Research Article

Exploring Green Purchase Intention for Organic Products: Insights from Young Consumers in Guangzhou City, China

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development advocates for the adoption of green consumption practices. Organic products, a crucial element of sustainable consumption, fulfill consumer needs while alleviating stress on the agricultural ecosystem and promoting health benefits. A refined version of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is applied in this study to analyze the critical factors shaping the consumption intentions of young consumers in China and to verify the relationships among green environmental knowledge (EK), green perceived value (GPV), green perceived attitude (GPA), green social influence (GSI), and green purchase intention (GPI). A purposive sampling method was employed to conduct an effective cross-sectional survey among 648 participants, and the collected data provided reliable support for evaluating the research model. For the reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha was employed, followed by confirmatory factor analysis using Smart PLS 4. To test the hypotheses, structural equation modelling (SEM) was subsequently applied. The results showed that Environmental Knowledge, Green Perceived Attitude, and Green Perceived Value positively influence Green Perceived Intention of young Chinese consumers for organic products, while Green Social Influence does not. Significant mediating roles are played by Green Perceived Value and Green Perceived Attitude in the relationship between Environmental Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention, as revealed by the results. The findings underscore that enhancing Environmental Knowledge, alongside leveraging Green Perceived Attitude and Green Perceived Value, is vital for fostering positive Green Purchase Intention towards organic food among consumers. With the results, policies can be developed by the government to promote organic food production and marketing, while also supporting businesses in optimizing their marketing strategies to effectively reach target consumers. **Keywords:** Green Purchase Intention, Environmental Knowledge, Green Perceived Attitude, Green Perceived Value, Green Social Influence

INTRODUCTION

The excessive exploitation of agricultural resources, overuse of pesticides and fertilizers, heavy metal pollution, and the application of novel technologies (such as ripening agents hormones and antibiotics) have raised significant concerns about environmental protection and food safety (Cao et al., 2023). Currently, countries around the world consider the development of organic agriculture to be an important measure for improving the quality of agricultural products, enhancing food safety, and promoting the green and sustainable development of agriculture (Zhai & An, 2020). Furthermore, the need for sustainable agricultural practices has never been more pressing, given the accelerating pace of climate change and its potential impacts on global food security. In this agricultural production model, the production of organic food is increasingly attracting consumers' attention. Compared to traditional food, organic food is not only more environmentally friendly, healthier, and safer in its production model, but it is also more environmentally friendly and sustainable in promoting economic development (Katt & Meixner, 2020). Organic farming employs sustainable techniques that safeguard the environment from the detrimental effects of

traditional agriculture. This "GoGreen" trend has also effectively stimulated the considerable growth of the organic food market (Le-Anh & Nguyen-To, 2020; Rana & Paul, 2020; Seconda et al., 2017). Projections indicate that the worldwide organic food market will expand to USD 272.18 billion by 2027, achieving an annual growth rate of 12% (Business, 2020).

Currently, China's consumer market is one of the most influential and attractive markets in the world. As a large country with a residential population of 17.39% of the world's total population (Worldometer, 2024), any consumption change has a huge impact on the global economic trend. Driven by health and environmental awareness, Chinese consumers' interest in organic products is growing, and improvements in certification and market expansion also highlight significant opportunities in the industry. From 2012 to 2022, the number of organic food products in China grew from 17,125 to 55,482, reflecting over threefold growth by figure 1. Nevertheless, the study of the environmental product consumption behavior among Chinese consumers, particularly regarding organic food purchases within the context of green consumption, remains sparse (He & Sui, 2024). This literature gap highlights the necessity of exploring the factors driving Chinese consumers' inclination toward organic food and examining how these preferences may shift due to market dynamics and policy measures. Furthermore, frequent food safety incidents in China have raised public awareness and altered consumption habits, exerting a significant impact on healthy eating trends and related industries (M. Li et al., 2022). The widespread use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and growth regulators derived from petroleum has further polluted agricultural land, exacerbating environmental and food safety challenges in China. These pressing issues necessitate eco-friendly and sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic farming, to mitigate food safety risks, enhance public health, and reduce environmental damage (Zhou et al., 2013). According to World Ocean Atlas 2022, China has over 2.4 million hectares of organic farmland, ranking second in Asia, with the organic food market size reaching 10.2 billion euros. Despite the growing popularity of organic food due to its distinct safety and health benefits, it is noteworthy that consumers' enthusiasm and interest in green purchasing do not always translate into actual actions (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). According to research data, China's per capita intake of organic food is less than half of the global average, at just 7 euros (Willer et al., 2024). Experts predict substantial development potential in China's organic food sector, as the retail value of organic packaged food constitutes a smaller fraction of overall packaged food compared to other developed economies (Zipser & Poh, 2021). Furthermore, China's organic food market, still in its early stages, remains relatively small with per capita consumption below the global average (Willer et al., 2024), driven primarily by consumers in first-tier cities (Liu et al., 2021). This has impeded the growth of the organic industry in the country. Consequently, understanding the drivers of consumer acceptance for environmentally friendly products is crucial for organizations and policymakers, as it provides valuable insights into sustainable market trends.
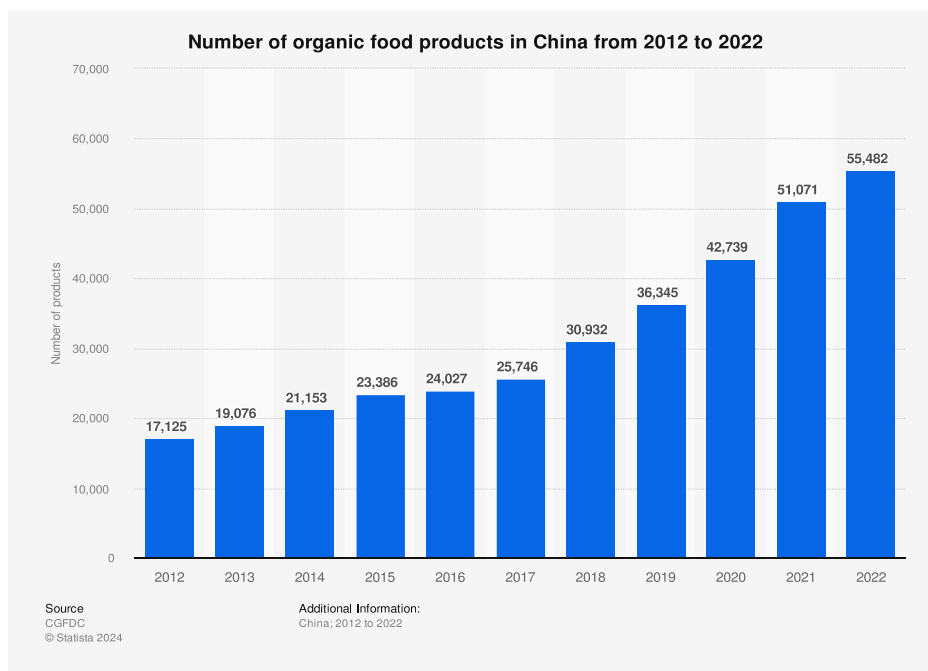

