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"Hey Friend Buy Green": Influence of Green Blogging on Green Purchase Intention Through Green Trust and Perceptions of Information Usefulness

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Abstract: Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, Social Learning Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study investigates how social media usage affects green purchase intention (GPI) through the sequential and parallel mediating roles of green blogging, perceptions of information usefulness, and green trust. Drawing on data from 293 urban consumers in eastern China, the structural equation modeling results validate all seven proposed hypotheses. Social media usage significantly enhances green blogging, perceptions of information usefulness, and green trust. Green blogging further reinforces both perceptions of information usefulness and green trust. In turn, both perceptions of information usefulness and green trust positively influence GPI. Mediation analysis confirms that green trust and perceptions of information usefulness partially mediate the relationship between social media usage and GPI, with green trust emerging as the stronger mediator. Multi-group comparisons reveal that gender, age, education, and income significantly moderate the mediation pathways, with the effects more pronounced among women, individuals with higher education and income, and those with greater exposure to social media. These findings extend digital green marketing theory and offer actionable insights for platform managers, sustainability advocates, and policy developers aiming to foster environmentally responsible consumer behavior through digital channels.

Keywords: social media usage, green blogging, perceptions of information usefulness, green trust, green purchase intention, SOR model, TAM, Social Learning Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

As climate change and environmental degradation intensify, consumers are showing growing interest in environmentally friendly green products that promote sustainability and low ecological footprints (Barbu et al., 2022). Alongside this rising environmental awareness, the pervasive influence of social media is reshaping how consumers access, evaluate, and act upon green information. Social media has become a powerful vehicle not only for marketing green products but also for fostering two-way communication about sustainability between firms and consumers (Sarwar & Loureiro, 2025). Understanding how such digital platforms shape eco-conscious consumer behavior is crucial for advancing sustainable consumption practices.

Green products, as defined in environmental research, encompass both environmentally responsible production processes and resource-efficient outcomes, such as recyclable designs and low-polluting technologies (Sharma, 2024). Consumers' willingness to purchase green products is often seen as an expression of proactive environmental behavior. Prior research has

identified both psychological drivers—such as environmental attitudes, personal values, and perceived consumer effectiveness (Shen & Wang, 2022; Miller et al., 2022)—and contextual enablers, including price sensitivity, social norms, and information access (Kumar & Dholakia, 2022), as predictors of green purchase intention (GPI).

Nevertheless, there continues to be a substantial omission of research exploring how these behavioral mechanisms operate in the social media context. Social media is an ever-changing digital landscape, expediting information dissemination, as well as engagement with the users. Some studies have noted that it has the potential to influence consumers' attitudes toward and behaviors to purchase green products (Chaihanchanchai & Anantachart, 2023), but relatively few have tested the cognitive and affective mechanisms by which social media marketing leads to GPI in a systematic way. In particular, the psychological mechanisms linking digital marketing to behavioral intention have been understudied.

Two primary constructs – perceptions of information usefulness and green trust - have surfaced as key to explaining green behavior in web contexts. Perceptions of information usefulness refers to the consumer's cognitive evaluation of whether online content boosts the consumer's confidence in their decision-making (Wang et al., 2023) and green trust refers to the consumer's belief in the credibility and honesty of environmental claims (Nguyen-Viet & Thanh Tran, 2024). Each construct has been investigated on its own, but the direction (i.e., does one construct enhance the other) and their relationship is not clear.

Moreover, their potential as dual mediators between social media usage and green purchase intention have not been fully tested. Existing research highlights the importance of trust in digital commerce and the persuasive power of useful information in promoting sustainable behaviors (Luo et al., 2023), but few studies offer an integrative framework that combines both. Additionally, limited attention has been paid to how these relationships vary across socio-demographic groups in rapidly evolving markets like urban China.

To address these gaps, the present study proposes a conceptual framework grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The SOR model suggests that external stimuli (e.g., digital marketing) influence internal states (e.g., trust, cognitive appraisal), which in turn shape behavioral responses (Vinoi et al., 2025). TAM complements this view by emphasizing the roles of perceived usefulness and credibility in digital adoption (Muflih, 2023).

To guide this investigation, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1:
How does social media usage influence green purchase intention through green trust and perceived information usefulness?

RQ2:
What is the directional relationship between green trust and perceived information usefulness, and how does this affect their respective mediating roles?

RQ3:
To what extent do gender, education, income, and social media exposure moderate the structural paths in the proposed model?

This study contributes to the literature in three significant ways. First, it extends the SOR model to digitally mediated contexts by examining green trust and perceptions of information usefulness as dual mediators. Second, it clarifies the causal relationship and interaction between these two organismic constructs, providing insight into their sequencing and interdependence. Third, it introduces a multi-group analysis to uncover how consumer heterogeneity moderates the effectiveness of green digital marketing strategies.

The remaining sections of the paper are organized as follows, with Section 2 extending into an overview of the relevant literature and hypotheses development, in Section 3, the data collection and variables used are discussed, with Section 4 summarizing findings statistically. Section 5 synthesizes findings into theoretical and practical perspectives and Section 6 summarizes findings, limitations of study, and future research direction.

2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Research Background and the Current Status of Green Consumption

Environmental issues, such as pollution and climate change have risen to prominence in recent years, which has led to green consumption emerging as a major driver of sustainable development globally (Abid et al., 2022). FTSE Russell (2023) reported that listed companies around the globe earned over USD 4.4 trillion in revenues from green products and services in 2022, and that in early 2025, revenues are projected to reach USD 7.9 trillion, which is roughly 8.6% of global listed equity markets (FTSE Russell, 2025).

Over the past ten years, global green revenues have been growing at an annualized rate of 6.6%, which reflects a robust and institutionalization of sustainability-based business models. Green revenues are also not limited to Western markets. In China, for example, there is a rising consumer enthusiasm for sustainability: over 70% of surveyed participants reported being aware of green products and about as many (72.5%) also reported being willing to pay premium prices for them (Chemlinked Market Insight, 2025). While exact figures on the value of the green economy varies by source, the general direction of travel is apparent: China's green consumer economy is in a phase of accelerating and diversifying growth, and it is especially visible in high-growth sectors such as clean beauty, plant-based nutrition, and low-carbon household goods that are rapidly becoming new engines of green domestic consumption.

