

Mapping Theories, Digital Predictors, and Asian Dominance in Green Purchase Intention Research

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Abstract—Despite growing environmental awareness, consumers often fail to translate this interest into actual green purchases. This systematic review maps the theoretical and empirical evolution of green purchase intention research during the period of rapid digital transformation from 2020 to 2025. This study follows PRISMA guidelines and analyzes 56 empirical studies from five major academic databases, including Scopus and ScienceDirect. The analysis focuses on publication trends, geographical distributions, theoretical frameworks, and key predictors. The review reveals a significant geographical concentration of research in Asia, particularly China, India, and Vietnam, while studies from Western contexts remain limited. Theoretically, while the Theory of Planned Behavior remains the dominant framework, the Stimulus-Organism-Response model is gaining traction as researchers increasingly explore digital contexts. Key findings indicate that attitude and green trust are the most consistent psychological predictors, while social media influence has emerged as a powerful external stimulus. This review is timely, as it captures how digital marketing factors have reshaped traditional behavioral models in the post-2020 period, a shift that earlier reviews did not address. The main contributions include: (1) documenting the paradigm shift from static behavioral models to dynamic, digitally-integrated frameworks; (2) identifying the most robust predictors across diverse contexts; and (3) examining the implications of the geographical research concentration for global theory development. The study concludes by recommending that future research prioritize longitudinal designs, cross-cultural comparisons, and investigations into digital platform features to understand better how green intentions translate into actual sustainable consumption behaviors across different cultural and institutional contexts.

Keywords—Green purchase intention, systematic literature review, digital marketing, consumer behavior.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer habits have changed significantly over the last decade. People now focus more on sustainability and consider how their purchasing decisions affect the environment. This shift is clearly evident across sectors such as organic food, green vehicles, household products, and sustainable packaging [1]–[5]. At the same time, rapid digitalization has transformed how these products are marketed and perceived. However, actual buying behavior does not always match the growing interest in eco-friendly products [6]. This gap raises an important question concerning what truly motivates individuals to purchase these items.

Researchers have long studied purchase intention as a key psychological step preceding actual action [7]. While scholars have traditionally examined personal values, perceived benefits, and social norms, the rise of digital platforms has introduced new dynamics. Recent studies have shifted focus to digital triggers, such as live-streaming commerce, influencer marketing, and e-service quality. These elements provide important context that shapes how consumers receive and process sustainability information, particularly through social media [8]–[12].

Research on green purchase intention has expanded rapidly since 2020, with a significant number of studies published in 2024 and 2025. Geographically, most of the literature in this review originates from Asia, with China, India, and Vietnam being the main contributors, while studies from other regions remain limited. This geographical concentration offers valuable insights into rapidly digitalizing markets where environmental awareness is growing. However, it also raises important questions regarding whether findings from these contexts are equally applicable across different cultural settings, regulatory environments, and consumer markets. Theoretically, the Theory of Planned Behavior is the most prevalent framework, followed by the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. This trend reflects an increasing need to analyze how digital stimuli impact consumer psychology. It also demonstrates that green purchase intention is a complex process influenced by a mix of cognitive, emotional, social, and technological factors.

While previous reviews have examined green purchase

behavior, they have not fully captured recent developments in the field. Specifically, three important gaps remain unaddressed. First, the dominance of digital stimuli as key drivers of green purchase intention has emerged primarily after 2020, making earlier reviews unable to account for this shift. Second, the surge in publications since 2020 reflects a fundamental change in how researchers approach green consumption, moving from traditional behavioral models to frameworks that incorporate digital marketing and real-time consumer interactions. Third, the concentration of recent research in Asian markets limits our understanding of how different cultural and institutional contexts shape green purchasing patterns globally. In light of these rapid developments, there is a need to synthesize the latest empirical findings. It is essential to examine how psychological factors, digital marketing stimuli, and social contexts interact to drive green purchase intention.

Therefore, this literature review aims to answer three key questions: (1) What theories are predominantly used in green purchase intention research? (2) What factors consistently predict green purchase intention? Moreover, (3) What are the methodological patterns and geographical contexts of recent studies? By answering these questions, this review makes several contributions to the literature. It systematically maps the theoretical evolution in green purchase intention research during the period of rapid digital transformation from 2020 to 2025. It identifies how digital marketing factors have altered traditional behavioral frameworks and highlights the role of trust in contemporary green consumption. Furthermore, it examines the implications of the geographical concentration of research for both theory development and practical implementation. This review seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the current research landscape and identify global patterns.

