THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ON GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION

Kai Tan
Chengning Huang
Panyapiwat Institute of Management, Nonthaburi, Thailand

Green consumption is the main driving force for sustainable economic growth and the main factor for the high-quality economic development of various countries. Based on the S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) theory, this paper constructs a conceptual model of green purchase intention with government support as an independent variable, green trust as an intermediary variable, and green purchase intention as a dependent variable. An empirical analysis has been carried out. The research shows that the government's material, informational, and emotional support all have a positive impact on consumers' green trust, and green trust plays a mediating role between government support and green purchase intention.

Keywords: government support; green trust; green purchase intention

Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping, in his report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, noted that it is necessary to promote green development, promote the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, and firmly establish and practice the concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are golden mountains and silver mountains".
The development of harmonious coexistence of man and nature has been thoroughly planned. In recent years, the Chinese government has introduced a series of encouraging policies to promote green consumption. For example, in February 2021, the State People’s Council promoted green consumption in the whole process, and promote China’s green development to a new level.

In January 2022, seven ministries and commissions, including the National Development and Reform Commission of China, jointly issued the "Implementation Plan for Promoting Green Consumption", emphasizing the need to vigorously develop green consumption, and improve green consumption to promote green consumption. In April 2022, the General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China issued the "Opinions on Further Unleashing Consumption Potential and Promoting Consumption Sustained Recovery", pointing out that green consumption should be vigorously developed and the consumption potential of counties and cities should be fully exploited.

Screen et al. (2018) pointed out that in terms of policies, the government promotes the consumption of green products, but the public's willingness to buy and purchase behavior is insufficient.

Frank & Brock (2018) believe that this discrepancy has been referred to and confirmed in many kinds of literature, and it is referred to as the "green attitude-behavior gap", also known as the "green gap". An in-depth study of the underlying factors will help to understand and reduce this gap between attitudes and behaviors. Most of the existing research on green purchase intention is to explore the effect of individual psychological factors or situational factors on it, while ignoring the psychological process of consumers in the decision-making process.

Wu (2014) proposed that consumers are generally affected by the comprehensive effects of attitude, demographic characteristics, internal psychological factors, and external situational environment in the process of purchasing green products. Since the S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) framework has been widely used to study the relationship between external stimuli, psychological states, and subsequent behavioral responses. This article studies whether government support (S) can trigger consumer behavior based on the research framework of the S-O-R model. Green trust (O) and issues that indirectly affect consumers’ willingness to purchase (R), thus providing a framework and ideas for promoting green consumption.

**Research purposes**

The purpose of this study is to proceed from the following three points: first, to explore the relationship between government support and consumers' green purchase intention, and to expand the research scope of government support in consumer decision-making. The obtained results can be used as a supplement to the previous studies of factors influencing the intention of ‘green purchase’.

Other purposes are to build a theoretical model of government support influencing the intention of green purchase and reveal the relevant mechanism, enrich the research on green consumption from the theoretical level, to provide a theoretical and empirical basis for promoting the development of green consumption behavior.
In this paper, the government's intervention strategies and suggestions on improving green purchase intentions are proposed in order to make the policy play its due role more accurately and effectively in the intervention of green purchase intentions.

**Literature review**

S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) based on SR (Stimulus-Response) theory to describe the external stimulus (S) experienced by the individual and the internal mental state (O) of the individual organism and its follow-up Reaction (R) relationship.

Li & He (2022) compared with the SR theory, the SOR theory fully takes into account the role of external stimuli in the internal state of the individual and describes the process of psychological activity in which external stimuli lead to internal changes and then generate reactions. Stimulus (S) refers to external factors that change the internal state of the individual, such as environmental stimuli and social stimuli. A mental state (O) within the body is an intermediate and transitional state between a stimulus and the final response or behavior. It refers to a person's internal experience of emotional cognition, including cognitive state and emotional state. The response (R) is the result of a stimulus, again the result of the organism, usually in the form of a psychological reaction to an attitude or willingness to act.

As a sustainable economic and social development, green consumption is widely respected around the world. In this study, government support can be regarded as an external "stimulus" for green product customers. After customers receive external "stimuli", the green trust formed by self-judgment and evaluation is an "organism". Finally, this internal psychological state of consumers affects their intention to purchase green products--"reaction".

**Green purchase intention**

Purchase intention is an extension of the concept of intention, which is the subjective probability or possibility of consumers purchasing a specific product.