Figure 1 Number of Organic Food Products in China From 2012 to 2022

Guangzhou, a leading first-tier city in China with a population of 18,676,605 in 2020 (Zhong et al., 2022), stands as a prime location for studying organic food purchase intentions due to its demographic, economic, and cultural significance. Serving as the primary fresh food distribution hub for southern China and a key site for Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), Guangzhou plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainable consumption practices (Leung, 2021; Martindale, 2021). As an economic and cultural centre, its influence extends beyond local markets, providing valuable insights into broader national trends. Despite the growing interest in organic products, per capita consumption of organic food in China remains below the global average, with first-tier cities like Guangzhou driving demand. Young consumers, representing the future of society, are particularly crucial to study as their purchasing intentions shape sustainable consumption patterns. Understanding their motivations offers valuable insights for businesses targeting this expanding market and contributes to advancing sustainable consumption research in China.

Despite the abundance of research on young consumers' green purchase intention (GPI) (Chowdhury & Alamgir, 2021; Hasan & Suciarto, 2020; M. Hassan et al., 2024; Ho & Huynh, 2022; Van Hoang, 2024), which also highlights the influence of consumption attitude (Zaremohzzabieh et al., 2021) and environmental knowledge (Cui et al., 2024), studies specifically addressing the green purchase intention for organic food among young Chinese consumers remain limited (Sultan et al., 2020). The scarcity of research highlights the necessity of further investigation into the specific ways environmental knowledge and social influences impact young consumers' purchasing behaviors regarding organic food. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this research investigates the determinants of young consumers' green purchase intentions (GPI) in Guangzhou.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), investigates individuals' behaviors and intentions by analyzing their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Widely applied in studies on green consumption, TPB has proven to be a reliable framework for predicting various pro-environmental behaviors (Rasiah et al., 2023).

2.1 Organic Food and Green Purchase Intention

Organic farm products are often characterized as healthy and natural foods, grown without genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and without relying on synthetic chemicals like artificial fertilizers and pesticides. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, organic food encompasses fresh or processed items produced using organic farming methods (Duram, 2024). Organic foods consist of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy items, and processed products like crackers, beverages, and frozen foods.

Purchase Intention is commonly regarded as a key driver that encourages and motivates consumers to make actual purchases of products and services. Numerous studies analyze consumer intentions to better predict their actual behaviors. Green Purchase Intention denotes the probability of buyers' inclination to acquire ecologically sustainable products (Varah et al., 2021). Consumers choose green products to protect or avoid harming the environment (Zhang & Dong, 2020). Consumers' willingness and capacity to choose organic agricultural products instead of conventional alternatives define their intention to purchase organic food during the decision-making process (Rashid et al., 2009).