This review systematically analyzes 56 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025 that explicitly measure green purchase intention. It includes only peer-reviewed articles in English with full-text access, following a strict selection process detailed in the Method section. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: The Method section describes the search and selection process; the Results section presents the characteristics and main findings of the studies; the Discussion section interprets emerging patterns and theoretical implications; and the Conclusion section summarizes the contributions and suggests directions for future research.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This systematic literature review adhered to established guidelines to ensure transparency and replicability. The overall search and selection procedures used in this study are illustrated in Fig. 1.

Literature searches were conducted across five major academic databases: Scopus, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Wiley, and SpringerLink. These databases were selected for their comprehensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed journals in business, marketing, consumer behavior, and information systems.

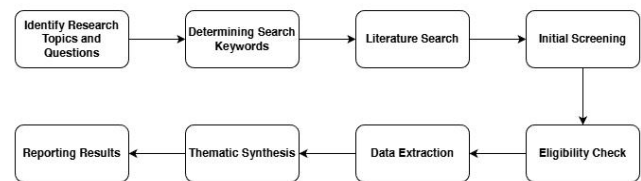


Fig. 1. Research procedure.

Scopus provides extensive multidisciplinary coverage with robust indexing of international journals, while ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Wiley, and SpringerLink offer direct access to leading publishers in business and management research. Together, these databases ensure a broad representation of mainstream academic literature in the field. The search covered publications from 2020 to 2025 to capture the most recent research developments in the field.

It is important to acknowledge potential limitations in database selection. While the chosen databases provide comprehensive coverage of English-language business and marketing journals, the exclusion of Web of Science or regional databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) or specialized repositories may have resulted in the omission of relevant studies published in non-indexed journals or non-English publications. This limitation may particularly affect the representation of regional studies outside mainstream indexed journals. However, the focus on these five databases aligns with the study's objective to analyze the current state of international peer-reviewed research accessible to a global academic audience.

The search strategy used a combination of keywords related to green purchase intention and its predictors. Search terms included phrases such as "green purchase intention" or "sustainable purchase intention," combined with broader terms like "consumer," "attitude," "trust," "value," and "marketing." Boolean operators were used to connect these terms, and no additional filters were applied during the initial search to ensure maximum coverage.

Articles were evaluated based on the criteria summarized in Table 1. To be included, studies had to meet five specific conditions: (1) they were empirical research using quantitative, experimental, or mixed-methods designs; (2) they explicitly measured green purchase intention (including specific products like electric vehicles or organic food) as the dependent variable; (3) they were published between 2020 and 2025; (4) they were peer-reviewed articles written in English; and (5) the full text was accessible.

In contrast, conceptual papers, editorials, and reviews that lacked empirical data were excluded. Studies that focused on green behaviors other than purchasing, such as general recycling habits or travel mode choices, were also omitted. Furthermore, studies published before 2020 or those focusing purely on macro-level policies were excluded from this review.

Table 1.
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
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Study type	Empirical studies (quantitative, experimental, mixed-methods)	Conceptual papers, editorials, comments, reviews without data
Main variable	Measures green purchase intention or purchase intention for environmentally friendly products	Focus on other green behaviors such as recycling, energy saving, and transport choice
Publication year	2020-2025	Published before 2020
Accessibility	Full text available	Full text not available
Language	English	Non-English
Population	Consumers, social media users, students, Gen Y, or Gen Z	Industry studies, macro-level, government policy
Theoretical relevance	Examines stimulus, psychological, or marketing factors affecting green purchase intention	Does not examine factors relevant to green purchase intention

The selection process followed the PRISMA guidelines, as shown in Fig. 2. The initial search yielded 998 articles. After removing 312 duplicates, 686 articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts, which resulted in 461 exclusions. Full texts were sought for the remaining 225 articles. However, ten articles could not be accessed, leaving 215 articles for full-text assessment.

During the eligibility check, an additional 159 articles were excluded. The reasons for exclusion included irrelevant variables, insufficient statistical results, the use of qualitative methods without measuring purchase intention, or a focus on unrelated topics. Ultimately, 56 articles met all criteria and were included in the final review.