Dodds et al. (1991) believe that green purchase intention refers to consumers' willingness to purchase green products. Regarding the research on green purchase intention, at present it is mainly carried out from two aspects at home and abroad, namely, the influencing factors of green purchase intention and the mechanism of green purchase intention. Research on influencing factors mainly focuses on consumer factors, external intervention factors, publicity factors, and product factors.

Zhang (2005) investigated the role of Taoist cultural values in consumers’ green purchase behavior from the perspective of Taoist values, and the results confirmed that the stronger the tendency of consumers to “worship nature”, the easier it is to buy green products. In terms of the mechanism of influence, most scholars use the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to conduct research.

Yadav et al. (2016) used the TPB theory as a theoretical framework to demonstrate that consumers’ concern for the environment and environmental knowledge will affect their attitudes through the study of green purchase intentions of Indian youths, and cooperate with subjective norms and perceived behavior control to influence consumers’ impact on green purchase intentions.
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**Government support and green trust**

The term ‘green trust’ was first proposed during the formation of green consumption. Chen (2010) defined green trust as trust is a kind of belief and expectation for green products. In the field of consumer behavior, green trust plays a pivotal role. Commodities are endowed with green characteristics, which is a kind of trust.

Chen & Xiao (2016) proposed that people may be motivated by green products, trust to consider buying green products for yourself or others.

Schlosser (2006) believes that buying and selling should be based on trust, and consumers’ trust is a decisive factor in determining consumers’ willingness to purchase. When there is a reliable transaction experience between consumers and sellers, consumers’ purchases will be higher. Scholars have gradually realized the function of government support in the process of green trust. Our country’s green consumption policy is managed and adjusted through material support such as financial subsidies.

Wang & He (2011) used the grounded theory analysis and pointed out that the government can guide customers to think more about consumption behavior through informational support.

Yue et al. (2013) used the grounded theory to explore the deep influencing factors of urban residents' energy-saving behavior in Jiangsu Province and found that emotional support plays an important role in residents' energy-saving behavior. If a certain kind of tax is understood as the individual having turned over the obligation, the tax reduces an individual’s motivation to behave morally. Although the conclusions drawn by scholars are different, these scholars agree that the government should promote consumers’ trust in green through material support, informational support, and emotional support. Based on the above analysis, the research hypotheses of this study are put forward:

- **H1**: Material support has a positive impact on consumers' green trust.
- **H2**: Informational support has a positive impact on consumers' green trust.
- **H3**: Emotional support has a positive impact on consumers' green trust.

**Green trust and green purchase intention**

Green trust is defined as a psychological state that includes accepting vulnerability based on affirming others' intentions or behavioral expectations. Trust in a person or thing reduces the perception of hidden risks, making one more inclined to choose based on that person or thing. Trust has a significant impact on the decision-making process in different scenarios, especially on consumer purchase decisions.

Ashura & Zabadi (2016) found that consumers' trust in green brands can significantly affect consumers' purchase process of green products. Regarding green consumption, some scholars started from the green context and proposed the concept of "green trust", which refers to a belief formed by people based on factors such as product, service, or brand reputation, social responsibility, ability, and environmental protection efficiency.

In addition, consumers' trust in green products or green companies also means that they have high expectations, so the product or company will receive positive feedback from consumers, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

- **H4**: Green trust has a positive impact on consumers' green purchase intention.
**Research method**

The study uses a structured questionnaire to identify variables and conduct research. The data research is supported by a professional platform "Questionnaire Star", which publishes the QR code photos and links generated by the questionnaire to the Internet via social software to complete the data collection. Using the network platform aims to ensure the scientificity, reliability, and generalizability of the results. The questionnaire covers different age groups, genders, education levels, majors, and monthly family income, and the samples are representative to a certain extent. The effective recovery rate in this study was 94.6%. A small number of unqualified questionnaires had regular unqualified answers. After exclusion, a total of 218 qualified questionnaires were received.

Correlation analysis is made based on the responses to these 218 questionnaires. In the selection of questionnaire objects, to ensure that the questionnaire survey is scientific and reasonable, the research objects are enterprise personnel, college teachers, college students, retirees, etc. across the country. The data also included gender, age, education level, and family income level of the survey objects, etc.

All have been fully considered, and there is stratification in sample selection. The sample demographic information is shown in Tab. 1.