Concurrently, China’s rapid digital transformation has profoundly transformed consumer behavior trends. Based on CNNIC (2024a), by mid-2024, the number of internet users in China reached an estimated 1.10 billion, with a national penetration rate of 78.0%, increased from 77.5% at the close of 2023 (CNNIC, 2024b). In line with this rapid increase in internet usage, social media engagement has likewise reflected an increase. According to DataReportal (2024) reports, over 1.06 billion Chinese actively used social media platforms at the beginning of 2024, equating to 74.2% of the national population.

Considering this digital context, recent empirical studies have recorded the increased role of social media in new eco-friendly behaviours, particularly among youth. For instance, Xie and Madni (2023) found social media content influenced green purchase intention through perceived green value and subjective social norms in Chinese Gen Z. Likewise, Zhao et al. (2025) pointed out, referenced by the 2023 China Consumer Trends Report, that 73.8% of Chinese consumers stated they prefer to use environmentally friendly brands in their everyday consumption; an important indicator of significant movement toward sustainability in conventional consumption.

Despite this, there are still structural barriers that continue to represent significant challenges. Yang et al. (2024) surveyed 1,072 urban and rural consumers in Inner Mongolia and report that generalized distrust of national eco-labels inhibits more widespread consumption of sustainable products. They conclude that there is a significant gap between trust levels for sustainable consumption and those for other factors relating to institutional trust, consumer knowledge, and accessible information on eco-labels and related products. In transitional economies, such as China, trust is generally low, and this low level appears to be an impediment to achieving sustainable consumption.

In addressing these challenges, this study explores how social media usage and green blogging potentially strengthen consumers' trust and perceptions of information usefulness, thereby enhancing green purchasing intentions. Moreover, to ensure the robustness and validity of the proposed research model, this study integrates demographic factors—gender, age, education level, and income—as critical control variables. Prior literature consistently identifies these demographic characteristics as influential factors that may differentially affect consumer environmental behaviors, perceptions of green messaging, and subsequent purchasing intentions (Li, 2025). By controlling for these demographic variations, the study aims to clearly isolate the effects of the core theoretical constructs under investigation, thereby offering deeper insights and more precise theoretical contributions to green marketing literature and practice.

2.2 Social Learning Theory

Within the evolving landscape of digital consumption, contemporary research increasingly highlights the significance of social learning processes in shaping pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. Yu et al. (2024) note that interactive online communities, particularly those centered around sustainability themes, serve as important venues where individuals observe and internalize green practices through both peer interaction and influencer modeling. Although much attention has been devoted to the positive influence of vicarious learning, recent studies also point to potential limitations, such as the risk of information overload or authenticity concerns arising from excessive digital content. Green blogs and similar user-driven platforms further expand these opportunities by offering authentic contexts for engagement and knowledge sharing (Rachmad, 2024). As research shifts toward understanding not just the presence, but the effectiveness of these learning mechanisms, the question arises as to how observational experiences within digital environments translate into sustained intentions for green purchasing.

2.3 S-O-R Model

This question is further addressed by the S-O-R (Stimulus–Organism–Response) framework, which has gained considerable traction in recent scholarship examining the psychological mechanisms underlying sustainable consumption. Leeuwis et al. (2022) demonstrate that stimuli embedded in digital contexts—ranging from targeted green campaigns to participatory content—activate cognitive and affective responses that mediate consumer decision-making. Rather than presenting a uniform pathway, the literature offers nuanced perspectives regarding the roles of perceived credibility, informational utility, and emotional resonance (Garczarek-Bak et al., 2024). Currie et al. (2024) argue that these organismic factors do not operate in isolation, but interact dynamically, sometimes yielding unexpected outcomes contingent upon individual and situational differences. Evidence from empirical studies underscores the importance of contextually grounded research, particularly as new digital formats continuously reshape consumer engagement with green information (Vătămănescu et al., 2024). In this way, the S-O-R model advances the field by clarifying how psychological processes triggered by digital stimuli ultimately inform real-world purchasing intentions.

2.4 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Building upon these psychological insights, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) further enriches our understanding by elucidating consumers' cognitive evaluations in digitally mediated sustainability contexts (Al-Emran, 2023). Davis and Granić (2024) revisit the TAM, originally formulated to explain user adoption of technological innovations, emphasizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as fundamental determinants of digital engagement with information content. Recent literature extends this foundational logic by incorporating additional cognitive and social-psychological dimensions, such as trust, environmental concern, and platform credibility, to better capture the complexity inherent in consumer engagement with green information online (Worakittikul et al., 2024). Nonetheless, critiques within contemporary scholarship highlight TAM's limited capacity to fully explain behavioral intentions without adequately addressing affective and socially driven factors (Ishengoma, 2024). Such critiques underscore a critical theoretical gap: the need for more comprehensive frameworks that integrate cognitive evaluations with broader social-psychological influences. As digital contexts evolve, scholars increasingly advocate for an expanded, integrative approach that acknowledges the multifaceted drivers shaping sustainable consumer behavior (Amiri et al., 2024). In response to these theoretical debates, the present research positions TAM within a broader conceptual nexus—incorporating cognitive, affective, and social dimensions—to more robustly explain consumers' green purchasing intentions.

2.5 Green Purchase Intention

Against this backdrop, green purchase intention (GPI) emerges as a multifaceted construct shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and social influences. Chang and Hung (2022) suggest that while consumers' environmental awareness serves as a necessary foundation, its effectiveness in predicting actual green purchasing is substantially influenced by emotional engagement and alignment with personal values. Similarly, social influences—including norms and peer behaviors—are recognized as critical determinants, yet their impact

varies considerably across cultural contexts and demographic segments (Xiao et al., 2023; Liao, 2024). In digitally mediated contexts, perceptions of information usefulness also surface as significant cognitive mediators influencing consumers' intentions (Ho et al., 2024). However, ongoing scholarly debates persist regarding the precise mechanisms and conditions under which these cognitive evaluations translate into behavioral intentions. Thus, a nuanced examination of how cognitive, affective, and normative elements interact is essential to comprehensively understand consumers' GPI, particularly within the unique and rapidly evolving landscape of Chinese social media. In response, this study proposes an integrated theoretical framework explicitly focusing on mediating roles such as information usefulness and green trust within digital environments, thereby providing deeper insights into sustainable consumption intentions.