2.2 Environmental Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention

Environmental knowledge refers to a person's awareness and comprehension of common environmental concerns (Eles & Sihombing, 2017). It is defined environmental knowledge as the awareness individuals have about how the production process of a product affects the environment, the environmental impact itself, and the importance of collective responsibility in promoting sustainable development (Suki, 2013). Researchers in environmental knowledge studies frequently categories knowledge into general versus specialized and subjective versus objective forms to forecast individuals' environmentally friendly behaviors (Y. K. Lee, 2017). Research suggests that when customers gain greater environmental awareness, their propensity to buy eco-friendly products increases. Environmental awareness substantially and positively affects consumers' inclination to acquire eco-friendly items (Asif et al., 2023). Consumer environmental knowledge is recognized as an important factor influencing green purchase intention (Rusyani et al., 2021) and as a beneficial factor (Hossain et al., 2022). Previous studies have demonstrated a significant positive correlation between environmental knowledge (EK) and green purchase intention (GPI) (Azizah & Dwita, 2024; Bigliardi et al., 2022; Cui et al., 2024; Saraireh, 2023). Accordingly, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H1. Environmental knowledge has a significant relationship with Green Purchase Intention.

2.3 Environmental Knowledge and Green Perceived Attitude

Promoting sustainability relies heavily on environmental knowledge and a conscientious attitude toward environmental responsibility (S.-I. Wu & Chen, 2014). It is indicated that enhancing environmental knowledge and cultivating a positive environmental attitude significantly contribute to improved ecological behavior (Faize & Akhtar, 2020). In the theoretical model, it is clearly articulated that an enhancement in environmental knowledge leads to a greater appreciation for nature, which in turn improves an individual's attitude towards protecting the environment. Study have explored that consumer attitudes evolve as awareness of environmental concerns and the health and economic advantages of green products grows (L. Wang et al., 2020). Previous research indicates that consumers' attitudes and beliefs toward eco-friendly products are positively shaped by their level of environmental knowledge (Choi & Johnson, 2019). However, there are also contrasting views emerging. Environmental knowledge was identified as a negative moderator of the connection between prosocial values and environmental attitudes. This indicates that although prosocial principles often enhance favorable environmental attitudes, an increased amount of environmental knowledge diminishes this relationship (Tamar et al., 2021). Therefore, the hypothesis derived from the above discussion is as follows:

H2. Environmental knowledge has a significant relationship with Green Perceived Attitude

2.4 Environmental Knowledge and Green Perceived Value

Drawing from existing research, it is showed that individuals with advanced environmental knowledge are likely to recognize higher green value in products, which could subsequently impact their purchasing behavior (Tong et al., 2020). Likewise, the results suggest that when consumers recognize greater green value and possess higher environmental knowledge, they become more inclined to pay a premium for such products (Amoako et al., 2020). A recent study also identified that environmental knowledge and green perceived value are the most critical factors driving consumers' willingness to buy eco-friendly refurbished smartphones (Bigliardi et al., 2022). Also in recently study, the conclusion drawn from the specific issue of environmental sustainability in tourism and the hotel industry is that environmental knowledge enhances perceived value (Han, 2021). Hence, the hypothesis is:

H3. Environmental knowledge has a significant relationship with Green Perceived Value

2.5 Green Perceived Attitude and Green Purchase Intention

Green perceived attitude is an individual's subjective evaluation or attitude towards environmentally friendly products, practices or behaviors based on one's assumptions, values and environmental sensibilities (Y. Li et al., 2016). Green perception attitudes can influence the consumption emotions of environmentalists, potentially affecting their purchasing decisions when choosing eco-friendly products or those with the lowest carbon emissions (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). The perception of a green attitude significantly influences consumption as it serves as a crucial indicator of green purchasing intentions and sustainable consumption practices, especially towards eco-bag (H. M. Hassan et al., 2022). Additionally, consumers with more favorable attitudes toward green organic products exhibit a stronger intention to purchase them, particularly those who demonstrate greater support for the green industry and are more likely to choose green organic options (Sun & Wang, 2020). Suggesting that consumers' environmental awareness affects their perception of organic food, this influence subsequently enhances their willingness to purchase green organic products and increases their consumption levels (Liu et al., 2021). The study now proposes the following hypothesis based on this fact.

H4 Green Perceived Attitude has a significant relationship with Green Purchase Intention

2.6 Green Perceived Value and Green Purchase Intention

Perceived value reflects consumers' assessment of the overall benefits they receive from a product or service. It serves as an indicator of how they evaluate the worth and usefulness of a service in relation to the time and resources they invest (H.-W. Kim et al., 2012). Perceived value can promote positive word-of-mouth of a product, thereby increasing consumer recognition of the product and enhancing purchase intention. It is critical for marketing success, as companies can leverage perceived value to enhance consumers' purchase intentions (Watanabe et al., 2020; Zhuang et al., 2010). Consumers with environmental awareness will focus on considering the perceived green value of products, which in turn will encourage them to choose more environmentally friendly products (Yaacob & Zakaria,

2011). Research has identified perceived value as a key factor influencing purchase intention, acting both as an indicator of consumer evaluation and a critical intermediary in the purchasing process (Mahesh, 2013). Customers in Malaysia exhibit a greater propensity to buy food with conspicuous eco-labels, suggesting that perceived value significantly influences purchasing behavior (Alam et al., 2023). It has also been established that consumers' purchase intention becomes stronger when they perceive a higher value in green products (Tan & Goh, 2018; S. Wu et al., 2024). Many studies have shown that consumers' perceptions of environmental value are important factors influencing their purchasing decisions (Ahmad & Zhang, 2020; Juliana & Sijabat, 2023; Zhuang et al., 2021). So, the hypothesis is shown as below.