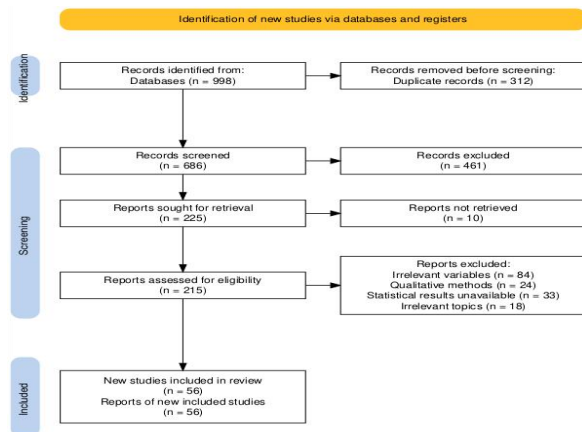


Fig. 2. PRISMA flowchart.

The author systematically extracted data from each study, including publication details, geographical context, theoretical frameworks, methodology, and key findings. A narrative synthesis approach was used to analyze the results. Articles were first categorized by their theoretical frameworks, such as the theory of planned behavior or the stimulus-organism-response model. Subsequently, they were analyzed using key predictors, including psychological, social, and marketing stimuli. This approach allowed for the

identification of consistent patterns across different geographical contexts and consumer segments.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the characteristics and main findings of the 56 studies included in this systematic literature review. The results are organized to systematically address the research questions regarding theoretical frameworks, key predictors, and methodological patterns.

A. Publication Trends

Analysis of the 56 included studies reveals a clear upward trend in research on green purchase intention from 2020 to 2025. Publications were initially stable, with five articles in 2020, four in 2021, nine in 2022, and nine in 2023. A notable increase occurred in 2024, with 13 publications, followed by a peak in 2025, with 16 articles (Fig. 3). This surge indicates growing academic interest in sustainable consumption, particularly in emerging markets and post-pandemic contexts.

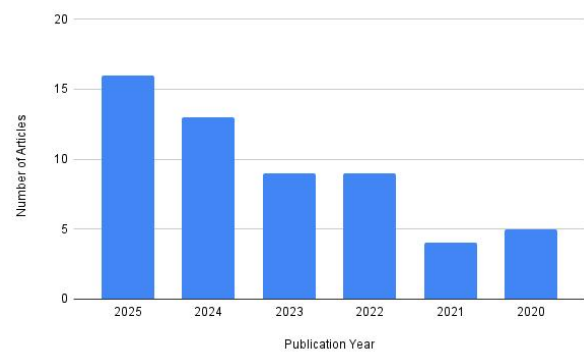


Fig. 3. Distribution of publications by year.

B. Geographical Distribution

The research's geographical distribution shows an intense concentration in Asia. China leads with the most studies (20 articles), followed by India (11) and Vietnam (8). Research in China predominantly examines digital stimuli, social media marketing, and advertising appeals [13]–[17]. Meanwhile, Indian studies often focus on psychological determinants and value integration for specific product categories, such as apparel or electric vehicles [6], [18], [19]. In Vietnam, research primarily targets young consumers and specific behaviors, such as carbon offsetting [20]–[23]. Outside of these dominant regions, contributions include studies from Saudi Arabia [11], Pakistan [24], [25], Italy [4], and Indonesia [26], [27]. Although research from Western contexts is limited in this sample, there are notable single studies from Europe [28], [29] and cross-cultural comparisons involving Malaysia [30], Mexico [31], the USA [32] and the UK [33].

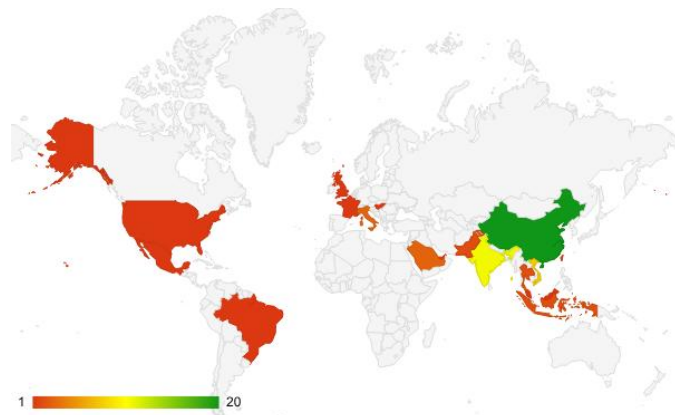


Fig. 4. Geographical distribution of studies.