2.6. Social Media Usage

Social media platforms have revolutionized information dissemination and consumer interaction. Drawing on Social Learning Theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977), social media usage enables consumers to observe and emulate green bloggers, who serve as pivotal agents in sharing environmental knowledge and promoting sustainable behaviors. Although the theoretical foundation suggests a strong link between social media usage and green blogging, empirical evidence remains limited, especially in emerging markets like China, where digital ecosystems and consumer behaviors are rapidly evolving (Saqib et al., 2025). This research gap underscores the necessity to empirically validate this relationship. Therefore, we propose:

H1: Social media usage has a positive relationship with green blogging.

Beyond behavioral engagement, social media usage functions as a critical external stimulus that shapes consumers' cognitive evaluation processes. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Vafaei-Zadeh et al., 2025) conceptualizes social media marketing as an environmental stimulus (S) influencing consumers' internal cognitive state (O), particularly their perceptions of information usefulness regarding green products. Prior research confirms that social media exposure enhances consumers' perceived usefulness of green information, which plays a crucial role in informed decision-making (Wu & Long, 2024). However, inconsistent operationalizations and contextual disparities in existing studies reveal a pressing need for more rigorous, culturally grounded investigations into this construct. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

H2: Social media usage has a positive relationship with perceptions of information usefulness.

In addition, social media platforms have been considered suitable interactive and transparent contexts for establishing consumer trust in a product or brand. Green trust is defined as the trust consumers have in a product, or information about a product, and trustworthiness of green products and brands (Ahmad et al., 2022). Green trust is necessary to mitigate skepticism and perceived risk of green consumption. Green trust might also benefit from social media contexts because it is well-established that social media can contribute to building trust through verification of opinions from peers and credible sharing of information (Huang et al., 2024). Nevertheless, previous studies have tended to neglect the concurrent roles of behavioral

engagement, cognitive assessment processes and development of affective trust. Therefore, to address this research gap, this study connects these three dimensions to generate a comprehensive model towards understanding the role of social media use toward green consumption. Hence, we hypothesize:

H3: Social media usage has a positive relationship with green trust.

2.7 Greening Blogging

In recent years, green blogging on social media has changed the way consumers process information, which is important to their attitudes, values, and, eventually, their purchases. Empirical studies show that the content created by influential green bloggers is likely to resonate with their audiences, due to the favorability associated with authenticity, leading to improvements in information quality and user engagement (Elgammal & Majeed, 2024). However, the relationship is complicated; Chen and Madni (2023) note that the efficacy of green blogging can differ substantially based on blogger credibility, audience environmental awareness, or interactivity. Specifically, such complexity highlights the importance in understanding the mechanisms in-depth through which green blogging creates consumers perceptions and trust.

In addition, green blogging is critical to changing how consumers interact with brands, highlighting the potential for consumers to engage more actively with information — they are not mere consumers, nor simply passive recipients of information. Martínez García de Leaniz et al. (2025), for example, have argued that the use of visual storytelling elements in blogs (images, videos, and community interactions, such as likes, shares, and comments) can greatly enhance consumers' perceptions of the usefulness of sustainability-related information. However, although in general more interactive elements facilitate more consumer engagement, recent critiques have cautioned that, in the context of green blogging, over-commercialization or prior shallow involvement in consumer engagement may reduce perceived authenticity, leading to a lack of consumer credibility (Ktisti et al., 2022). As a result, developing a better understanding of the conditions for successful green blogging that enhance consumers' perceptions of information usefulness remains a valuable area of explorative research.

Moreover, trust is a central and multifaceted dimension in the green blogging context. Recent studies suggest that a consumer's level of trust in green content is often determined by the sincerity and transparency of the message source (Luo et al., 2023). Blogging that is rich in detail, high quality, and consistent in aesthetic may increase consumers' trust in the veracity of the environmental claims being made, and additionally their concerns about potential greenwashing (Sharma et al., 2024). Conversely, green blogging that is overly promotional, or simply inconsistent with the blog type, may elicit consumer skepticism, revealing how trust is at the mercy of a blogger's credibility and the quality of blog content (Hochstein et al., 2023). While trust is garnering increased attention in this space, there remains a significant gap in research about how the different types of blog content, green or not, directly impacts consumer trust, especially in rapidly changing digital contexts like China.

Given these insights, understanding the specific effects of green blogging on consumers' perceptions of informational value and trust toward green products is crucial. Accordingly, the present study proposes the following hypotheses to empirically clarify these dynamics:

H4: Green blogging has a positive influence on Perceptions of Information Usefulness.
H5: Green blogging has a positive influence on Green Trust.

2.8 Perceptions of Information Usefulness

Within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, perceptions of information usefulness emerge as pivotal cognitive mechanisms that mediate the relationship between external sustainability-oriented stimuli and consumers' behavioral intentions. Recent studies emphasize that consumers actively evaluate the informational utility of green content encountered on digital platforms based on its authenticity, relevance, and practical applicability to decision-making processes (Wu & Long, 2024). Angelaki et al. (2024) highlight the importance of informational clarity and problem-solving capacity, noting that consumers' assessments of green information significantly shape their attitudes toward sustainability-oriented behaviors. Nonetheless, perceptions of information usefulness are inherently complex and context-sensitive; Marrucci et al. (2025) caution that variations in perceived authenticity and environmental specificity profoundly affect how consumers internalize and respond to sustainability communications.

