



From Green Marketing to Green Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Green Brand Image

<u>INFO PENULIS</u>	<u>INFO ARTIKEL</u>
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Saran Penulisan Referensi

Supardin, L Kuncorowati, H., & Bikorin (2026) From Green Marketing to Green Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Green Brand Image *.Arus Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora*,6(2),2332-2340

Abstrak

Konsumsi berkelanjutan telah memasuki arus utama, namun kepedulian konsumen terhadap lingkungan seringkali gagal diterjemahkan menjadi niat untuk membeli produk ramah lingkungan, terutama ketika praktik greenwashing yang meluas mengikis kredibilitas klaim lingkungan merek. Studi ini meneliti pengaruh pemasaran hijau terhadap citra merek hijau dan niat pembelian hijau, serta menguji peran mediasi citra merek hijau dalam hubungan tersebut. Pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan menggunakan survei lintas sektoral terhadap 200 responden Generasi Z di Yogyakarta, yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan dengan kriteria memiliki niat untuk membeli produk ramah lingkungan. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner Likert lima poin tertutup dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) dengan SmartPLS 4. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran hijau memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek hijau dan niat pembelian hijau. Citra merek hijau secara positif dan signifikan memengaruhi niat pembelian hijau dan sebagian memediasi hubungan antara pemasaran hijau dan niat pembelian hijau. Model ini menjelaskan 60,8% varians dalam citra merek hijau dan 54,5% varians dalam niat pembelian hijau. Temuan ini memperluas Teori Stimulus-Organisme-Respons dengan memposisikan pemasaran hijau sebagai stimulus, citra merek hijau sebagai organisme, dan niat pembelian hijau sebagai respons, sekaligus menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas pemasaran hijau bergantung pada pembentukan kredibilitas lingkungan yang dirasakan. Secara praktis, perusahaan harus mendasarkan komunikasi hijau pada bukti yang dapat diverifikasi sehingga citra merek hijau dapat dibangun dan skeptisisme Generasi Z dapat dikurangi.

Kata kunci: Pemasaran Hijau, Citra Merek Hijau, Niat Pembelian Hijau.

Abstract

Sustainable consumption has entered the mainstream, yet consumers' environmental concern frequently fails to translate into the intention to buy green products, particularly when widespread greenwashing erodes the credibility of brands' environmental claims. This study examines the effect of green marketing on green brand image and green purchase intention, and tests the mediating role of green brand image in that relationship. A quantitative approach was employed using a cross-sectional survey of 200 Generation Z respondents in Yogyakarta, selected through purposive sampling with the criterion of holding an intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Data were collected through a closed-ended five-point Likert questionnaire and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results show that green marketing has a positive and significant effect on green brand image and on green purchase intention. Green brand image positively and significantly affects green purchase intention and partially mediates the relationship between green marketing and green purchase intention. The model explains 60.8% of the variance in green brand image and 54.5% of the variance in green purchase intention. These findings extend Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory by positioning green marketing as the stimulus, green brand image as the organism, and green purchase intention as the response, while showing that the effectiveness of green marketing depends on the formation of perceived environmental credibility. Practically, firms should anchor green communication in verifiable evidence so that green brand image can be built and Generation Z's scepticism can be reduced.

Keyword: Green Marketing, Green Brand Image, Green Purchase Intention.

A. Introduction

Sustainable consumption has moved from moral discourse into a market requirement. Climate change pressure and environmental degradation have pushed consumers across countries to treat environmental attributes as a purchase consideration. Rising concern, however, does not automatically translate into consistent behaviour. Recent literature documents the persistence of the green attitude behaviour gap, namely the discrepancy between consumers' favourable environmental attitudes and their intention or action to buy green products (Margariti et al., 2024; Shaheen Hosany & Serdiuk, 2025). The gap matters because corporate investment in green initiatives pays off only once it converts into genuine purchase intention.