H5 Green Perceived Value has a significant relationship with Green Purchase Intention

2.7 Green Social Influence and Green Purchase Intention

Green Social Influence encompasses the effect of social elements, including societal expectations, peer attitudes, and norms, on an individual's environmental views and actions. Meanwhile, green social influence continuously reinforces individuals' environmental awareness. The societal pressure towards environmental protection and the recognition of sustainable social development deepens people's understanding of green products, leading them to purchase more environmentally friendly or low-carbon products. It reshapes consumers' consumption behavior by establishing norms for their conduct and values, for instance, by promoting sustainable consumption concepts to influence consumers' values, thereby achieving overall social acceptance and meeting the actual needs of society. A study on consumer purchases of new energy products that environmental factors, green social influence, and brand credibility all have positive impacts on consumers' purchase intentions (Ayodele et al., 2017). In researching investments in the field of sustainable clothing, it has been found that consumers are influenced by their close friends or family members, and societal environmental pressures also prompt them to conform to social norms, thus choosing to purchase sustainable apparel (Tewari et al., 2022). It is indicated that social influence does not affect the attitudes and purchase intentions of young adult Indian customers aged 20-40 about organic clothing (Varshneya et al., 2017). These findings suggest that it can be hypothesized:

H6. Green Social Influence has a significant relationship with Green Purchase Intention

2.8 The Mediating Role of Green Perceived Attitude

Comprehensive environmental knowledge has been shown to greatly impact individuals' attitudes toward environmental protection, thereby increasing their intention to buy green products (Rasiah et al., 2023). Environmental awareness influences the behaviors of hotel guests, while environmental knowledge enhances their attitudes toward eco-friendly decisions (Varshneya et al., 2017). For instance, a study on green cosmetics examined how attitudes and environmental knowledge affect purchase intention using a purposive sample of 100 consumers in Denpasar City (Putri et al., 2021). The results indicated that both environmental knowledge and attitude positively influenced purchase intention, with attitude acting as a partial mediator. Moreover, the impact of green brand knowledge on purchase intention has also been examined through the lens of attitude toward purchasing green products (Hartanto et al., 2023). Drawing from these insights, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H7 The Relationship between Environmental Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention is mediated by Green Perceived Attitude.

2.9 The Mediating Role of Green Perceived Value

Green consumption values influence the connection between environmental knowledge and the desire to choose eco-friendly hotels (S. Wang et al., 2018). Moreover, research indicates that customers exhibiting heightened environmental awareness are more apt to acknowledge the sustainability worth of goods, hence increasing their propensity to buy eco-friendly items (Shehawy & Ali Khan, 2024). Perceived green value plays a pivotal role as a mediator, linking individuals' sense of environmental responsibility with their intention and desire to purchase green products, thereby highlighting its importance in driving sustainable consumer behavior (Hudayah et al., 2023). Research on green product purchase intentions in India, based on data from 260 participants, highlighted that perceived green value acts as a mediator. The findings underscore its significant influence on shaping sustainable buying behavior (Khan, 2024). From the above, the hypothesis can be suggested:

H8 The Relationship between Environmental Knowledge and Green Purchase Intention is mediated by Green Perceived Value.

Figure 2 presents the hypothesized variable correlations in the research framework.
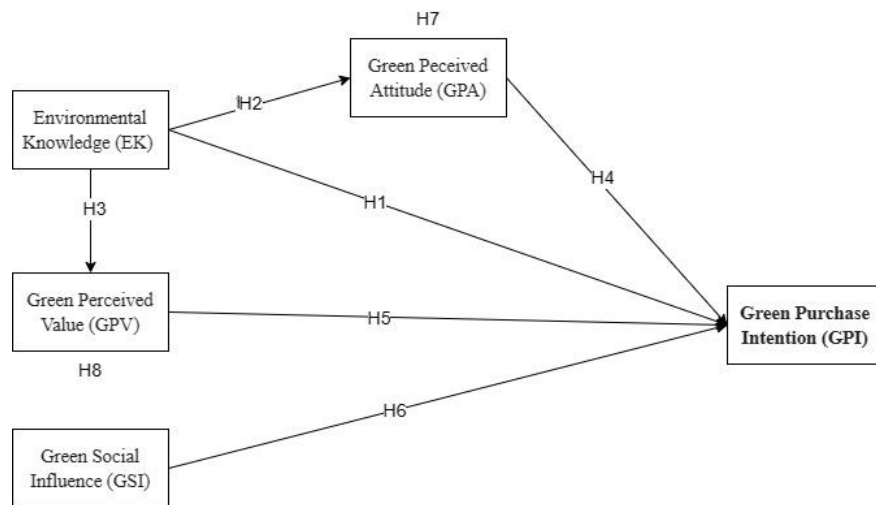

Figure 2 Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and Sampling

This research utilizes an extended framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to comprehensively analyze the purchase intentions in Guangzhou, China, regarding organic food. To achieve this, a cross-sectional survey was carried out, utilizing purposive sampling technique to ensure that participants met specific criteria relevant to the research focus. This study conducted data collection through an online survey in Guangzhou from September to October 2024. The study targeted Generation Y and Z consumers identified as significant contributors to green consumption.