In addition to considering epistemic trust, individuals must also assess the informativeness of the sustainability-related information. This cognitive process involves a weighing of credibility and skepticism, especially given the ongoing issues related to "greenwashing" and information overload. As outlined by Acuti et al. (2022), skepticism is evoked in consumers when they detect inconsistencies or think there is an exaggeration regarding sustainability claims, which ultimately hampers their consumer trust level in the information being presented. Within Chinese social media contexts, Zhao et al. (2023) suggest that user-generated green content presented as evidence or transparently is more likely to generate confidence in sustainability messages compared to overly commercialized or unverifiable content, which diminishes consumers' perception of the informational value regarding sustainability.

Given these complications, perceived usefulness of information justifies a rigorous analysis of both the cognitive appraisal process as well as contextual factors which may shape consumer evaluations. Cognitive appraisal creates not only an initial readiness toward the green content, but also subsequent intentions to purchase the green product. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H6. Perceptions of information usefulness has a positive influence on Green Purchase Intention

2.9 Green Trust

Green trust refers to consumers' willingness to rely on the environmental claims of a brand, product, or service based on perceived integrity, competence, and benevolence in fulfilling sustainability commitments. As a construct grounded in relationship marketing and sustainability psychology, green trust functions as a critical mediator between sustainability

messaging and behavioral intention (Ahmad et al., 2022). Scholars argue that in digital consumption contexts—especially where information asymmetry is high—green trust plays an indispensable role in reducing perceived risk and uncertainty, enabling consumers to confidently make environmentally conscious decisions (Luo et al., 2023).

Recent research has emphasized both the antecedents and consequences of green trust. From a signalling theory perspective, elements such as eco-labels, third-party certifications, and transparent disclosures about production practices serve as symbolic cues that build trust in green brands (Nguyen-Viet, 2022). At the same time, consumer perceptions of brand consistency, honesty, and long-term commitment to sustainability strongly shape their willingness to trust and, in turn, purchase green products. Sarwar and Loureiro (2025) demonstrate that when green bloggers engage in transparent, content-rich discussions regarding product lifecycle, certifications, and social impact, they significantly enhance their audiences' trust in the brands and practices they endorse.

In spite of these developments, the fragility of green trust is receiving increasing scholarly attention. For example, Srivastava et al. (2024) explain how perceived "greenwashing" (i.e., overstating or lack of substantiating sustainability claims) can quickly shatter trust and push consumers away. Similarly, Sivapalan et al. (2024) state that inconsistency in communication, absence of independent checks, or the use of vague environmental messaging can spark skepticism among consumers, especially when the consumption context is already digitally driven. Scholars have recently started to advocate for more contextualized research into how green trust is constructed, maintained, or eroded in contextually-embedded sociocultural and media contexts.

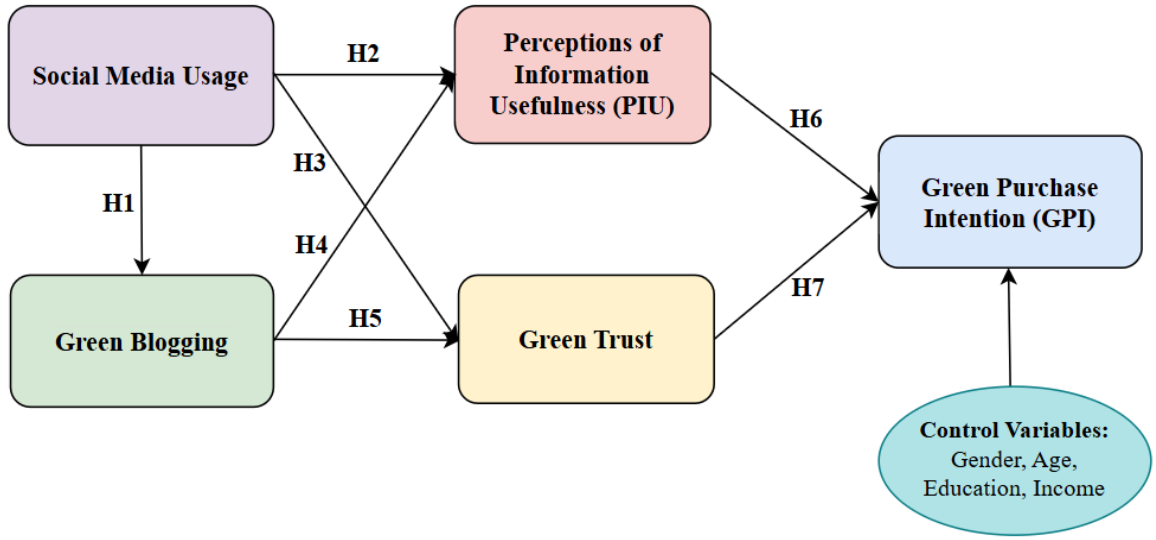
Critically, although green trust is often treated as an antecedent to green purchase intention, recent integrative models have suggested its more dynamic role—as both a mediator and moderator—shaping how cognitive and affective appraisals convert into behavioral responses (Ahmed et al., 2022). This shift reflects a broader recognition that trust in green contexts is not static but highly sensitive to consumer experience, media framing, and institutional credibility.

In line with this literature, the present study views green trust as a central psychological mechanism through which social media-based green communications—particularly green blogs—can influence pro-environmental consumption. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7. Green trust has a positive influence on Green Purchase Intention

To sum up, Figure 1 shows the theoretical model.

Figure 1.



Author's own creation

3. DATA COLLECTION & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

This study adopted a structured, cross-sectional survey design to examine how green blogging influences consumers' green purchase intention in the context of Chinese social media. To enhance ecological validity, all measurement items were adapted from well-established scales and contextualized for platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Weibo, where green content is actively shared.