Generation Z occupies the most paradoxical position within this gap. The cohort is the most vocal in climate activism and is often cast as the driver of future green markets, yet its purchasing patterns are strikingly inconsistent. Borah et al. (2024) found that environmental knowledge among Generation Z does not produce green purchase behaviour without consumer trust. Di Pillo et al. (2025) added that this cohort is highly sensitive to claim credibility, so greenwashing perceptions can neutralise their pro-environmental drivers. In Indonesia, these characteristics grow more complex because high environmental literacy confronts limited purchasing power.

Green marketing is commonly positioned as the strategic instrument for closing that gap. Through environmentally friendly product attributes, sustainable packaging, pricing that reflects environmental value, and green communication and labelling, firms signal ecological commitment to the market (Nguyen-Viet, 2023). This approach is often assumed to operate linearly, in that more intensive green marketing produces stronger intention to purchase the products offered.

Empirical evidence for that assumption is far from conclusive. Akram et al. (2024) found that green advertising and eco-labelling do not act directly on purchase intention but are channelled through consumers' brand perceptions. Dinh et al. (2025) reported that in the fast moving consumer goods sector of an emerging market, green marketing produced no significant direct effect on green purchase intention. Conversely, Li and Shan (2025) and Vafaei-Zadeh et al. (2025) identified significant direct effects for organic food and green electronics. This cross-context inconsistency points to an intervening variable that remains inadequately explained.

Green brand image is proposed as the bridging mechanism. It represents the accumulation of consumer perceptions regarding a brand's environmental commitment, credibility, and performance, formed through repeated exposure to green marketing signals (Plotkina et al., 2025). Its urgency has intensified alongside widespread greenwashing, exaggerated claims, and

green confusion, which cultivate scepticism and systematically depress trust and purchase intention (Isac et al., 2025; Qayyum et al., 2023; Rehman et al., 2025). When claim credibility is doubted, intense green campaigns may backfire and harm the brand. Green marketing stimuli therefore lead to a purchase response only once translated into a green brand image that consumers judge credible.

Prior research leaves three relevant gaps. First, most studies position green brand image as an antecedent of green brand trust (Rahman & Nguyen-Viet, 2023) or as a consequence of greenwashing rather than as the cognitive mechanism linking green marketing to purchase intention. Its theoretical position within the causal chain therefore remains unclear. Second, evidence on its mediating role is contradictory. Several studies confirm it (Akram et al., 2024; Plotkina et al., 2025), whereas Dinh et al. (2025) found no mediating effect and argued that brand image works as a meta-signal through trust. Third, testing this model among Generation Z in an education city of a developing country remains rare, even though high environmental literacy combined with budget constraints may alter these relationships.

This study adopts Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory, with green marketing as the stimulus, green brand image as the organism representing internal evaluation, and green purchase intention as the response. Its novelty lies in testing green brand image as an organism rather than an outcome variable among Generation Z in Yogyakarta. The theoretical contribution is to clarify the causal pathway of S-O-R within green consumption, the empirical contribution is to supply evidence from an underrepresented emerging market, and the managerial contribution is to show that green marketing investment must build a credible brand image rather than increase campaign frequency. The research questions are as follows. How does green marketing influence Generation Z's green purchase intention, and to what extent does green brand image mediate that relationship?

B. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory cross-sectional survey design. The population comprises Generation Z consumers in Yogyakarta, and the sample consists of 200 respondents determined through purposive sampling. The purposive sampling criteria are Generation Z consumers domiciled in Yogyakarta who intend to purchase environmentally friendly products and who have been exposed to a brand's green marketing activity within the past three months. The research instrument is a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 denotes strongly disagree and 5 denotes strongly agree. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The analysis proceeded in two stages, namely evaluation of the outer model covering convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, followed by evaluation of the inner model through the coefficient of determination and hypothesis testing using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

C. Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Characteristics		Frequency	Presentase (%)
Gender	Female	110	55
	Male	90	45
Age	18–21 years	135	67,5
	22–25 years	50	25
	26–29 years	15	7,5
Education	Senior High School	24	12
	Bachelor's degree (S1)	155	77,5
	Master's degree (S2)	45	22,5
	Doctoral degree (S3)	1	0,5
Occupation	Student	155	77,5
	Teacher / Lecturer	5	2,5
	Civil Servant (PNS)	3	1,5
	Private Employee	9	4,5