Data collection was facilitated through an online self-administered questionnaire using Microsoft Forms platform, which allowed participants to provide their responses at their convenience by their smartphones, tablets or laptops via social media such as WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook, QQ, Instagram. Participants provided informed permission while submitting the survey. The survey garnered a total of 648 valid responses, creating a robust dataset for evaluating the proposed model. The respondents' demographic profile included respondents' gender and education. Regarding gender, 354 of participants identified as female, while 292 identified as male and 2 people did not specify their gender. When analyzing educational attainment, 288 of respondents were degree, 107 were masters, 15 held PhD/DBA, and 219 specialized in the pre university and 1 person were undergraduate course, and the remaining 18 people chose none.

3.2 Measures

The questionnaire comprises two sections: the initial section gathers demographic data from respondents, while the subsequent section contains variable items (EK, GPA, GPV, GSI, GPI) derived from earlier studies, utilizing instruments based on established questionnaires for quantitative analysis.

Environmental Knowledge: This study measured participants' knowledge using a five-item scale developed by Mostafa (2007). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Participants were required to express their level of agreement with statements such as, "I know that I buy products and packages that are environmentally safe."

Green Perceived Attitudes: To assess participants' Green Perceived Attitudes, this study utilized the five-item to evaluate it (e.g. "Green practice is good.") (Akbar et al., 2014). Responses were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 signified strong agreement.

Green Perceived Value: This research used an enhanced scale to evaluate participants' perceived green value (Chaudhuri, 1997). A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure responses, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

G*reen Social Influence*: The method for measuring green social influence is based on a six-item scale (O'cass & Frost, 2002). A five-point Likert scale was used to quantify responses, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Green Purchase Intention: The measurement of green purchasing intention in this study was based on an adapted scale derived from previous research. A five-point Likert scale was used to record responses to the five questionnaire items, with options ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") (Akbar et al., 2014). The first item of the scale was reverse-coded ("I have low intention of purchasing green products."). Furthermore, participants were assured throughout data collection that their information would remain confidential and would not be disclosed to any third parties.

3.3 Data Analysis

This research primarily employs Smart PLS 4.0 for data analysis, a leading software in PLS-SEM analysis. It offers an extensive set of algorithms and modeling tools, an intuitive user interface, and professional support (Cheah et al., 2024). This study took a two-step strategy by examining and utilizing the methodological framework (Henseler et al., 2009). Assessing the measurement model is the initial step, with a primary focus on validity and reliability. The subsequent step involves evaluating the structural model, focusing on examining the relationships between variables and testing the proposed hypotheses.

In the SmartPLS 4.0 software, the measurement model is evaluated by constructing a Structural Equation Model (SEM). Cronbach's alpha should be at least 0.7 to ensure sufficient internal consistency. For structural validity, composite reliability must also be greater than 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Convergent validity is assessed by confirming that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5 and does not exceed the corresponding Composite Reliability (CR). Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981a). Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio matrix is used to further verify discriminant validity, ensuring that all HTMT values remain below 0.90 (Gold et al., 2001).

The evaluation of SRMR value near 0.08 denotes an exceptionally good model fit (McNeish & Wolf, 2023). The model's explanatory power was assessed by calculating the R-squared (R^2) value, which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables (S. W. Lee, 2022).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the R-squared value for GPI as 0.618, demonstrating that EK, GPA, GPV, and GSI collectively account for 61.8% of the variance in GPI. These factors indicate the model's predictive ability for GPI. Similarly, the R-squared for Green Perceived Attitude (GPA) is 0.273, showing that 27.3% of GPA's variance is accounted for by the model, indicating an adequate fit. The R-squared value for Green Perceived Value (GPV) is 0.624, indicating that the independent variables collectively explain 62.4% of the variance in GPV. These findings collectively show that the model can adequately explain the primary dependent variables.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Variable	R-square	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EK		0.942	0.942	0.955	0.811
GPA	0.273	0.937	0.937	0.952	0.799
GPI	0.618	0.938	0.939	0.953	0.801
GPV	0.624	0.928	0.929	0.946	0.778
GSI		0.955	0.955	0.964	0.815

As shown in Table 2, the evaluation of the measurement model confirms strong internal consistency across all factor loadings. The Cronbach's alpha values for each construct are above 0.9, well exceeding the recommended reliability

threshold of 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2021). In addition, the composite reliability (rho_c) values of all constructs exceed 0.9, surpassing the benchmark of 0.7, demonstrating the strong reliability of the constructs (Chanda et al., 2023). Moreover, the composite reliability (rho_a) values, a recent and objective measure of internal consistency, confirm the strong reliability of all constructs. Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs fall within the range of 0.778 to 0.815, surpassing the 0.5 threshold, which confirms that the criteria for convergent validity have been met (Fornell & Larcker, 1981b). These numbers further strengthen the model's overall validity by showing that its convergent validity is very strong.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was used to evaluate discriminant validity, ensuring clear differentiation between constructs. An HTMT value below the 0.90 threshold signifies adequate discriminant validity (Gold et al., 2001). As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values fall below this threshold, providing strong evidence that the constructs in this study meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