Data were collected using Wenjuanxing (www.wjx.cn), a widely used online survey tool, and distributed via WeChat. Prior to full deployment, a pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability of the items. The final questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first captured respondents' demographic information (e.g., gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income); the second assessed key constructs including social media usage (SMU), green blogging behavior (GB), perceptions of information usefulness (PIU), green trust (GT), and green purchase intention (GPI). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

After screening for completeness and consistency, the final data set was comprised of 293 valid responses. Descriptive statistics of the sample are included in Table 1. Overall, the demographic distribution illustrates a respondent profile that is relatively diverse and balanced, suggesting the representativeness and the integrity of the statistical procedures to be conducted in the remaining chapters.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 293)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	140	47.8
Female	153	52.2
Age Group (in years)		
18–30	47	16.0
31–40	101	34.5
41–50	82	28.0
51 and above	63	21.5
Education		
Middle School	49	16.7
High School	79	27.0
Bachelor	105	35.8
Postgraduate	60	20.5
Occupation		
Office Worker	212	72.4
Entrepreneur	52	17.7
Others	29	9.9
Monthly Income (in RMB)		
0–3000	19	6.5
3001–6000	74	25.3
6001–9000	92	31.4
9001–12000	61	20.8
Above 12000	47	16.0

3.2 Measurement Development

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from validated instruments in prior research and contextualized for the green consumption context on social media. All items were evaluated using five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Social media usage (SMU) was assessed using five items measuring participants' exposure to, interaction with, and perception of green product information on social media platforms (Wu & Long, 2024). Green blogging (GB) was measured with five items adapted from Park, Heo, and Lee (2011), capturing users' experiences in knowledge acquisition, expertise development, idea transformation, network building, and knowledge dissemination through blogging behavior. Perceptions of information usefulness (PIU) was measured with four items adapted from Wu and Long (2024), reflecting users' evaluations of the utility, decision support, and awareness effects of green-related content on social media. Green trust (GT) was captured using four items assessing consumers' belief in the credibility, reliability, and environmental promises of green products and brands (Wu & Long, 2024). Green purchase intention (GPI) was measured with three items evaluating consumers' future purchase plans, willingness to pay a premium, and intention to recommend green products to others (Wu & Long, 2024). The complete list of measurement items is provided in Appendix 1.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Reliability and Validity Assessment

The constructs used in this study (i.e. social media usage (SMU), green blogging (GB), green trust (GT), perceptions of information usefulness (PIU), and green purchase intention (GPI)) achieved acceptable levels of reliability, as summarized in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha values of each construct ranged between 0.790 and 0.879, with alpha values above the 0.70 criteria to support internal consistency. Composite reliability (CR) values for each construct ranged from 0.877 and 0.911, while average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.597 and 0.708, which reflects that each construct accounted for more than 50% of the variance of each indicator.

Constructs' convergent validity was supported by standardized outer loadings, which met or exceeded 0.75 for each variable. The lowest standardized loading was 0.756. The squared multiple correlations (SMC) of the indicators were above the 0.50 threshold. Also, there were no multicollinearity issues with the constructs, as variance inflation factor (VIF) values were under the criterion of 3.3.

Discriminant validity was established with the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). All HTMT values ranged from 0.403 to 0.630, below the more conservative threshold of 0.85. Together these assessments provide confirmation of construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model. For further detail, please see Table 3.

Table 2. Results and validity of confirmatory factor analysis for each research construct

Constructs	Index	Estimate	SMC	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
SMU	SMU1	0.793	0.629			
	SMU2	0.757	0.573			
	SMU3	0.756	0.572			
	SMU4	0.795	0.632			
	SMU5	0.763	0.582	**0.881**	**0.597**	**0.832**
GB	GB1	0.813	0.661			
	GB2	0.795	0.632			
	GB3	0.811	0.658			
	GB4	0.830	0.689			
	GB5	0.852	0.726	**0.911**	**0.673**	**0.879**
GT	GT1	0.805	0.648			
	GT2	0.826	0.682			
	GT3	0.841	0.707			
	GT4	0.817	0.667	**0.893**	**0.676**	**0.841**
PIU	PIU1	0.851	0.724			
	PIU2	0.846	0.716			
	PIU3	0.837	0.700			
	PIU4	0.830	0.689	**0.906**	**0.708**	**0.862**
GPI	GPI1	0.842	0.709			
	GPI2	0.837	0.701			
	GPI3	0.838	0.702	**0.877**	**0.704**	**0.790**

*** signifies a significance level of $p < 0.001$, ** indicates a significance level of $p < 0.01$, and * denotes $p < 0.05$. SMU, social media usage; GB, green blogging; GT, green trust; PIU, perceptions of information usefulness; GPI, green purchase intention. The same is below.

Table 3. Model fit and reliability assessment based on established criteria

Index	Threshold	Observed Values	Evaluation
Outer Loadings	> 0.70	0.756 – 0.852	Satisfied
SMC	> 0.50	0.572 – 0.726	Satisfied
Cronbach's α	> 0.70	0.790 – 0.879	Satisfied
Composite Reliability (CR)	> 0.70	0.877 – 0.911	Satisfied
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	> 0.50	0.597 – 0.708	Satisfied
HTMT	< 0.85	0.403 – 0.630	Satisfied
VIF	< 3.30	1.558 – 2.277	Satisfied

4.2 Confirmatory Test of Common Method Bias

Due to the data for this investigation being self-reported and the data all being gathered at Single Time point, an analysis for the possibility of common method variance (CMV) was considered. To confirm the absence of CMV, two diagnostic approaches were used.

First, a Harman's single-factor test was performed in SPSS. All measurement items were included in an exploratory factor analysis with unrotated principal components extraction. The initial analysis revealed a first factor that accounted for 36.743% of the total variance, which is below the conventional cut-off level of 50%. Therefore, CMV is not likely to be serious.

Second, confirmatory assessment of construct distinctiveness was conducted in SmartPLS. Discriminant validity was established through the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), with inter-construct HTMT values ranging from 0.403 to 0.630 (all values were below the more conservative cut-off score of 0.85). Additionally, all variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.558 to 2.277, with no evidence of multicollinearity across constructs.

Overall, these findings provide sound evidence that common method bias does not present a significant risk to the measurement model's validity in this study.

