scale of anti-

hedonic consumption preferences. Finally, the experiment counts the participant demographic information.

3.2. Analysis

The results of network data and literature studies suggest that busy vs idle, high and low productivity orientation has a significant effect on anti-hedonic consumption preference. To further verify whether this hypothesis holds, we constructed an ANOVA model with busy vs idle state, productivity orientation as a fixed factor, and anti-hedonic preference as the dependent factor to perform ANOVA using SPSS software.

Main effect: Taking consumer busy vs idle state as the independent variable, productivity orientation as the adjustment variable, and consumer anti-hedonic consumption as the dependent variable, we selected the sample size of model 1, bootstrapping, 5000, and obtained the following results. According to the analysis of the results of the PROCESS model 1, Consumer busy vs idle state had a significant impact on anti-hedonic consumption preference ($t=25.0515$, $P<0.05$, CI interval [2.2604, 2.6446], Excluding 0), High and low productivity orientation had a significant influence on anti-hedonic consumption preference ($t= -7.5385$, $P<0.05$, CI Interval [-0.9089, -0.5335], Excluding 0), The interaction was significant ($t= -14.2871$, $P<0.05$, CI interval [-2.2674, -1.7199], Not including 0).

Mediation analysis: In the high productivity-oriented situation, busy vs idle direct effect on anti-hedonic consumption was significant ($t=3.9457$, $P=0.0001 <0.05$, CI interval [0.0852,0.2538] excluding 0), and indirect utility was also significant (CI interval [2.0889,2.4699 excluding 0]), with an effect value of 2.2830. In the low-productivity orientation, the direct effect of busy vs leisure on anti-hedonic consumption was significant ($t= -3.8379$, $P=0.0001 <0.05$, CI interval [-0.2093, -0.0677] excluding 0) and indirect utility was also significant (CI interval [0.4339,0.7603] excluding 0) with an effect value of 0.5973.

The above results prove that the sense of emptiness plays a mediating role in the influence of state and high-low productivity orientation on anti-hedonic consumption.

4. Summary

4.1. Theoretical contribution

First, this study explored the psychological characteristics of consumers through the mediating mechanism of the psychological variable and the sense of emptiness. This study puts forward that productivity orientation affects consumer psychology. In busy time, people's efficiency is relatively high, but in leisure time, people are relatively low. For high productivity oriented consumers, low efficiency is a waste of time and life, creating emptiness (Keinan A, 2011). They tend to improve themselves by being busy. For low productivity-oriented consumers, they do not pursue high productivity orientation. Therefore, low-productivity-oriented groups will feel relaxed and comfortable at leisure. But when low-productivity-oriented groups are busy, they feel stressed and anxious.

Second, this study enriches the studies on the dependent variables before anti-hedonic consumption. Anti-hedonic consumption is the latest concept. Some studies have explored the impact of resource scarcity on anti-hedonic consumption, believing that the more scarce resources, the lower people's sense of control and the weaker the preference for anti-hedonic consumption (Yang H, 2021). This study

suggests that productivity orientation and state interaction influence consumer anti-hedonic consumption preferences. High-productivity-oriented consumers will feel empty in their leisure state, and their anti-hedonic consumption preferences will increase.

4.2. Management enlightenment

First, the productivity-oriented and busy interaction we cite in this paper helps to explain the phenomenon of "inside" and "lying flat" in contemporary society, high productivity-oriented groups will spend more time in "meaningful" things, busy is meaningful to them, and they will "inside". Low-oriented groups pay less attention to the "meaning", and think that the most important thing is to carpe diem and not fight. Therefore, they are not willing to be busy, which will increase anxiety, and they choose to "lie flat". The government should pay attention to this phenomenon. For the high-productivity oriented groups, they should ensure their busyness and ensure that their labor is proportional to their income. For low-productivity-oriented groups, the government should strive to improve their quality of life and personal happiness, and help them relieve the stress and anxiety caused by being busy. This will help improve people's livelihood and people's happiness.

Secondly, for the businesses that provide anti-hedonic consumption, it is necessary to find the right time to publicize the goods and services. The investigation and analysis show that the busy groups are more willing to make anti-hedonic consumption in their leisure state. That is to say, busy groups not only have no time to experience anti-hedonic consumption during their work and study moments, but also have a low willingness to experience during their periods. If you recommend anti-hedonic consumption to busy groups on weekdays and study, the effect is poor. Therefore, anti-hedonic consumption businesses can promote their anti-hedonic products and services on weekends and holidays.

Then, anti-hedonic consumption businesses can identify highly productivity-oriented consumers through consumer portraits and recommend anti-hedonic consumption to them first. We found by ANOVA and simple slope analysis of SPSS that anti-hedonic consumption preference is influenced by busy state and productivity-oriented. For low-productivity-oriented consumers, they may prefer to rest at home, play games, etc. Businesses can identify highly productivity-oriented consumers and promote anti-hedonic consumer products among them.

Finally, in the marketing of busy groups, businesses should pay attention to the influence of emptiness. We all find that the influence of busy type and productivity orientation on the willingness to experience anti-hedonic consumption is caused by the sense of emptiness. High productivity oriented in the leisure state, a high sense of emptiness, further, the desire to experience anti-hedonic consumption is relatively strong. Non-anti-hedonic consumer businesses can create an immersive experience and relieve the emptiness of consumers.

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