TABLE 3. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	EK	GPA	GPI	GPV	GSI
EK					
GPA	0.555				
GPI	0.684	0.749			
GPV	0.843	0.761	0.775		
GSI	0.852	0.595	0.660	0.820	

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was also applied to assess discriminant validity, ensuring that the square root of each construct's AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs. When this condition is met, it indicates a high level of discriminant validity. As demonstrated in Tables 3 and 4, the results confirm that the constructs in the model are sufficiently distinct, thereby validating the model's discriminant validity.

TABLE 4. FORNELL-LARCKER

	EK	GPA	GPI	GPV	GSI
EK	0.901				
GPA	0.523	0.894			
GPI	0.645	0.703	0.895		
GPV	0.790	0.710	0.724	0.882	
GSI	0.807	0.563	0.627	0.773	0.903

Table 5 presents the cross-loadings, providing additional verification of discriminant validity by determining whether each indicator has a higher loading on its assigned construct compared to other constructs. The items measuring EK exhibit larger loadings on EK, compared to the loadings on other constructs, hence affirming robust discriminant validity. These results support the measurement model's discriminant validity by confirming that the items clearly measure their intended constructs.

TABLE 5. CROSS LOADINGS

	EK	GPA	GPI	GPV	GSI
EK1	**0.877**	0.494	0.624	0.739	0.695
EK2	**0.897**	0.475	0.581	0.714	0.744
EK3	**0.917**	0.468	0.563	0.708	0.734
EK4	**0.895**	0.427	0.553	0.682	0.722
EK5	**0.917**	0.485	0.579	0.709	0.736
GPA1	0.445	**0.882**	0.614	0.621	0.482
GPA2	0.491	**0.893**	0.633	0.640	0.510
GPA3	0.448	**0.900**	0.631	0.617	0.500
GPA4	0.489	**0.889**	0.636	0.647	0.520
GPA5	0.462	**0.905**	0.627	0.645	0.503
GPI1	0.511	0.611	**0.885**	0.600	0.501

GPI2	0.582	0.669	**0.898**	0.644	0.560
GPI3	0.595	0.614	**0.886**	0.654	0.555
GPI4	0.600	0.625	**0.905**	0.664	0.591
GPI5	0.596	0.626	**0.900**	0.672	0.594
GPV1	0.723	0.572	0.629	**0.871**	0.700
GPV2	0.661	0.650	0.624	**0.867**	0.643
GPV3	0.721	0.607	0.640	**0.900**	0.719
GPV4	0.719	0.624	0.641	**0.896**	0.715
GPV5	0.655	0.679	0.657	**0.875**	0.626
GSI1	0.751	0.467	0.516	0.690	**0.895**
GSI2	0.725	0.521	0.568	0.703	**0.896**
GSI3	0.706	0.515	0.577	0.713	**0.914**
GSI4	0.757	0.540	0.570	0.702	**0.881**
GSI5	0.717	0.499	0.573	0.679	**0.915**
GSI6	0.717	0.506	0.586	0.700	**0.915**

The assessment of model fit was conducted by Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which resulted in a value of 0.037, staying well below the 0.08 threshold, indicating a strong model fit (Henseler et al., 2016). These results suggest that the structural model aligns well with the data and validates the hypothesized relationships. As detailed in Table 6, the analysis revealed significant positive effects. Environmental Knowledge (EK) exerted a strong positive influence on Green Purchase Intention (GPI), with a path coefficient of 0.604, t-value of 10.554, and p-value < 0.001, confirming H1. Additionally, EK significantly influenced Green Purchase Attitude (GPA) (path coefficient = 0.523, t-value = 13.173, p-value < 0.001), supporting H2. A strong association was also observed between EK and Green Perceived Value (GPV) (path coefficient = 0.790, t-value = 34.352, p-value < 0.001), validating H3. Furthermore, GPA exhibited a significant positive impact on GPI, as indicated by a path coefficient of 0.396, t-value of 8.219, and p-value < 0.001, confirming H4. Similarly, GPV positively influenced GPI (path coefficient = 0.238, t-value = 3.456, p-value = 0.001), supporting H5. However, the relationship between Green Social Influence (GSI) and GPI was weak and statistically insignificant (path coefficient = 0.051, t-value = 0.914, p-value = 0.361), leading to the rejection of H6.