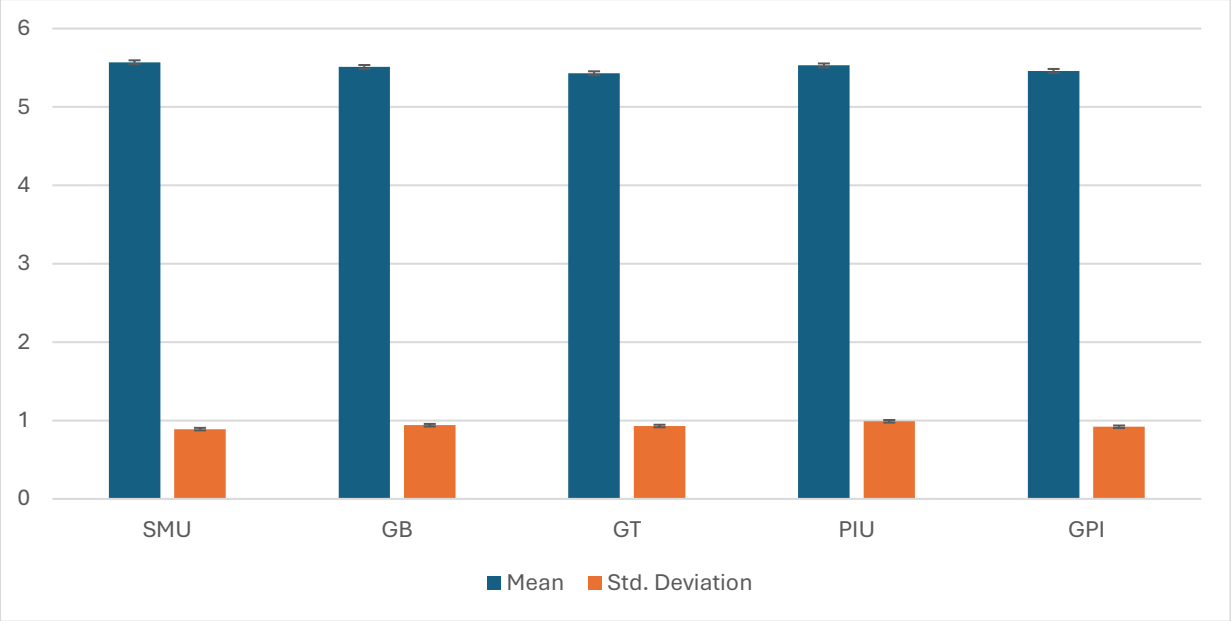
4.3 Mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients of the variables

The variables of social media usage (SMU), green blogging (GB), green trust (GT), perceptions of information usefulness (PIU), and green purchase intention (GPI) were analyzed using descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation analysis. As shown in Figure 3, the descriptive statistics based on the SPSS output (N = 293, 5-point Likert scale) revealed that the mean score of social media usage (SMU) was 3.99 (SD = 1.08), green blogging (GB) was 3.62 (SD = 1.27), perceptions of information usefulness (PIU) was 3.61 (SD = 1.26), green trust (GT) was 3.84 (SD = 1.16), and green purchase intention (GPI) was 3.64 (SD = 1.23). All variables demonstrated moderate mean scores and sufficient variability, confirming that there was no ceiling effect and the data were appropriate for further analysis.

Figure 3 (A)

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	SMU	GB	GT	PIU	GPI
SMU	3.99	1.08	1	0.764	0.752	0.745	0.768
GB	3.62	1.27	0.764	1	0.732	0.712	0.740
GT	3.61	1.26	0.752	0.732	1	0.826	0.738
PIU	3.84	1.16	0.745	0.712	0.826	1	0.730
GPI	3.64	1.23	0.768	0.740	0.738	0.730	1

Figure 3 (B)



4.4 Hypothesis test

4.4.1 Testing of the main effect and mediating effect

A structural equation model analysis was used to test the main effects and mediating effects using SmartPLS version 3 and the results are summarised in Table 5. First, the direct effects were examined. The results supported H1 indicating that social media use (SMU), has a significant positive effect on green blogging (GB) (β = 0634, t = 15857, p < 001). SMU also had a positive effect on perceptions of information usefulness (PIU) (β = 0313, t = 4398, p < 001) and green trust (GT) (β = 0352, t = 5352, p < 001), these support hypothesis H2 and H3 respectively.

Second, the mediating role of GB and GT were tested. GB had a significant positive effect on PIU (β = 0477, t = 6861, p < 001) and GT (β = 0534, t = 8612, p < 001) which supports H4 and

H5. Next, GT and PIU were tested as predictors of green purchase intention (GPI) and both GT (β = 0371, t = 5379, p < 001) and PIU (β = 0428, t = 6309, p < 001) had significant effects on GPI which supported H6 and H7.

Further, using the bootstrap method with 5000 resamples, the indirect (mediating) effects were tested and those results indicated significant indirect effects of SMU to GPI through GB and GT (SMU → GB → GT → GPI; β = 0126, t = 4313, p < 001) which indicated significant indirect effect of SMU on GPI through GB and GT forming a mediating pathway. Another significant indirect pathway SMU to GPI was found through GB and PIU (SMU → GB → PIU → GPI; β = 0130, t = 4271, p < 001). Results suggest that GB, GT, and PIU each partially mediated the relationship between SMU and GPI and together supported the robustness of the hypothesized structural model.

Table 5:

Hypothesis	Path	Path coefficient (β)	T-value	P-value	Decision
H1	SMU → GB	0.634	15.857	<0.001	Supported
H2	SMU → PIU	0.313	4.398	<0.001	Supported
H3	SMU → GT	0.352	5.352	<0.001	Supported
H4	GB → PIU	0.477	6.861	<0.001	Supported
H5	GB → GT	0.534	8.612	<0.001	Supported
H6	PIU → GPI	0.428	6.309	<0.001	Supported
H7	GT → GPI	0.371	5.379	<0.001	Supported
	SMU → GB → GT → GPI (Indirect)	0.126	4.313	<0.001	Supported
	SMU → GB → PIU → GPI (Indirect)	0.130	4.271	<0.001	Supported

4.4.2 Chain mediating effect test

The chain mediating effects were examined using the bootstrap method (5000 resamples) implemented in SmartPLS, and the specific results are shown in Table 6. For the first mediating path, **SMU → GB → GT → GPI**, the indirect effect was significant (β = 0.126, Boot SE = 0.029), with the 95% confidence interval [0.077, 0.181] excluding zero. This finding clearly supports the hypothesis of a significant chain mediation effect through green blogging and green trust (SMU→GB→GT→GPI).