This paper draws on the existing mature scales from abroad and compiles the scale in combination with the green consumption situation, and finally contains 24 measurement items. All the items in this research adopt Likert 5-level scale, "1" means strongly disagree, "5" means strongly agree, and the degree of agreement gradually increases from 1 to 5. Among them, the government support variable was measured during the preparation of the government support measurement scale, mainly referring to the measurement scale of Suurmeijer et al. (1995) and Liang et al. (2012), on this basis, the items were compiled in combination with the characteristics of green consumption, and finally determined.
The measure of material support (MS) contains 3 items, the measure of informative support (IS) contains 4 items, and the measure of affective support (ES) contains 4 items. During the development of the Green Trust (GT) measurement scale, referring to the related research on green trust by Chen (2010), four items were determined. In the process of compiling the Green Purchase Intention Scale (GCI for short), the green purchase intention variables are mainly measured concerning the Green Purchase Intention Scale of Chan (2001) and Laukov (2013), and three items are finally determined.

**Research results**

**Reliability and validity testing**

In this study, SPSS was used to test the reliability and validity of the formal scale, and the results are shown in Tab. 2.
The reliability of the measurement variables of the formal scale is tested by Cronbach's \( \alpha \) value, because Cronbach's \( \alpha \) value of all variables is greater than 0.7, indicating that the internal consistency and reliability of the scale are good.

All measurement scales are revised concerning mature scales or research results compiled by domestic and foreign scholars, combined with green consumption scenarios, and the content validity is good after the data has been adjusted after the pre-investigation.

After factor analysis in this study, the factor loadings of the dependent variables are all above 0.6, the average variance AVE values are all above 0.5, and the combined reliability CR values are all above 0.8, which shows that the variable scales have good convergent validity.

Table 2 - Reliability and validity analysis results of each variable
(compiled by co-authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>latent variable</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>factor loading</th>
<th>CR value</th>
<th>AVE value</th>
<th>Cronbach’s ( \alpha )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>material support</td>
<td>MSI</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS2</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS3</td>
<td>0.748</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informative support</td>
<td>IS1</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS2</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS3</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS4</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional support</td>
<td>ES1</td>
<td>0.698</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES2</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES3</td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ES4</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green trust</td>
<td>GT1</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GT2</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GT3</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GT4</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green purchase</td>
<td>GCII</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intention</td>
<td>GCI2</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GCI3</td>
<td>0.857</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the premise of passing the convergent validity test, this study compared the AVE root value with the correlation analysis results to obtain the discriminant validity of each variable.

The results are shown in Tab. 3. Since the square root of the AVE of each variable is greater than the Pearson correlation coefficient between itself and other variables.

All variables were tested for discriminant validity. In addition, Tab. 3 also shows that with the exception of material and informational support, there is no correlation between other variables, and the remaining variables are significantly correlated at the 0.01 level, which is consistent with the expected theoretical assumptions and also forms the basis for testing the hypotheses below.
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Table 3 - Correlation among variables and discriminant validity analysis results
(compiled by co-authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variable</th>
<th>Material Support</th>
<th>Informative Support</th>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
<th>Green Trust</th>
<th>Green Purchase Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material Support</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>0.198**</td>
<td>0.204**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative Support</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.213**</td>
<td>0.254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Support</td>
<td>0.198**</td>
<td>0.213**</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>0.249**</td>
<td>0.274**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Trust</td>
<td>0.249**</td>
<td>0.242**</td>
<td>0.324**</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>0.244**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Purchase Intention</td>
<td>0.204**</td>
<td>0.254**</td>
<td>0.274**</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** indicates the significance level of 0.01

Model Fit Test

In this paper, Amos is used to testing the fit of the model. The results of the model fit analysis are shown in Tab. 4, where GMIN/DF is 1.784, less than 3; RMSEA is 0.056, less than 0.08; GFI is 0.876, NFI is 0.841, and CFI is 0.931, IFI 0.933, TLI 0.919, all close to or greater than 0.9; PGFI 0.695, PNFI 0.728, all greater than 0.5.

Considering comprehensively, each fitting index can meet the corresponding requirements, indicating that the model fit of this study is good.

Table 4 - Overall fitting coefficient table
(compiled by co-authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GMIN/DF</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>PGFI</th>
<th>PNFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.784</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.841</td>
<td>0.931</td>
<td>0.933</td>
<td>0.919</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothetical test

In this paper, the structural equation model of the research model was established with the help of Amos software, and the parameter results are shown in Tab. 5.