Table 6. Structural Model Assessment

Paths	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Total Effect Model					
EK -> GPI (H1)	0.604	0.602	0.057	10.554	0.000
EK -> GPA (H2)	0.523	0.522	0.040	13.173	0.000
EK -> GPV (H3)	0.790	0.790	0.023	34.352	0.000
GPA -> GPI (H4)	0.396	0.398	0.048	8.219	0.000
GPV -> GPI (H5)	0.238	0.234	0.069	3.456	0.001
GSI -> GPI (H6)	0.051	0.054	0.056	0.914	0.361
Direct Effects					
EK -> GPI (H1)	0.209	0.209	0.063	3.315	0.001
EK -> GPA (H2)	0.523	0.522	0.040	13.173	0.000
EK -> GPV (H3)	0.790	0.790	0.023	34.352	0.000
GPA -> GPI (H4)	0.396	0.398	0.048	8.219	0.000
GPV -> GPI (H5)	0.238	0.234	0.069	3.456	0.001
GSI -> GPI (H6)	0.051	0.054	0.056	0.914	0.361
Specific Indirect Effect					
EK -> GPA -> GPI (H7)	0.207	0.208	0.032	6.537	0.000

EK -> GPV -> GPI (H8)	0.188	0.185	0.055	3.433	0.001

To investigate the mediating relationships within the model, the indirect and total effects were examined. The findings revealed that Environmental Knowledge (EK) indirectly influenced Green Purchase Intention (GPI) through Green Purchase Attitude (GPA), as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.207, t-value of 6.537, and p-value < 0.001, confirming H7. Additionally, EK also had an indirect impact on GPI via Green Perceived Value (GPV), with a path coefficient of 0.188, t-value of 3.433, and p-value = 0.001, supporting H8. This signifies that GPA and GPV partially mediate the relationships in question. The existence of substantial direct effects in conjunction with the indirect effects indicates that these mediators do not entirely explain the impact of the GPA and GPV on the GPI. Consequently, GPA and GPV serve as partial mediators. The path diagram is illustrated in Figure 3 below.
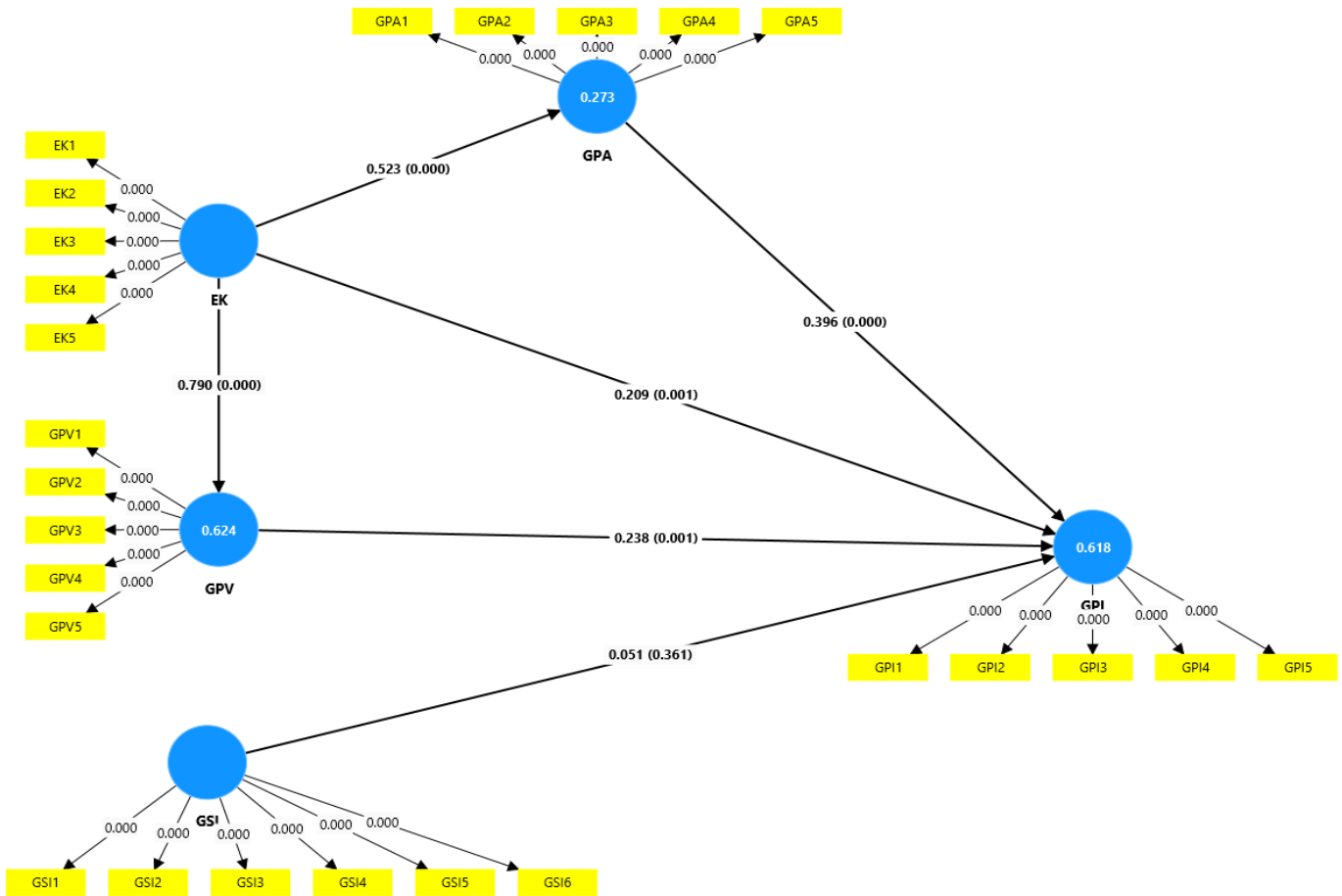

Figure 3 Path Diagram

DISCUSSION

This research focuses on the key factors influencing the green purchase intentions of young consumers in Guangzhou. It emphasizes the role of environmental knowledge, examines the effects of green social influence, and explores how green perceived attitude and green perceived value mediate consumers' intentions to buy organic food.