Regarding the second indirect pathway, **SMU → GB → PIU → GPI**, the results indicated a significant indirect effect (β = 0.130, Boot SE = 0.030), with the 95% confidence interval

[0.081, 0.186] not containing zero. This finding confirms that green blogging and perceptions of information usefulness serve as significant sequential mediators between social media usage and green purchase intention (SMU→GB→PIU→GPI).

Taken together, these results strongly validate the presence of significant chain-mediated pathways linking social media usage to green purchase intention through both green blogging–green trust and green blogging–perceptions of information usefulness, thereby fully supporting the hypotheses of the research model.

Table 6:

Effect path	Effect (β)	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Conclusion
SMU → GB → GT → GPI	0.126	0.029	0.077	0.181	Significant
SMU → GB → PIU → GPI	0.130	0.030	0.081	0.186	Significant

Note: Boot SE = Bootstrap Standard Error; LLCI = Lower Limit of 95% Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Limit of 95% Confidence Interval. Confidence intervals excluding zero indicate significant mediating effects.

4.5 Multi-group comparative analysis

To identify whether the theorized relationships among social media usage (SMU), green blogging (GB), green trust (GT), perceptions of information usefulness (PIU), and green purchase intention (GPI) varied across multiple consumer groups based on demographic characteristics and the amount of time spent on social media each day, this study used multi-group analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS. The MGA results indicated significant differences between groups, indicating important moderating effects.

As shown in Figure 4, (1) the relationship from SMU to GB was stronger for males than females ($\beta = 0.712$, $p < 0.001$). Secondly, medium to high educational levels indicated stronger relationships than low educational levels ($\beta = 0.735$, $p < 0.001$) as well as high-income groups with low-income groups ($\beta = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$). Lastly, respondents who spent over 3 hours a day on social media had higher influence than those who spent less than 3 hours on social media ($\beta = 0.748$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that SMU promotes green blogging behaviors among males, high-income individuals, those with medium to high educational levels, and those who actively engage with social media through more exposure and impulse to eco-friendly practices online.

(2) For the pathway from GB to GT, strong moderating effects emerged for females ($\beta = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$), lower educational groups ($\beta = 0.613$, $p < 0.01$), middle to high income ($\beta = 0.589$, $p < 0.001$), and lower exposure to daily social media ($\beta = 0.607$, $p < 0.01$). This finding may suggest that even though lower education groups and lower social media exposure are less exposed to green messages, exposure may play a larger role in influencing their GT/Trust in green products.

(3) Females demonstrated a significant stronger relationship between SMU and PIU than males ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, the effect was significantly stronger in those including the

middle to high educational group (β = 0.655, p < 0.001) and in the middle to high income group (β = 0.610, p < 0.001). Participants spending more than 3 hours a day on social media also had a stronger effect size than those who used less than 3 hours daily (β = 0.663, p < 0.001). These results suggest that females and high education and income groups spending more time online may be more susceptible to perceptions of information usefulness.

(4) When assessing the influence from PIU to GPI, considerable effects were identified primarily for male (β = 0.461, p < 0.01), less educated (β = 0.479, p < 0.05), low-income (β = 0.515, p < 0.001), and less socially engaged individuals (β = 0.437, p < 0.01). These results suggest that perceptions of information usefulness may contribute to eco-friendly purchase intentions for these groups primarily due to heightened susceptibility to online marketing.

(5) In regards to the effect of GT on GPI, the effect was stronger for males (β = 0.548, p < 0.001), lower educated individuals (β = 0.502, p < 0.001), low-income individuals (β = 0.523, p < 0.001), and individuals with less social media engagement (β = 0.537, p < 0.001). These findings indicate that trust in greens products is an important factor in eco-friendly purchase intentions for these groups, possibly due to increased trustworthiness and credibility and fewer sources of alternative information.

(6) Ultimately, the direct effect of SMU on GPI was significant largely for women (β = 0.385, p < 0.01), middle-to-high education groups (β = 0.417, p < 0.001), higher income groups (β = 0.571, p < 0.001), and social media users with a high level of activity (β = 0.398, p < 0.01). In summary, this indicates that SMU directly facilitates eco-friendly purchase intentions in these consumer groups due to more awareness and more engagement with eco-friendly marketing.

In general, the multi-group comparison results make evident the more nuanced role of demographic characteristics and social media usage level in moderating the relationships of the proposed model. The results demonstrated that gender, education level, income level, and level of social media exposure factor significantly into the social media usage to green purchase intentions, and therefore should be used to develop marketing strategies for a consumer group.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study proposed a conceptual framework integrating the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, Social Learning Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to investigate how social media usage affects green purchase intention (GPI) through the mediating roles of green blogging, perceptions of information usefulness, and green trust. The empirical results based on data collected from 293 urban consumers in eastern China provide robust support for all hypothesized relationships (H1–H7), thereby offering new theoretical and practical insights into digital sustainability behavior.

First, the findings confirm that social media usage significantly encourages green blogging behavior (H1), highlighting the powerful and direct influence of digital environments on the dissemination of eco-conscious narratives. This aligns with prior research asserting that social media functions as a dynamic space for environmental discourse and user-generated advocacy (Sarwar & Loureiro, 2025). Moreover, social media usage was found to positively influence both perceptions of information usefulness (H2) and green trust (H3), revealing that users

exposed to credible and engaging environmental content are more likely to trust green claims and find the content helpful for making informed decisions.