Characteristics		Frequency	Presentase (%)
	Self-employed / Entrepreneur	18	9
	Other	10	5
Monthly expenditure	< IDR 2.000.000	63	31,5
	IDR 2.000.000–4.000.000	70	35,0
	> IDR 4.000.000–6.000.000	37	18,5
	> IDR 6.000.000–8.000.000	22	11
	> IDR 8.000.000–10.000.000	7	3,5
	> IDR 10.000.000	1	0,5

Source: Processed data

Table 1 shows that respondents were predominantly female (55%), with the 18 to 21 age group forming the largest cohort (67.5%), followed by the 22 to 25 group (25%). In terms of education, most respondents were at the undergraduate level. In terms of occupation, the majority were students (77.5%). Monthly expenditure was concentrated below IDR 4,000,000, with a cumulative proportion of 66.5%. This profile is consistent with the characteristics of Generation Z in an education city, namely well educated, broadly exposed to environmental information, but constrained by relatively low purchasing power. The composition is theoretically relevant because budget constraints make brand credibility the primary filter before deciding to purchase green products that typically carry a price premium

Validity and reliability Test

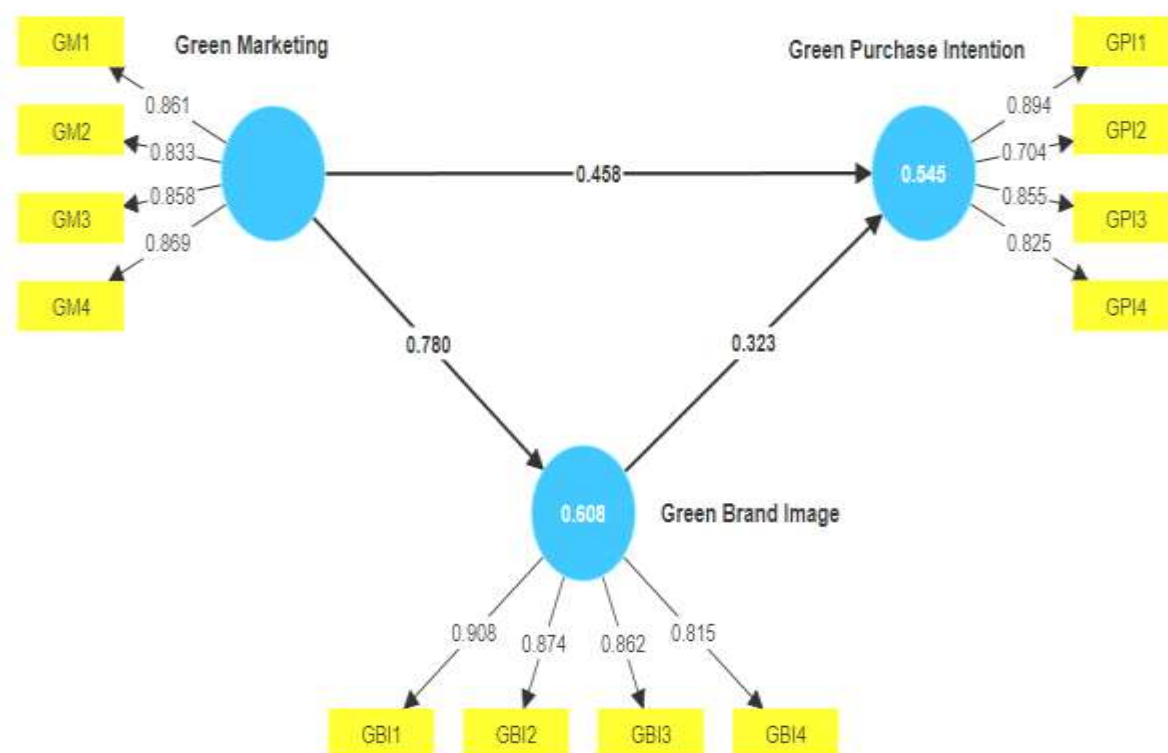


Figure 1. Outer Model

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable/Indicator		Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR
Green Marketing			0,73	0,87	0,87
Source: adapted from Nguyen-Viet (2023), Akram et al. (2024)			2	9	8
GM1	This brand offers products made with environmentally friendly materials and processes	0,861			
GM2	This brand uses packaging that is recyclable or easily biodegradable	0,833			
GM3	This brand communicates clear and understandable	0,858			