It can be seen from the data in Tab. 5 that material support has a positive impact on consumers’ green trust (β=0.27, p<0.01), while informational support has a positive impact on green trust (β=0.287, p<0.001), emotional support has a positive impact on green trust (β=0.645, p<0.001), and emotional support has the greatest impact on green trust, so H1, H2, and H3 are all proven. According to the test results, the external stimulus (S) will have a positive impact on the consumer's internal psychological state and cognitive state (O).

Tab. 5 shows that green trust has a positive impact on green purchase intention (β=0.172, p<0.01), and H4 is established, indicating that consumers’ internal psychological state and cognitive state (O) have a positive impact on their behavioral intention (R).
Table 5 - Results of model path regression parameters (compiled by co-authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothetical</th>
<th>Estimate(β)</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>In conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Material support→green trust</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>2.771</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Informational Support→Green Trust</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>3.789</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Emotional Support→Green Trust</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>3.568</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Green Trust→Green Purchase Intention</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>2.436</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>set up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * represents p<0.05, ** represents p<0.01, *** represents p<0.001.

Mediating effect test
To further examine the intermediary effect of green trust, Amos tested the intermediary variable of Bootstrap. The number of samples was set to 1000, and the confidence interval was set to 90%. The results are shown in Tab. 6.

It can be seen from Table 6 that there is no 0 in the confidence interval of each role, indicating that green trust has a mediating effect on government support and green purchase intention, and also proves the applicability of S-O-R theory to green consumption situations. External stimuli (S) will affect the individual's internal psychological state, that is, consumers' green trust (O), thus prompting consumers to respond to green purchase intentions (R).

Table 6 - Mediating effect test results (compiled by co-authors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>偏效应</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>偏效应校正90%CI</th>
<th>90%CI Lower</th>
<th>90%CI Upper</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stdIndA1</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stdIndA2</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stdIndA3</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A1 represents the path of material support→green trust→green purchase intention; A2 represents the path of informational support→green trust→green purchase intention; A3 represents the path of emotional support→green trust→green purchase intention.

Summary and discussion
Based on the S-O-R theoretical model, this paper examines the complete path through which government support (S) stimulates consumers' inner psychological state (O) to promote consumers' green purchase intention (R), and draws the following conclusions:

Government support can enhance consumers' green trust and then have a positive impact on their green purchase intention. The results of this study show that after receiving external emotional, material, and information support, individuals have a higher degree of trust in green products and the attributes and values of green enterprises, and this degree of trust enhances their willingness to purchase green products.
When consumers find that green products are more cost-effective than non-green products, and can accurately and timely obtain a large amount of information related to green products, they will be encouraged by the society and people around them. Enterprises have a strong sense of trust, thus enhancing their purchase intentions for green products.

The path-related hypothesis test also shows that emotional support has the highest impact on consumers' green trust, followed by informational and material support, whose impact is relatively low. The reasons for the different impacts above may be as follows: first, in addition to the traditional attributes of similar non-green products, green products usually have green attributes such as sustainability, environmental friendliness, and altruism, which make consumers buy and consume green products.

In this environment, consumers will further affirm that the purchase and consumption of green products are beneficial to the country and the people. Second, by receiving detailed information on green enterprises and green products, consumers have a deeper understanding of the purpose of green enterprises, the fulfillment of social responsibilities, and the functional and social attributes of green products, which will have a positive impact on consumers' green trust. If the product is also cost-effective, it will further increase consumers' trust and accelerate consumers' desire to purchase green products.

**Discussion**

Based on the above findings, this study suggests that the government can guide and develop resource-saving and environmentally friendly consumption patterns and lifestyles for consumers from the three levels of material, information, and emotional support. First, the government should further strengthen subsidies for green products, mainly by increasing the amount of subsidies, giving green products and manufacturers more technical and financial support, and giving consumers material support. Second, the government should introduce an authoritative green product certification system and green service certification system to reduce product identification confusion and increase consumer confidence in green products.

Finally, the government should pay attention to the publicity and promotion of green consumption, enhance consumers' sense of self-efficacy in achieving environmental protection goals, recognize their green consumption behavior, and then increase the general public's awareness of green consumption and promote their behavior.

**References:**


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