The data point to the positive and important effects of EK, GPV, GPA, and GPI. Similar to earlier research (Asif et al., 2023; Azizah & Dwita, 2024; Bigliardi et al., 2022; Cui et al., 2024; Saraireh, 2023), this one also confirms that having a clearer awareness of the environmental issues drives customers' willingness to make green purchase, that is to say, increasing the knowledge and publicity of organic food can effectively promote purchase intention. In addition, the results is consistent with previous findings that EK positively affects GPA (Tamar et al., 2021; Tong et al., 2020), meaning that higher environmental awareness increases green perceived attitude, thus improving young customer's knowledge of organic food can improve their attitude towards green perception. Moreover, the empirical findings reinforced prior research, demonstrating a strong positive correlation between EK and GPV (Amoako et al., 2020; Han, 2021). Therefore, enhancing knowledge about organic products can raise their green perceived value.

Earlier research consistently highlighted a strong and positive association between GPA and GPI (Siyal et al., 2021), and positive relationship between GPV and GPI (Watanabe et al., 2020); S. Wu et al., 2024). These results imply that, in addition to their environmental friendliness, customers prefer organic products for their quality assurance and health benefits. As consumers' interest in green products increases, perceived value of green has become the main factor determining purchase intention. This conclusion emphasizes the need to improve marketing's capacity to communicate the high-value perceptions of green products to attract more clients. This study's results are consistent with previous research, highlighting the essential function of GPA as a mediator (Hartanto et al., 2023). A notable shift in consumer attitudes towards sustainable solutions, driven by enhanced access to knowledge regarding the environmental and health advantages of eco-friendly products, has increased purchasing intention. These results suggest that educational initiatives can significantly raise environmental consciousness, which may positively affect consumers' propensity to act in an environmentally conscious manner. Green Perceived Value amplifies the impact of EK on GPI by highlighting perceived value as a key motivator for sustainable purchase (Luo, 2024). Customers that care more about the environment are more inclined to value green products, which affects their purchasing decisions. This highlights the need of educating consumers on the environmental benefits of eco-friendly products, which can increase their perceived value and encourage eco-friendly buying. Nevertheless, hypothesis 8, which proposed a strong correlation between GSI and GPI, was not supported by the data. This suggests that GSI and GPI are not statistically significantly related. There are several explanations for this result. First, the measurement of GSI might not have accurately reflected its actual influence on GPI. In previous studies similar conclusions have also been reached (Varshneya et al., 2017). Additionally, cultural and contextual factors within the sample may have diminished the effect of social influence on consumer behavior. This discovery necessitates additional research, possibly using new measuring methods or sample characteristics, into the circumstances in which social influence may impact purchasing intentions. Future studies should examine whether social influence is more important in other customer segments or through different channels such focused social media advertising or peer influence.

CONCLUSION

The primary factors influencing young Chinese consumers' GPI to utilize organic products in Guangzhou, China, were examined in this study. These findings validate the critical contribution of EK, GPA, GPV and informing GPI. Moreover, EK was shown to exert significant indirect effects on GPI through the mediators GPA and GPV. But GSI does not affect GPI in any statistically significant way. A key theoretical contribution lies in recognizing GPV and GPA as crucial mediators in the decision-making process for green purchases. This finding significantly advances the current body of literature by underscoring the essential roles that Perceived Attitude and Perceived Value play in shaping and enhancing green purchase intentions.

The government and enterprises disseminate information through the media, the Internet, lectures and other forms, to popularize the definition of organic food, production process, certification standards and other knowledge to consumers, so as to improve consumers' comprehensive understanding and accurate understanding of organic food and then enhance their intention of green consumption. The government should emphasize the importance of environmental protection in the production of organic food, such as reducing the use of chemical substances and protecting biodiversity to attract more attention to environmental protection consumers. Businesses may enhance consumer comprehension of the beneficial effects of organic products on the environment by bolstering the promotion of environmental information. For example, increasing environmental information in product packaging or advertising can effectively enhance consumers' environmental knowledge. At the same time, by introducing consumers to the organic food production process, including soil, water, climate, biodiversity, requirements, and do not use chemical synthesis of fertilizer, pesticides, growth regulators and other substances of production, and show the certificate of organic food certification, such as organic food certification, no pesticide residue detection report, etc., to prove the quality, value and safety of organic food. Marketers should not only emphasize product knowledge, but also emphasize the intrinsic value of green products, such as sustainability and quality, to attract eco-conscious consumers. From a policy standpoint, promoting transparency in green labeling and claims could bolster consumer value perception, further supporting green purchasing.

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