Variable/Indicator		Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR
GM4	environmental information in its advertising	0,869	0,749	0,891	0,888
	This brand sets a fair price for the environmental benefits it offers				
Green Brand Image					
Source: adapted from Rahman and Nguyen-Viet (2023), Plotkina et al. (2025)					
GBI1	This brand is known for a genuine commitment to environmental protection	0,908			
GBI2	This brand is credible in communicating its environmentally friendly claims	0,874			
GBI3	This brand has a good reputation for environmental performance	0,862			
GBI4	This brand meets my expectations as an environmentally conscious consumer	0,815			
Green Purchase Intention			0,749	0,891	0,888
Source: adapted from Di Pillo et al. (2025), Vafaei-Zadeh et al. (2025)					
GPI1	I intend to buy this brand because of environmental considerations	0,894			
GPI2	I am willing to pay more for the environmentally friendly products of this brand	0,704			
GPI3	I would choose this brand over comparable conventional brands	0,855			
GPI4	I plan to purchase this brand in the near future	0,825			

Source: Processed data

Table 2 shows that all indicators have outer loadings above 0.70, ranging from 0.704 (GPI2) to 0.908 (GBI1), thereby satisfying the criterion of convergent validity at the indicator level. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the three constructs exceeds the 0.50 threshold, with green marketing at 0.732 and both green brand image and green purchase intention at 0.749. This indicates that each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0.879 to 0.891 and Composite Reliability ranges from 0.878 to 0.888. Both measures exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70. The research instrument is therefore considered valid and reliable, so the measurement model is suitable for structural model testing.

R-Square Test

Table 3. R-Square Test Results

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Green Brand Image	0,608	0,606
Green Purchase Intention	0,545	0,540

Source: Processed data

Table 3 shows an R-square value of 0.608 for green brand image with an adjusted R-square of 0.606, meaning that green marketing explains 60.8% of the variance in green brand image, while the remainder is explained by variables outside the model. The R-square value of 0.545 for green purchase intention with an adjusted R-square of 0.540 indicates that green marketing and green brand image jointly explain 54.5% of the variance in the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Both values fall within the moderate to substantial range in consumer behaviour research. The small difference between R-square and adjusted R-square indicates that the model is not overfitted and that the number of predictors is proportionate to the sample size. These findings confirm that green brand image plays an important role in enhancing the explanatory power of the model for green purchase intention.