Second, the results demonstrate that green blogging significantly enhances perceptions of information usefulness (H4) and green trust (H5). This highlights the active role that user-generated eco-content plays in shaping consumer cognition and affect. In particular, informative and credible green blogs appear to bridge the trust gap that often hinders the adoption of sustainable behaviors. These findings are consistent with studies that underscore the mediating power of content credibility and perceived expertise in digital environmental communication (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2025; Luo et al., 2023).

Third, both perceptions of information usefulness (H6) and green trust (H7) were found to positively predict green purchase intention, supporting their theorized roles as core psychological mechanisms in green consumer decision-making. Notably, mediation analysis shows that green trust exerts a stronger mediating effect ($\beta = 0.312$) compared to perceptions of information usefulness ($\beta = 0.119$), suggesting that trust in environmental claims may be a more critical determinant of sustainable purchasing behavior in the Chinese digital context. This reinforces the premise that emotional security and perceived brand integrity can substantially elevate pro-environmental commitment.

Finally, the multi-group analysis uncovered significant moderating effects of demographic and behavioral variables. Specifically, the mediating pathways were more pronounced among women, consumers with higher education and income levels, and those with more frequent social media exposure. These patterns reflect the differentiated ways in which green messages resonate across consumer segments, emphasizing the value of targeted strategies in digital green marketing.

Taken together, the findings offer a refined understanding of how social media usage, green blogging, perceptions of information usefulness, and green trust interweave to shape eco-friendly consumption behavior. This study not only validates the SOR and TAM models in a novel context but also contributes to the expansion of Social Learning Theory in the domain of green marketing. In doing so, it offers a comprehensive account of how digital interactions catalyse sustainable consumer behavior in rapidly evolving online ecosystems.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study constructs a theoretically grounded framework to explain the psychological mechanisms through which social media usage influences green purchase intention. Extending the SOR paradigm, it positions social media usage and green blogging as dual external stimuli that activate organismic processes—specifically, perceptions of information usefulness and green trust. Unlike traditional applications of SOR in physical consumption settings, this model adapts the framework to a digital ecology where environmental stimuli are embedded in user-generated content. This transformation is essential as environmental persuasion increasingly occurs in algorithmically curated, peer-mediated spaces (Elgammal & Majeed, 2024; Wu & Long, 2024). A key theoretical advancement lies in the simultaneous inclusion and comparison of cognitive (perceptions of information usefulness) and affective (green trust) mediators. The stronger mediating role of green trust ($\beta = 0.312$) compared to perceptions of information

usefulness (β = 0.119) suggests that affect-based evaluation exerts more influence over green behavioral intention than information processing alone—offering empirical reinforcement to emerging critiques of overly rationalistic consumer models in green marketing (Chang & Hung, 2022; Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022). Furthermore, this study integrates TAM to support the relevance of perceived usefulness as a digital cognition construct. Its validated role reinforces the updated TAM perspective that content relevance and source credibility—not technological novelty per se—shape behavioral intention in digital green environments (Muflih, 2023; Wu & Long, 2024). Green blogging, as an intermediary between stimulus and response, offers a bridge between SOR and social learning theory by demonstrating how observational learning and normative reinforcement are embedded in consumer-to-consumer communication. The significant path from social media usage to green blogging (H1), and from green blogging to both mediators (H4, H5), empirically supports the social transmission of eco-conscious behavior in peer-led media systems (Martínez García de Leaniz et al., 2025). Taken together, these theoretical contributions point to a necessary rethinking of the unitary cognitive path in behavior models, instead favoring integrated affective–cognitive systems situated in participatory digital contexts.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Findings from this study yield clear implications for those designing, regulating, or implementing green marketing strategies across digital platforms. Social media content strategy must move beyond one-way information transmission toward interactional design that encourages user participation and identity reinforcement through green blogging. Marketers should prioritize authenticity, factual transparency, and perceived social proof to maximize both cognitive engagement and emotional trust. Messaging strategies that foreground credible environmental claims, feature verifiable certifications, and include detailed product sourcing narratives are more likely to be interpreted as useful and trustworthy, enhancing GPI formation. For platforms, green engagement tools should be adapted to segmented user profiles. Since women, high-income earners, and high-frequency users showed stronger mediation paths, targeted content modules—such as expert-backed sustainability columns, community storytelling, or gamified environmental pledges—can be crafted to appeal to these segments' behavioral patterns. Emotional trust emerges as the more powerful lever over behavioral intention, signaling a strategic shift from rational persuasion to value affirmation. Content that emphasizes shared goals, identity consistency, and community endorsement can shape deeper affective attachment to eco-behaviors. Brands should collaborate with influential figures in sustainability, enabling them to function as trust bridges between institutional claims and user skepticism. Finally, platform developers should embed interactive experiences—ranging from eco-badges and loyalty rewards to user-voted green challenges—that encourage long-term engagement and behavior internalization. These tools not only enhance perceived involvement but also create an immersive digital atmosphere that reinforces both trust and perceived informational relevance. When harmonized, these mechanisms transform green marketing from transactional promotion into an experiential, emotionally charged digital practice.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable theoretical and managerial insights into the digital mechanisms underlying green purchase intention, several limitations warrant further attention. First, the use of a cross-sectional design with data from 293 urban social media users in China limits the ability to draw causal inferences or to observe the temporal evolution of green trust and purchase behavior. Employing longitudinal or experimental designs in future research would enable a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic influence of social media usage and green blogging on consumer cognition and affect. Second, although the present model incorporates dual mediators—green trust and perceptions of information usefulness—the complex nature of sustainable consumer behavior likely involves additional psychological mechanisms, such as environmental concern, message credibility, and social identity. Future studies should consider integrating these variables to further enhance the explanatory power of the proposed framework. Third, while this study conducted multi-group analyses by gender, age, education, and income, other segmentation variables—such as environmental literacy, social media platform type, or frequency of green product purchases—may reveal further heterogeneity in consumer responses and merit inclusion in subsequent research. Finally, as data collection was limited to a single cultural context, replicating and extending the research in other countries or cultural groups would help establish the generalizability and robustness of the findings. Addressing these limitations can facilitate a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of how digital stimuli shape pro-environmental consumption behavior in an increasingly mediated green marketplace.

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