C. Theoretical Frameworks

Regarding theoretical approaches, the theory of planned behavior emerged as the dominant framework, employed in 16 studies (29%), as shown in Fig. 5. Researchers frequently extended this theory with additional variables, such as environmental knowledge or trust, to enhance its explanatory power [20], [34]–[36]. The stimulus-organism-response framework was the second most common approach, appearing in eight studies (14%). This model was primarily applied in digital marketing contexts to measure how external stimuli, such as CSR activities, affect internal states, such as trust and subsequent purchase intention [1], [21], [37]. Other significant frameworks include theories used in experimental designs, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model [13], value-based theories such as the value-belief-norm theory [38], actor-network theory [39], and frugality models [40]. Notably, one study utilized machine learning algorithms to predict purchase intention without relying on a specific behavioral theory [8].

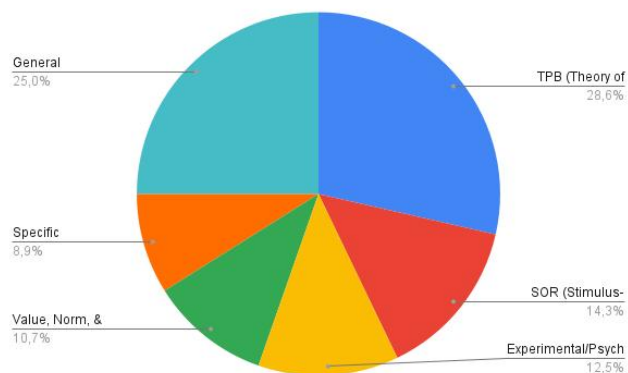


Fig. 5. Distribution of theoretical frameworks.

D. Methodological Patterns

Methodologically, quantitative approaches dominate the field. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was the most widely used analytical technique, appearing in 21 studies (38%), reflecting its popularity for exploratory theoretical research. Covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) was used in 13 studies. Experimental designs were also prominent, appearing in eight studies, specifically for

testing advertising appeals, message framing [41], [42], and specific products like electric two-wheelers [43]. Regarding sampling, the majority of studies employed cross-sectional surveys with nonprobability sampling methods, often targeting online populations or university students.

E. Key Predictors of Green Purchase Intention

The analysis of key predictors reveals distinct patterns in how different factors influence green purchase intention. These patterns are presented below by predictor category. Psychological factors consistently emerged as foundational drivers. Attitude is the strongest predictor, examined in 15 studies with a 100% consistency rate. Regardless of the product type, a positive attitude consistently leads to higher purchase intention [2], [5], [26], [36]. Green Trust also demonstrated a perfect consistency rate across nine studies. It acts as a crucial mediator, especially in online and CSR contexts [1], [21], [23], [44]. Additionally, Perceived Green Value was a strong driver in 9 of 10 studies, although social value showed mixed results in some specific contexts [45]. Environmental Knowledge and Consciousness yielded generally positive results across 13 studies, though some findings suggest that environmental concern alone may not directly drive intention without mediation [46], [47].

Social and normative influences showed more context-dependent effects. Subjective Norms showed mixed results with an 80% significant association rate across ten studies. While significant in many Asian contexts [48], norms were found to be non-significant in studies focused on refurbished products or specific cultural settings [47]. Conversely, social media influence demonstrated high consistency across 12 studies. Factors such as firm-generated storytelling content were found to be more effective than user-generated content in driving purchase intention [10], [49], [50].

Marketing stimuli demonstrated consistently strong effects across contexts. Corporate social responsibility and public welfare had a 100% positive impact across five studies. This effect is often mediated by trust and brand image [25], [51]. Message framing was also effective in all six experimental studies examined. However, the effectiveness of specific appeals, such as egoistic versus altruistic framing, depends heavily on the product type and the consumer's resource availability [13], [52]–[54].

F. Summary of Key Findings

Table 2 summarizes the frequency and consistency of key predictors across the 56 studies.