Hypothesis Testing

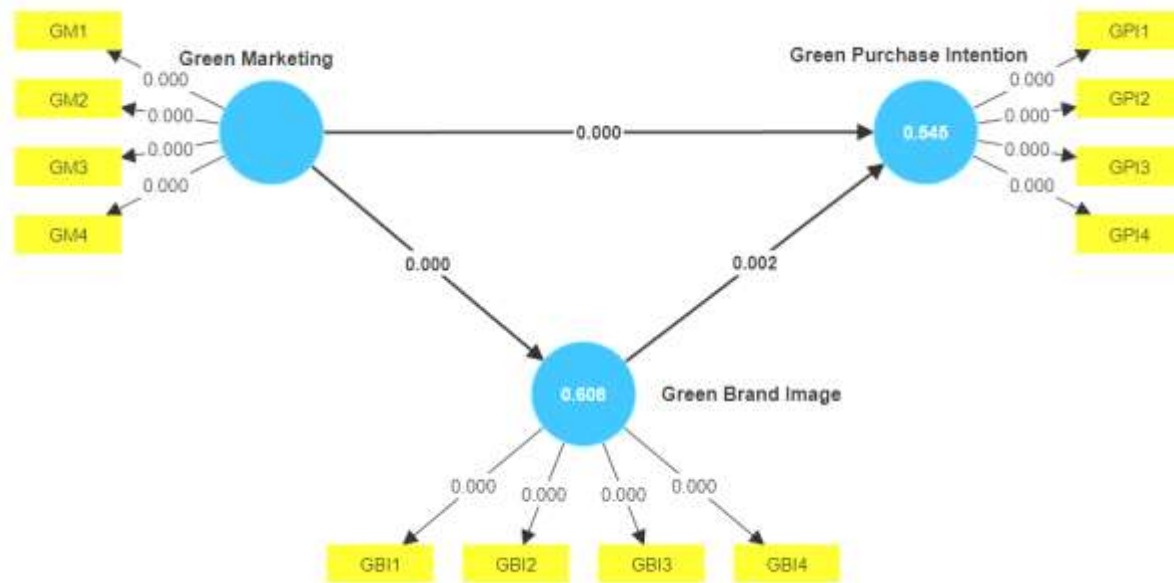


Figure 2. Inner Model

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Hypothesis	O	M	STDEV	O/STDEV	P values
H1	Green Marketing → Green Brand Image	0,780	0,779	0,035	21,993	0,000
H2	Green Marketing → Green Purchase Intention	0,458	0,457	0,114	4,031	0,000
H3	Green Brand Image → Green Purchase Intention	0,458	0,457	0,114	4,031	0,000
H4	Green Marketing → Green Brand Image → Green Purchase Intention	0,252	0,252	0,080	3,150	0,002

Source: Processed data

Table 4 shows that all four hypotheses are supported because every t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and every p value falls below 0.05. Green marketing has a positive and significant effect on green brand image, with the largest path coefficient in the model ($\beta = 0.780$, $t = 21.993$, $p < 0.001$), so H1 is supported. Green marketing also has a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.458$, $t = 4.031$, $p < 0.001$), which supports H2. Green brand image is shown to have a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention, so H3 is supported. The indirect effect test shows that green brand image significantly mediates the relationship between green marketing and green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.252$, $t = 3.150$, $p = 0.002$), so H4 is supported. Because both the direct and the indirect paths are significant, the form of mediation is partial mediation.

Discussion

Green Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Green Brand Image.

The results show that green marketing has a positive and significant effect on green brand image, with the largest path coefficient in the model ($\beta = 0.780$, $t = 21.993$, $p < 0.001$). This finding confirms that the green marketing mix, covering product attributes, sustainable packaging, pricing, and environmental communication, functions as a stimulus that consistently shapes Generation Z's perception of a brand's ecological commitment. The magnitude of this coefficient is consistent with Nguyen-Viet (2023), who found that green marketing mix elements are the principal drivers of green brand equity in emerging markets. A similar finding was reported by Akram et al. (2024), who demonstrated that green marketing instruments such as green advertising and eco-labelling positively influence green brand image and green brand trust among Chinese and Indian consumers.

Within the S-O-R framework, this result positions green brand image as an organism that responds to marketing stimuli. Plotkina et al. (2025) demonstrated a comparable mechanism, whereby exposure to sustainable packaging raised the green brand image of European

consumers, which in turn drove purchase intention and willingness to pay. The effectiveness of such stimuli is nonetheless conditional. Qayyum et al. (2023) showed that excessive packaging and confusing claims actually reduce green brand equity, while Rehman et al. (2025) demonstrated that greenwashing practices trigger scepticism that damages brand attitude. The large coefficient found in this study should therefore be read as an indication that respondents perceived the green marketing activity they encountered as substantive and verifiable rather than as mere environmental rhetoric.

Green Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Green Purchase Intention.

Green marketing is shown to have a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.458$, $t = 4.031$, $p < 0.001$), so H2 is supported. This finding indicates that green marketing stimuli operate not only at the level of brand perception but also directly mobilise Generation Z's behavioural tendencies. The result is consistent with Li and Shan (2025), who found that consumer receptivity to green advertising exerts a significant direct effect on the intention to purchase organic products. Vafaei-Zadeh et al. (2025) similarly showed that green advertising and information quality are important determinants of purchase intention for green electronics within the S-O-R framework.