Table 2.
Frequency and Consistency of Key Predictors

Predictor Category	Specific Variable	Studies Examined	Studies Significant	Success Rate
Psychological	Attitude	15	15	100%
	Subjective norms	10	8	80%
	Perceived behavioral control	8	7	87.5%
Other	Green trust	9	9	100%

psychological	Green perceived value	10	9	90%
	Env. Knowledge & consciousness	13	12	92%
	Social media/digital ads	12	10	83%
Marketing stimulus	CSR/public welfare	5	5	100%
	Message framing/appeal	6	6	100%

IV. DISCUSSION

This discussion interprets the findings presented in the Results section. It addresses the three research questions while exploring theoretical implications, methodological considerations, and directions for future research. The discussion is organized around four key themes: the theoretical landscape, predictor patterns, methodological limitations, and emerging future themes.

A. Theoretical Dominance and Paradigm Shifts

The Theory of Planned Behavior appeared in 29% of the studies, reflecting a continued reliance on established frameworks. The consistent significance of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in these studies confirms that these constructs remain fundamental [2], [36]. However, many researchers have recognized the need to extend this theory. They incorporated variables such as green trust, environmental knowledge, or green self-identity [20], [27]. This trend suggests that the original model, when used in isolation, may be insufficient to capture the full complexity of green consumption.

The emergence of alternative frameworks signals a potential shift in theoretical frameworks. The use of the Stimulus-Organism-Response model in 14% of studies offers a different perspective on how intention is formed. Unlike traditional models, this theory explicitly acknowledges that external stimuli shape psychological states before influencing intentions. These stimuli include digital information, corporate communications, and social media exposure [1], [21]. This shift is particularly relevant in digital environments where consumers are constantly exposed to green marketing. Similarly, the adoption of cognitive theories in experimental studies demonstrates a growing recognition that message characteristics matter. Factors such as message framing and psychological distance play a significant role in how consumers respond to green appeals [13], [52].

B. The Anatomy of Influence: Understanding Predictor Patterns

The systematic analysis of predictor variables reveals important nuances regarding the drivers of green purchase intention.

1) The role of attitude

Attitude emerged as a consistent predictor with a 100% significant association across the studies examined. This

association confirms that favorable evaluations are a prerequisite for intention [2], [45]. However, recent literature suggests attitude often functions as a mediator rather than a sole driver. For instance, environmental knowledge and past experiences shape attitudes first, which subsequently influence intentions [2]. This suggestion implies that marketing interventions should target the antecedents of attitude, such as perceived value and knowledge, rather than assuming attitudes exist independently.

2) Green trust as a key mediator

Green trust demonstrated a perfect consistency rate across nine studies. It frequently mediates the relationship between corporate stimuli and intentions [1], [21]. In an era of potential greenwashing, trust serves as a critical filter. Corporate investments in sustainability do not directly translate into purchase intention unless they first build trust and a positive brand image [14], [25]. This phenomenon underscores that credibility must precede persuasion.

3) Cultural nuances in norms and consciousness

The results for environmental consciousness and social norms reveal that context plays a significant role. While generally significant [38], [48], some studies found that environmental concern does not always directly predict intention, even with mediators such as perceived behavioral control [47]. Furthermore, comparative studies suggest that there are cultural differences. For example, [32] found that self-identity influenced attitudes more strongly among American consumers, whereas internal locus of control was more significant for Indian consumers. Similarly, subjective norms appear highly influential in Asian contexts [48] but may be less relevant for specific product categories in other settings [47].

4) Social media and marketing stimuli

Social media influence and digital marketing demonstrated high effectiveness across the studies. The mechanism is multidimensional as it involves storytelling, visual appeals, and influencer interactions [50], [55]. Crucially, experimental evidence highlights that message effectiveness is not universal. Studies [13] and [52] demonstrated that the impact of different appeals, such as egoistic versus altruistic framing, depends significantly on the product type and the consumer's available resources.

C. Methodological and Geographical Constraints

1) Limitations of cross-sectional design

The predominance of cross-sectional designs limits the ability to determine causality. While statistical models test theoretical paths, they cannot capture the dynamic nature of intention formation over time. Furthermore, reliance on self-reported intentions raises concerns regarding the gap between intention and actual behavior. This limitation was explicitly addressed by only a few studies [33].

2) *Geographical concentration*

The concentration of research in Asia raises questions regarding generalizability. China, India, and Vietnam account for a large majority of the studies. While this provides rich insights into emerging markets, the scarcity of recent studies from Western contexts in this sample suggests a potential bias. Findings regarding social influence and CSR might be powerful in these cultural settings compared to more skeptical or individualistic Western markets. However, the inclusion of studies from the USA [32] and Europe [41] helps provide some balance.

D. *Emerging Themes and Future Research Directions*

1) *Digital transformation*

The strong predictive power of social media variables and the use of machine learning suggest that green consumption is increasingly digitally mediated [8]. Future research should extend beyond surveys to analyze digital data or employ experimental designs to test specific digital features, as demonstrated by [42].

2) *Addressing greenwashing*

With green trust emerging as a key mediator, future research must thoroughly investigate greenwashing. Studies such as [56] highlight that greenwashing negatively impacts intention. Future scholars need to explore mechanisms to repair broken trust and identify specific signals that effectively counteract skepticism.

3) *Bridging the intention-behavior gap*

The gap between intention and behavior remains a critical frontier. Research by [33] found that implementation intentions help bridge this gap. Future research needs to employ longitudinal designs or actual purchase data. This condition is necessary to validate whether the high reported intentions in Asian markets translate into actual sustainable consumption.

E. *Theoretical and Practical Implications*

Theoretically, the field is moving towards integrative models. The Theory of Planned Behavior alone is often insufficient, so models that combine it with other theories or integrate value systems offer stronger explanatory power [18], [38]. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of message alignment. Marketers must tailor appeals to the product type and consumer segment [9]. For policymakers, leveraging social norms and digital platforms appears more effective than relying solely on environmental education, especially within the demographic contexts represented in this review.

V. CONCLUSION

This systematic review synthesizes findings from 56 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025. It highlights the complex nature of green purchase intention within a rapidly evolving marketplace. The review makes three key contributions to the literature. First, it systematically documents a paradigm shift from static behavioral models to dynamic frameworks integrating digital marketing and trust as central elements. Second, it identifies the most consistent

predictors of green purchase intention across diverse contexts, with attitude and green trust emerging as the most robust psychological factors. Third, it reveals the geographical concentration of recent research in Asian markets, particularly China, India, and Vietnam, and discusses the implications of this concentration for theory development and global applicability. Collectively, the analysis confirms that the field is shifting from static behavioral models to more dynamic frameworks. While the Theory of Planned Behavior remains the foundational approach, the increasing adoption of the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework indicates that researchers are recognizing the pivotal role of external stimuli. Digital marketing, social media interactions, and corporate communications are now viewed as critical drivers shaping consumer psychology before an intention is formed.

Empirically, the review identifies consistent predictors that drive green consumption. As noted, attitude and green trust emerged as the most robust psychological factors. Trust is particularly vital, as it serves as a necessary filter against consumer skepticism and greenwashing. Regarding social factors, the concept of influence has expanded beyond traditional peer pressure to include digital dynamics. Social media platforms now play a central role in educating consumers and shaping their values through storytelling and visual content. Geographically, these insights are predominantly derived from Asian perspectives, with China, India, and Vietnam contributing the majority of data. This fact suggests that emerging markets are currently the focal point for sustainable consumption trends.

These findings offer clear implications for practitioners and policymakers. For marketers, the results suggest that persuasion alone is insufficient; strategies must focus on building genuine credibility and trust to convert interest into intention. Furthermore, message framing should be tailored to consumer segments, as egoistic and altruistic appeals perform differently across product contexts. For policymakers, the substantial impact of social media suggests that digital campaigns may be more effective than traditional educational methods in fostering sustainable norms.

Despite significant progress, critical gaps remain. The existing literature predominantly relies on cross-sectional surveys. While capturing a snapshot of intent, this method fails to explain how intentions evolve or translate into actual behavior. The gap between reported intention and actual purchase remains a significant challenge that few studies have addressed. Additionally, the scarcity of research from Western contexts limits global generalizability. Future research should prioritize longitudinal designs and experimental methods to establish causality. Scholars should also focus on digital transformation and investigate how platform features influence consumer decision-making. Cross-cultural studies are needed to examine whether the potent effects of social norms and digital influence in Asian contexts apply to other markets. Addressing these limitations will help translate green intentions into tangible, sustainable actions.

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