The direct path coefficient is nevertheless considerably smaller than the effect of green marketing on green brand image, signalling that most of the influence of green marketing is channelled through the perceptual path. This interpretation is supported by Dinh et al. (2025), who found no direct effect of green marketing strategies on green purchase intention in the FMCG sector of an emerging market and identified significant paths only through perceptual variables. The divergence can be explained by respondent characteristics. Generation Z possesses high environmental literacy and can therefore convert green information into purchase intention relatively quickly. Conversely, Di Pillo et al. (2025) caution that greenwashing perceptions can neutralise such pro-environmental drivers. The implication is that the direct effect of green marketing is conditional on the credibility of the claims that accompany it.

Green Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Green Purchase Intention.

Green brand image has a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention, so H3 is supported. This finding places green brand image as the organism within the S-O-R framework, that is, the internal evaluative process that translates marketing stimuli into behavioural readiness. For Generation Z consumers facing budget constraints, green brand image functions as a credibility heuristic that lowers information search costs and perceived risk when evaluating green products that generally carry a price premium. Plotkina et al. (2025) identified a comparable pattern in which green brand image increased not only purchase intention but also willingness to pay more for sustainably packaged products.

This result also aligns with the green brand trust literature. Rahman and Nguyen-Viet (2023) showed that green brand image is an important determinant of green brand trust, which subsequently drives purchase intention, while Isac et al. (2025) demonstrated that the erosion of trust caused by greenwashing directly suppresses consumer purchase intention. The finding nonetheless warrants caution. Dinh et al. (2025) found no direct effect of green brand image on green purchase intention and argued that brand image operates as a meta-signal working through trust rather than independently. This divergence indicates that the role of green brand image depends on product category context and the level of consumer scepticism, as shown by Margariti et al. (2024) regarding the moderating role of greenwashing concerns in weakening the translation of attitudes into purchase intention.

Green Brand Image has a mediates the relationship between Green Marketing on Green Purchase Intention.

The indirect effect test shows that green brand image significantly mediates the relationship between green marketing and green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.252$, $t = 3.150$, $p = 0.002$), so H4 is supported. Because the direct path from green marketing to green purchase intention is also significant, the form of mediation is partial. Green marketing therefore operates through two routes simultaneously, namely a direct persuasive route and an indirect evaluative route through the formation of green brand image. This finding provides empirical support for the core proposition of S-O-R Theory that external stimuli require internal processing before culminating in a behavioural response.

The result reinforces Akram et al. (2024), who demonstrated that green brand image and green brand trust mediate the relationship between green marketing instruments and green purchase intention across cultures, and Plotkina et al. (2025), who found green brand image mediation in the relationship between sustainable packaging and both purchase intention and willingness to pay. Conversely, Dinh et al. (2025) reported the absence of a green brand image mediation effect in the FMCG sector, a divergence probably rooted in low consumer involvement with high-frequency purchase products. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in establishing green brand image as a substantive organism mechanism rather than a mere outcome variable. Practically, the finding cautions that intensifying green campaigns without verifiable evidence of environmental performance risks triggering scepticism and weakening purchase intention, as warned by Rehman et al. (2025) and Di Pillo et al. (2025).

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that green marketing has a positive and significant effect on both green brand image and green purchase intention, that green brand image has a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention, and that green brand image partially mediates the relationship between green marketing and green purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Yogyakarta. Theoretically, these findings reinforce Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory by showing that the effectiveness of green marketing stimuli depends heavily on the formation of an internal evaluation in the form of a credible green brand image.

The practical implication is that firms should shift their focus from the intensity of green campaigns to their substance, namely providing verifiable evidence of environmental performance, third-party certification, and transparent packaging information. For the Generation Z segment with limited purchasing power, combining a strong green brand image with an affordable pricing strategy will be more effective than generic environmental claims. This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, its single-region scope, and its reliance on self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce common method bias. Future research is encouraged to test greenwashing perception, green scepticism, or green trust as additional moderators or mediators, to adopt longitudinal or experimental designs, and to conduct cross-generational and cross-category comparisons in order to examine the generalisability of the findings.

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